

# OUR OPINION, THEIR OPINION

Life can only be understood backwards;  
but it must be lived forwards.  
- Soren Kierkegaard

## Ten Years of Digital India

Digital India Progressive India - the mission to make India digital in governance, public works and welfare started with this aim in object ten years ago. The Digital India Mission, has now completed 10 years this month and undoubtedly has changed the way business is conducted and life is lived for millions of Indians. It was launched to improve governance and help technology reduce the distance between governments and the people. It is still a work in progress, but it is not an exaggeration to say that the digital initiative has made a greater impact, in a significantly shorter period, than most other policy-backed programmes. Internet penetration has risen from 250 million in 2014 to over 970 million two years ago. All forms of digital payments have seen explosive growth. Over 8,375 crore UPI transactions worth Rs 139 lakh crore were processed in 2022-23, having risen from 92 lakh crore transactions in 2017-18 - the figure must be much higher now. The UPI has enabled over a hundred billion real-time transactions in a year. It benefitted in many ways when financial transactions, including direct benefit transfer (DBT), became easier and faster. DBT has helped facilitate the transfer of Rs 44 lakh crore directly to citizens, saving Rs 3.48 lakh crore in leakages in the process. The government became more effective, losses and slippages came down, and the reach of the financial system expanded. Apart from finance, the digital shift effected major changes in transport and communications, health, education, industry, agriculture, and entertainment - all sectors found new ways of doing things. Over 42 lakh km of optical cables have been laid, and over 4.8 lakh 5G base stations have been set up. High-speed internet is available in many inaccessible areas. E-governance and digital literacy have helped the country achieve greater levels of transparency and efficiency. But the country needs to go much farther on the digital road, and there are more challenges to overcome. There is a big rural-urban divide in access to digital services and the quality of services. According to the National Sample Survey, 66% urban households have access to quality internet, but only 24% rural households have this access. While 50% of women living in rural areas do not have a mobile phone, only about 57% of the schools have functional computers, and only 53% have internet access. The BharatNet broadband connectivity target for villages is far behind schedule. Cyber crimes and fraud are increasing, causing the loss of huge amounts of money. There are also serious concerns over digital personal data and privacy in the absence of an effective protection regime.

## Why Strait of Hormuz is key for global shipping

The strait is bordered by active, assertive states such as Iran, which means the potential for interstate conflict is relatively high. That is where commercial contracts become relevant, even if their influence is more indirect

During the recent conflict between Iran and Israel, Iran threatened to block the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's major shipping routes. Would that be possible, and what effects would it have?

The Strait of Hormuz is a choke point at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. It is used to transport about 20 per cent of global daily oil consumption.

Iran effectively controls this crucial shipping route because it is a coastal state bordering this narrow stretch of water. The strait is too narrow to avoid navigating waters claimed by Iran. This raises thorny legal questions about whether it is really possible for Iran to block the strait, and what recourse other states have if it does.

This geographical reality is far from new, and the legal frameworks governing international maritime activity have developed over centuries. At its heart is the lex mercatoria — the "law of merchants" — a body of transnational commercial law that emerged organically from the practices of traders operating across borders.

Within this broader framework sits the lex maritima, or customary maritime law, which has long adapted to the hazards of shipping across vast oceans.

The lex maritima originated from the shared practices of seafarers and merchants. Its purpose? To manage the unpredictable nature of maritime trade that demands coherent and stable rules.

One of the most enduring principles of this legal tradition is the idea of mare liberum, or "the free sea", set out by Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius in 1609. He argued the high seas should remain open to all for peaceful navigation and trade. This conveniently legitimised the ambitions of European colonial powers, granting them unfettered access to global maritime routes at a time when control over sea-based trade promised immense economic and strategic advantage.

The shifting boundaries of maritime law



One of the most fundamental questions in maritime law is: where do a nation's territorial waters end, and the high seas begin?

After the second world war, a series of conferences culminated in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), where the customary 3 nautical miles (5.56km) of territorial waters states could claim as their own was extended. This narrow limit was rooted more in historical naval range — the so-called "cannon shot rule" — than in modern geopolitical or environmental realities.

In 1959, Iran took the unusual step of unilaterally extending its territorial sea to 12 nautical miles, despite not being a party to UNCLOS. Two decades later, following the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the US Embassy hostage crisis, Washington grew increasingly anxious about the security of oil flows from the Persian Gulf. These concerns intensified during the Iran-Iraq War, especially as Iran began using small islands in the Strait of Hormuz to deploy military forces and threaten commercial shipping.

UNCLOS and the new rules of the sea

One of the key compromises of UNCLOS was an extension of territorial waters for states that ratified the treaty. In exchange, UNCLOS replaced the older concept of "innocent passage" — which allowed only surface navigation through territorial seas — with the broader notion of "transit passage". Under this regime, vessels and aircraft from other states are granted the right to travel not only

on the surface, but also under the sea and through the air above straits used for international navigation.

While 169 states have ratified UNCLOS, both Iran and the United States remain notable hold-outs. This means Iran does not enjoy the broader 12-nautical-mile limit recognised under UNCLOS, and the US cannot claim the agreement's protections for transit passage through strategic choke points.

While the geopolitical and legal tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz may seem far removed from the world of private commerce, the global economy continues to function thanks to a powerful legal tool: the contract. Contracts offer a predictable framework that allows trade across borders without parties needing to trust one another personally.

The Strait of Hormuz is bordered by active, assertive states such as Iran, which means the potential for interstate conflict is relatively high. This doesn't mean commercial contracts are irrelevant to the recent dispute in the Strait of Hormuz — far from it. But their influence is more indirect.

What can be learned?

Without significant political change in Tehran, it's unlikely either Iran or the US will shift its position on adopting UNCLOS. Yet despite Iran's repeated threats to close the strait, it has never followed through — and the US Navy continues to maintain a steady presence in the region. For now, a fragile but persistent equilibrium holds.

## From Tennis Court to Death Bed : The Murder of humanity

A Father is a first person a daughter feels safe with, but what if he is the one who makes you unsafe. In a chilling incident that has left the nation in shock, 25-year-old national-level tennis player and coach Radhika Yadav was allegedly shot dead by her father Deepak Yadav, at their home in Gurugram's Sector 57 on 10 July 2025. The murder of a promising sportswoman by her own parent has sparked widespread debate over women's freedom, parental control, and the toxic weight of societal "honor."

Who was Radhika Yadav?

Radhika was not just a rising tennis star; she had already made her mark in the sport:

Achieved ITF doubles ranking of 113. Ranked 5th in Haryana women's doubles. Recently turned coach after a shoulder injury. Known for her work ethic, positivity, and growing presence on social media and tennis coaching platforms.

As per police investigations and family accounts, Deepak Yadav allegedly murdered Radhika due to "Humiliation" by villagers who mocked him for depending on his daughter's income. Control issues over Radhika's independent life, especially her social media presence and coaching academy. Rumors suggest tensions over her personal relationships, which the family denies. He was reportedly suffering from depression and anger over being "left behind" while his daughter rose to prominence.

Radhika Yadav's death is not just a family tragedy—it is a nation's youth loss. A young woman with dreams, desires, and drive was brutally silenced by the very first person who should have protected her. The murder of Radhika Yadav is a wake up call for Indian society. It is a moment to confront uncomfortable truths about honor, control, and the value we place on women's lives. Justice must be swift, but more importantly, changes must be from within families, schools, and the public mindset. No killing is more important than humanity.

By-Komal

## 'Fibremaxxing' is new viral trend. But should you be doing it?

First came smellmaxxing. And then sleepmaxxing. Don't forget flavormaxxing. Now there is a newcomer to the scene. Fibremaxxing.

In the latest example of social media users fixating on something — only to have some take it to an extreme — proponents of the fibremaxxing trend are loading up their meals with soaked chia seeds and cruciferous vegetables in an effort to increase their fibre intake, and often to also lose weight. "Fibre is super cool — I think more people should be eating fibre," said Pamela Corral, a 25-year-old wellness content creator who said she tried to eat more than the recommended daily amount of fibre, which in the United States is approximately 25 grams for women.

Corral's TikToks, which often extol the virtues of the nutrient in text laid over footage of her morning chia seed puddings, have found a huge audience. A recent video garnered more than 10 million views.

Corral said inspiration for her videos tended to strike when she was eating things, like her fibre-rich pudding. "I try to eat it often," she said, "so I can make videos." Elsewhere, fibremaxxing proponents are talking up the health benefits of a fibre-rich diet, citing common foods you most likely already have in your house that are packed with fibre and talking about how it's the rare food trend that is about what you should add to your diet, rather than what to cut out of it.

Fibremaxxing is, essentially, a catchy Gen Z-style label for a niche trend, and the origins of the term remain unclear. (Corral said she first heard the term on the social media platform X, where she follows other wellness creators.) But it ties into a broader movement of social media users who routinely call for increased fiber consumption. That message has been driven by a coalition of health-conscious content creators, dietitians with online followings and people pushing their own gut health products. As with many other trends, too much of a good thing has the potential to be a problem, with experts cautioning against going overboard. But most participants, at this point, are simply adding more fiber to their meals with intention, giving the fibremaxxing trend a rare accolade among internet fads: a seal of approval from nutrition experts.

"This is a fun trend to see happening," said Emily Haller, a registered dietitian. Most people do not eat enough fiber, which is good for your gut, heart and brain, she said. "This is a fun trend to see happening," said Emily Haller, a registered dietitian. Most people do not eat enough fiber, which is good for your gut, heart and brain, she said. "A lot of times we see people obsessing about things that really don't move the needle in terms of health," Haller said, "whereas eating more plants and ingesting more fibre is going to have a positive health benefit." Fibre-rich diets are linked to numerous health benefits, including healthier guts and longer lives. And it's a very satiating nutrient, meaning it can help you feel fuller longer, which can help with weight loss, said Kate Mintz, a registered dietitian at UCLA Health.

"Many people don't get enough fibre, but it's just important to be thoughtful about how you're doing it so that it's not too much too fast," Mintz said.

BY-NICOLE STOCK

# Approaching Bhagavad Gita

Bhagavad Gita, song of the Lord, is a seven hundred verse conversation between Lord Krishna and warrior Arjuna at the time of the Kurukshetra battle.

Knowing the background will help us understand the context. Kauravas and Pandavas were cousins. Circumstances so evolved that they had to fight each other. Almost all the known warriors of that time had joined one side or another in this epic battle. Arjuna, an undefeated warrior known for his mastery in archery, was fighting from Pandavas side. He was bestowed with many weapons during sixty years of his life.

Upon entering the battle, Arjuna realised that all his friends, relatives, teachers and elders were standing on one side or another. Having seen the consequences of such war before, he quickly realised that this war would kill almost all of them. This led to his despondency. He dropped his bow and arrow in the chariot and sat down.

Krishna tried to nudge him saying that this type of attitude is not appropriate for a warrior like him. But that simple nudge didn't move Arjuna. Thus starts the Bhagavad Gita where Lord Krishna explains in detail various principles of this existence, not only to help Arjuna at that moment but also the entire humanity.

Bhagavad Gita was born in the battle field and the battle field can be taken as a metaphor for the serious problems faced by us during our lives. There is another conversation called the Uddhav Gita which is the eleventh chapter of the Srimad Bhagavatam. This conversation is between Lord Krishna and his childhood friend Uddhav who was also in despondency when the latter realised that Krishna is



leaving him. While the Bhagavad Gita can be taken as "war time" advice the Uddhav Gita can be taken as "peace time" advice. These two conversations complement each other. Together, they form a basis to understand the principles of this existence. By aligning ourselves with these principles, we can lead friction free and a joyful life.

We need to keep some basic facts in mind to understand these principles. Firstly, this conversation is contextual while the principles are eternal. Krishna's explanation reflects the state of mind of Arjuna as well as the practices and belief systems followed at that time. As a result, it appears that there is no clear cut demarcation of issues or concepts which we usually find in text books.

Secondly, the conversation happens at various levels of awareness. Sometimes, Krishna comes as a human being and at that level understanding is easier for us. At that level He gives easy examples such as a tortoise in the context of withdrawing senses from sense objects, a river and ocean in the context

of desires disappearing in the mind of a yogi like rivers lose their existence when they enter ocean, a lotus leaf and water in the context of non-attachment etc. Some times as He presents himself as Paramatma and at that level things become difficult to understand as we are completely unaware of them.

Thirdly, Bhagavad Gita is a text book from kindergarten to postgraduation. In one text of seven hundred verses, simple principles to complex ones are explained. It is not that we should master all the principles. If even one of them is realised, it would lead to mastering of all of them automatically.

If we take examples of mathematics, one starts with simple addition, multiplication etc. Subsequently, one moves to algebra and finally to calculus. Interestingly, all of them represent awareness relative to the capacity of the student. Calculus is needed to solve complex problems and algebra might not be useful for these problems. Similarly, in biology one learns about different human organs and their functions. As one moves higher classes, one would

understand the interdependence of these organs.

In the first reading of the Bhagavad Gita, it is advisable to grasp the principles which can be easily understood and then go for subsequent readings. When our own understanding and awareness improve through subsequent readings as well as life experiences, clarity comes even in the case of complex principles.

For example, karma (action) is explained in the beginning which is easy to understand, but when niyat karma (prescribed actions) are introduced, it presents a lot of difficulties to comprehend what is prescribed action and what is not. When Krishna says all karma are blemished, difficulty reaches next level.

Similarly, life presents simple to complex problems and dilemmas. A simple issue doesn't require much of expertise to handle, but a complex issue needs understanding, awareness, skills and attitude at a higher level.

Fourthly, the existence or universe never gives us any preachings. It puts us into different situations and from the

experiences we gain out of these situations, it makes us learn about natural principles that govern this universe like the natural law of gravity. Bhagavad Gita is a rare dialogue where 'the very existence' came as Krishna and explained these principles himself to help us understand them easily.

The fifth difficulty is our divisive mind which prevents us from seeing the whole truth. If we have to embrace existence or be one with it, we should embrace the whole of it. This includes what we believe as well as what we don't believe in. It includes both the praise and criticism we receive. It includes all people and situations that are described as good or bad.

For example, Krishna says He is creation as well as destruction, birth as well as death and sat (reality) as well as asat (illusion). Krishna is not here to support our belief systems nor Gita is a conversation to justify our belief systems. He simply presents the principles that govern this existence. This is the bravest approach whether we are able to inculcate it or not.

Finally, the Bhagavad Gita is not about participating in the war. Gita about renouncing our hatred while performing karma as we are just an instrument in the hand of the almighty, nimitta-matra. It is a matter of fact that after explaining the Gita, Krishna gave a choice to Arjuna to do what he wished to do. The Bhagavad Gita is about doing the job at hand to the best of our abilities, without hatred and attachment.

We need to keep in mind all these difficulties while approaching the Bhagavad Gita.

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