# PoK unrest revives Bharat's great strategic 'what if'



As unrest intensifies in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), exposing the growing disconnect between Islamabad and the people it claims to govern, an old strategic question has resurfaced. Did Bharat miss its best opportunity to alter the territorial status quo before Pakistan acquired nuclear weapons?

The question invariably leads back to General Krishnaswamy Sundarji, one of the Indian Army's most visionary — and controversial — Chiefs of Army Staff. While his legacy is often viewed through the prism of Operation Blue Star and the Indian Peace Keeping Force's intervention in Sri Lanka, Sundarji's most enduring contribution was transforming the Army's strategic mindset. He sought to build not merely a force capable of defending borders but one able, when necessary, to reshape the strategic environment through offensive manoeuvre.

One of the highlights of his 820-day tenure was Operation Brasstacks, conducted in the deserts of Rajasthan during the winter of 1986-87. It was among the largest military exercises undertaken anywhere in the world since the Second World War. Author Probal Dasgupta writes in General Brasstacks: "The sheer level of massive movement and bigness of the exercise had fascinated Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi." Dasgupta notes that Sundarji sought to surpass NATO's annual Autumn Forge exercises, which "moved about 125,000 troops across Europe during the exercise". Brasstacks ultimately involved more than half a million personnel, making it unprecedented in scale for the Indian Army.

Officially, Brasstacks was designed to validate Sundarji's operational concepts. During his tenure, he fundamentally reshaped the Indian Army by accelerating mechanisation, raising the Army's first Mechanised Infantry Division, championing technological modernisation, establishing the Army Aviation Corps, and replacing a predominantly defensive mindset with one built around speed, mobility and offensive manoeuvre.

In Full Spectrum: India's Wars, 1972-2020, military historian Arjun Subramaniam argues that Sundarji sought to transform the Army's institutional culture from one "more comfortable with attrition warfare and fighting the 'holding battle', while waiting for suitable opportunities to launch limited offensives" into a force centred on "manoeuvre" warfare. Long before network-centric warfare became fashionable, Sundarji was advocating technology-driven planning, integrated operations and rapid battlefield mobility.

While Brasstacks is officially described as a military exercise aimed at testing Bharat's armed preparedness, some experts have argued that the exercise may have concealed preparations for a far more ambitious operation. Military historian Ravi Rikhye contends that the exercise "was originally intended as a massive strategic deception to focus Pakistani attention on Sindh while India went for the Northern Areas". In The War That Never Was, he writes that the proposed Operation Trident envisaged an offensive beginning on February 8, 1987, with Skardu as the first objective and Gilgit as the second — a rapid, two-week campaign to recover PoK's Northern Areas while Pakistan remained focused on the Rajasthan-Sindh front.

Whether such a plan ever advanced beyond top military contingency planning remains contested. No official Indian documents have confirmed Operation Trident, and several scholars regard it as an unexecuted proposal rather than an approved war plan. Nevertheless, the episode continues to fuel debate over how close the country may have come to attempting a major strategic revision of the Line of Control before nuclear deterrence fundamentally altered the regional balance.

Many analysts argue that, at the time, Delhi enjoyed clear conventional military superiority over Islamabad. Even the Americans saw it that way, with their military attachés saying, "If fighting broke out, Pakistan would last not more than a month, unless India committed a blunder or unilaterally stopped fighting."

Dasgupta writes: "A comprehensive analysis of the subcontinental military balance conducted prior to the crisis revealed that India could have launched a successful blitzkrieg against Pakistan if the political leadership had deemed such a course desirable. The US military aid to Pakistan had not altered the balance of power in the region, and it was reasoned that India's offensive strike capability, with close air support, would permit rapid advances in Pakistan."

Not surprisingly, Brasstacks deeply alarmed Pakistan, with General Zia-ul-Haq, its military ruler at the time, taking the matter into his own hands. Gen Zia might have had an understated public persona, but he was a shrewd strategist, as wily as, if not more so than, the one he overthrew in Pakistan — Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. If Indira Gandhi was famously warned by then R&AW chief RN Kao to "count her fingers" after shaking hands with Bhutto following the Shimla Agreement — a warning she reportedly ignored, leading to Delhi losing on the diplomatic table what its generals had won in the war — Zia mastered a different style altogether. Ambassador SK Lambah, in his book In Pursuit of Peace, describes how Zia concealed his "traits of ruthlessness and deviousness... with a display of humility and courteousness". Lambah recounts an anecdote involving George Fernandes, who reportedly travelled to Pakistan intending to confront Zia over the issue of Benazir Bhutto's unfair treatment, only to return impressed after the Pakistani military dictator deftly defused the encounter by remarking: "Sir, I want to learn labour issues from you."

Unable to match Bharat conventionally, Zia pursued what came to be known as "cricket diplomacy", flying to Delhi almost uninvited to watch the 1987 Test series. The visit projected Pakistan internationally as the more restrained actor, thereby placing Delhi under intense diplomatic pressure and, crucially, buying Islamabad valuable time to accelerate both its nuclear weapons programme and its support for proxy warfare. The consequences became increasingly apparent. Punjab descended into militancy during the late 1980s, Jammu and Kashmir witnessed the outbreak of a more intense phase of Islamist terrorism, and Pakistan institutionalised the strategy often described as "bleeding India by a thousand cuts".

Counterfactual history can never provide answers with certainty. No one can say whether capturing Skardu or Gilgit would have fundamentally altered the trajectory of the Kashmir issue, prevented Pakistan's proxy war against Bharat, or changed South Asia's strategic landscape. Such questions cannot be answered definitively. They nevertheless remain worth asking.

Four decades later, as unrest resurfaces in PoK, the question inevitably returns: did Bharat allow a rare window of overwhelming conventional superiority to pass before nuclear deterrence froze the

# Could India have done more to prevent the Iran war?



A question that is being asked in India as well as abroad is this: did India do enough to try and stop the US-Israel war against Iran? Realistically speaking, whether India "did enough" depends on the analytical framework used. Observers who view India through the lens of a rising global power or regional mediator argue that New Delhi abdicated its responsibilities, while those aligned with "realist statecraft" maintain that India successfully insulated its core interests from a conflict it had no capacity to stop.

Criticism of India's approach

India's diplomatic response to the US-Israel war against Iran has been characterised by some analysts as a policy of "calculated neutrality" rather than active intervention. While New Delhi formally appealed for de-escalation, diplomacy, and civilian safety, critics argue that its muted stance and close alignment with Washington signalled deference rather than proactive mediation. They assert that the key aspects of India's stance include:

Selective Condemnation: India remained silent on the US-Israel military strikes and high-profile assassinations in Iran while actively condemning subsequent Iranian counter-attacks targeting Gulf Arab countries. India co-sponsored a UN resolution led by the Gulf Cooperation Council that condemned Iranian attacks on Gulf states and Jordan. This text did not mention the initial US-Israel strikes against Iran and was adopted by the UN Security Council as Resolution 2817 on 11 March 2026.

Prioritising Multi-Alignment: New Delhi attempted to balance its strategic and economic ties with the United States, Israel, and Gulf nations with its historic relationship with Tehran. Prior to the conflict, India deepened its ties with Israel, which observers argue limited its leverage to dissuade US-Israeli military action.

Prioritising Citizens and Expatriates: India focused heavily on safeguarding the roughly 10 million Indian expatriates working across the Persian Gulf, advocating generally for dialogue, diplomacy, and de-escalation to ensure civilian safety.

Protecting Interests over Intervention: India's primary diplomatic actions were inward-looking, focusing on evacuating citizens and mitigating global supply chain impacts.

Thus, in the view of such critics, India chose a path of deliberate diplomatic silence, opting not to intervene or actively mediate to stop the US-Israel war against Iran.

The opposite viewpoint

Conversely, defenders of the Indian government's policy argue that attempting to block the war would have been a reckless miscalculation for several reasons, such as:

Lack of Direct Leverage: Realists point out that India is a middle-tier superpower that simply lacked the military or financial muscle to alter the strategic objectives of the United States or Israel.

Securing Energy and Shipping Passages: India managed to successfully protect its economic lifeline. Through quiet, transactional diplomacy, New Delhi negotiated with Tehran to ensure that Indian-flagged commercial vessels were given safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz. India also secured temporary US sanctions waivers to offload pre-existing Iranian oil shipments and ramp up alternative imports from Russia.

Protecting Essential Western Ties: India's long-term economic growth depends heavily on Western technology, investment, and defence co-development, such as the joint Barak-8 missile defence system developed with Israel. Straining ties with Washington or Tel Aviv to defend Tehran was viewed as fundamentally contrary to India's national self-interest.

Where lies the truth?

India had no meaningful leverage to stop the US and Israel from carrying out the attacks against Iran. At the same time, having previously yielded to American sanctions by halting Iranian oil imports and distancing itself from traditional non-aligned stances, India found itself with very little direct diplomatic influence over the Iranian leadership. Furthermore, as a nation heavily dependent on Gulf energy supplies and home to a massive expatriate population, India's primary concern was managing the domestic fallout of the war rather than mediating the core dispute. While the Indian leadership sought to preserve diplomatic ties with all sides, its foreign policy ultimately deferred to American strategic priorities. Consequently, it lacked the unilateral influence needed to force a halt to hostilities.

While proactive backchannel diplomacy or mediation efforts could have theoretically fostered dialogue, India's broader strategic trajectory favoured non-interference over risking its foundational alliances in the region. Thus, rather than acting as a mediator, India's approach centred on quiet diplomacy, travel advisories for its citizens, and economic adjustments to weather the global fallout of the crisis.

Conclusion

Ultimately, India's approach to the US-Israel war against Iran is based on realism. While some critics argue that India's response was subdued and signifies a departure from its traditional non-aligned values, this perspective overlooks the realities of modern statecraft. India sought to protect its energy supply lines and prioritise the welfare of its people. Thus, India's policy is a deliberate diplomatic strategy designed to manage a severe strategic crisis without sacrificing national interests.

In conclusion, India's policy regarding the US-Israel war against Iran is both structurally sound and intensely practical. By anchoring its response in safeguarding energy supply lines, protecting millions of citizens in the Gulf, and preserving invaluable partnerships, New Delhi has successfully insulated its domestic economy from catastrophic blowback. In a fragmented global order, India's calculated silence is not an index of indecision, but a deliberate, highly effective strategy to protect its national interests amid the flames of regional conflict.

# Why India needs a new FCRA law



The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) has long been one of India's most debated legislative frameworks, sitting at the delicate intersection of state sovereignty and civil society. Enacted originally in 1976 and overhauled in 2010, the law dictates how non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and individuals can receive and utilise foreign funding. However, the introduction of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, has ignited a fierce new wave of controversy. While critics argue the new provisions are draconian tools designed to suffocate grassroots activism and minority institutions, the government—backed by historical data and judicial precedent—maintains that stringent oversight is an absolute necessity to protect national security and ensure democratic accountability.

At the heart of the uproar over the 2026 Amendment Bill is the proposed creation of a "designated authority". Under the new provisions, if an organisation's FCRA registration is cancelled, surrendered, or simply "ceases" (meaning it fails to renew the certificate before its five-year validity expires), the government can provisionally vest, manage, and even dispose of the organisation's assets created from foreign contributions.

The controversy stems from the sheer finality and scope of this power. Legal experts and civil rights advocates point out that the deprivation of assets can now occur due to mere procedural infirmities, such as a delayed renewal application. The law allows the authority to acquire even those assets that were only partly funded by foreign donations, transferring the proceeds to the Consolidated Fund of India. Also, the bill has been criticised for lacking a built-in administrative appeal mechanism, meaning an organisation may not get an opportunity to be heard before its renewal is denied.

Minority institutions have been particularly vocal about their anxieties. Bodies like the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC) have expressed deep concern that hospitals, schools, and charitable trusts could face confiscation of their assets due to administrative hurdles. Although the government has officially clarified that places of worship will retain their religious character by law and that confiscation is subject to judicial review, the fear of systemic weaponisation remains high among civil society.

The 2026 bill must be viewed alongside the strict restrictive amendments passed in 2020. The 2020 overhaul introduced devastating operational constraints on the non-profit sector. It explicitly banned NGOs from sub-granting foreign funds to smaller, grassroots organisations. Because smaller NGOs often lack the administrative capacity to secure their own FCRA clearances, they historically relied on larger umbrella organisations to disburse funds. The sub-granting ban effectively severed the financial lifelines of thousands of community-level workers.

Additionally, the 2020 amendments slashed the cap on foreign funds that could be used for administrative expenses from 50 per cent to 20 per cent. This redefinition meant that advocacy, research, and organisational salaries were severely underfunded, forcing many NGOs to scale back operations or shut down entirely. International watchdogs, including Amnesty International and United Nations human rights mechanisms, have criticised these cumulative rules as a violation of the right to freedom of association, arguing they deliberately penalise organisations that engage in peaceful dissent or independent human rights work.

But the government's push for a tighter FCRA framework is not occurring in a vacuum. It is driven by a stark historical record of financial opacity and misuse. The core philosophy of the FCRA is that foreign funds should not be allowed to materially influence India's socio-economic structure, public order, or political landscape without rigorous, transparent oversight.

The data presented by the government highlights a massive influx of foreign money coupled with widespread non-compliance. Between 2010 and 2019, the inflow of foreign donations into India nearly doubled. Concurrently, intelligence reports presented to the Supreme Court indicated that a concerning portion of these funds was being diverted from their stated charitable purposes to fund activities detrimental to national security, including support for Naxalite extremism.

During this same decade, the licenses of approximately 19,000 NGOs were cancelled. While critics frame this mass cancellation as a targeted purge, the government's data reveals that a vast majority of these revocations were due to glaring administrative and legal failures: NGOs repeatedly failed to file mandatory annual returns, failed to maintain designated bank accounts, or could not account for how millions of dollars were being spent. For any sovereign nation, allowing billions of unaccounted foreign dollars to circulate within its borders is a severe security vulnerability. The legal foundation for the government's stance was firmly validated by the Supreme Court of India in the landmark 2021 Noel Harper v. Union of India judgement.


**TRUHOME FINANCE LIMITED** (Formerly Shriram Housing Finance Ltd.)

**Head Office:** Level -3, Wockhardt Towers, East Wing C-2, G Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai 400 051;
**Tel:** 1800 102 4345 ; **Website:** http://www. truhomefinance.in
**Reg.Off.:** Srinivasa Tower, 1st Floor, Door No.5, Old No.11, 2nd Lane, Cenatoph Road, Alwarpet, Teynampet, Chennai-600018

**PRIVATE TREATY SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

**A Sale Notice is given for Sale of Immovable Asset through Private Treaty under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (54 of 2002).**

**Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/s and Guarantor/s and mortgagor/s that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/ charged to The Truhome Finance Limited(Earlier known as Shriram Housing Finance Limited), The Physical possession of which have been taken by the Authorized Officer of The Truhome Finance Limited(Earlier known as Shriram Housing Finance Limited). Earlier company had issued the sale notice on 29.05.2026 & 02.04.2026 and thereby fixed the e-auction of subject property in question on 30.06.2026 & 06.05.2026. However, the said auction scheduled on 30.06.2026 & 06.05.2026 remained failed due to want of bid. Now person have shown interest in purchasing the schedule mortgaged property. As the schedule mortgaged property could not be sold through e-auction earlier, The Truhome Finance Limited has decided to mortgage property will be sold through Private Treaty on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of balance outstanding amount due to The Truhome Finance Limited(Earlier known as Shriram Housing Finance Limited), from the Borrowers And Guarantors, as mentioned in the table.**

**The notice is being given to the Borrower/s, Guarantor/s and Mortgagor (s) that the aforesaid secured asset shall be sold after 15 day's for the date of the notice on such terms and conditions as mutually agreed between The Truhome Finance Limited and intended purchase.**

| Name of Borrowers/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/Mortgagers | Amount of Recovery and date of Demand Notice | Reserve Price (Rs.) & EMD Amount | Contact Person Details – (AO and Disposal team) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1) KAILA DARSHAN DALSUKHBHAI**<br>**2) KAILA MALATIBEN DARSHAN**<br>**Present Address:- 201 VAIBHAV HOME, UMIYA NAGAR 2, NR RAMSETU GHUNDA ROAD RAVAPAR, MORBI, Gujarat-363641**<br>**Permanent Address:- Nava Ghantila, Maliya Highway, Morbi – 363330.**<br>**Office Address:- Maruti Consultants (Account Officer) 427 – 4'th Floor, Patel Shopping centre, Nr. Super Market, Sanala Road, Morbi – 363641.**<br>**Property Address:- Plot no. 133p Dharm Ganga Soc.,Nr. Silver Soc.,Nr. Shakti nagar, BH. ITI, Opp. Sarvopari School,off. Pipli Road, Morbi.**<br>**LAN - SHLHMRBI0000066**<br>**Date of Possession & Type** 19-03-2026 & Physical Possession<br>**Encumbranches known** Not known | 13(2) Notice date 14.11.2025<br>---<br>Rs. 997140/-(Rs. Nine Lakh Ninety seven thousand one hundred forty only) as on dated. 07/11/2025 under reference of Loan Account No. SHLHMRBI0000066. | **Reserve Price.** Rs. 5,50,000/- (Rs. Five lakh fifty thousand )<br>**EMD Amount.** Rs.55,000/- (Rs. Fifty five thousand only)<br>**Date of Property shall be sold to the proposed purchaser by Private Treaty**<br>22 August 2026 | **Mehul Parmar 8490964364**<br>**Debjyoti Roy- 09747 02021** |

**Description of Property**

All the pieces and parcels situated at Morbi, Taluka village – Pipli R.S.No. 299/3 paiki 1 and R.S. No. 299/3 P/2 N.A. Plot no. 133 p Middle side Open land adm. 42-83sq. mtr. In built block with GF built up area 31-12 sq.mtr. and FF built up area 15-43 sq.mtr. total built up area 47-65 sq. mtr. Of Dist. Morbi, Pin Code No.363641 the said property is bounder asunder. Boundaries of the said Property East : N.A. Road and main Door, West : This N.A. Plot No. 133 p land North : This N.A. Plot No. 133 p land South : This N.A. Plot No. 133 p land,

| Name of Borrowers/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/Mortgagers | Amount of Recovery and date of Demand Notice | Reserve Price (Rs.) & EMD Amount | Contact Person Details – (AO and Disposal team) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1) PANARA HARDIKKUMAR RUGNATHABHAI.**<br>**2) PANARA SAROJBEN RUGNATHABHAI.**<br>**Present Address:- Shyampark 2,Halvad Road, Pipli Morbi – 363642.**<br>**Permanent Address: Sivnager, Panchar, Morbi – 363641.**<br>**Business Address: Dhyana Refrigerator. Shyampark 2, Opp. Uma Residency, Halvad Road, Morbi – 363642.**<br>**Property Address: Ground Floor shop no.1, Opp. Maruti Food Zone, Off. Ghuntu Road, At –Pipli, Dist. – Morbi.**<br>**LAN - SLPHMRBI0000423**<br>**Date of Possession & Type** 19-03-2026 & Physical Possession<br>**Encumbranches known** Not known | 13(2) Notice date 10.10.2025<br>---<br>Rs. 1127174/ (Rs. Eleven Lakh Twenty Seven Thousand one hundred seventy four only) as on dated. 08/10/2025 under reference of Loan Account No. SLPHMRBI0000423.. | **Reserve Price.** Rs. 5,50,000/- (Rs. Five lakh fifty thousand )<br>**EMD Amount.** Rs.55,000/- (Rs. Fifty five thousand only)<br>**Date of Property shall be sold to the proposed purchaser by Private Treaty**<br>22 August 2026 | **Mehul Parmar 8490964364**<br>**Debjyoti Roy- 09747 02021** |

**Description of Property**

All the pieces and parcels situated Dist. Morbi, At- Morbi, Taluka Village Pipli RS No.291/2 P 3 P 1, N.A. Plot no. 16 p Open land adm.112-36 sq.mtr. in built GF Shop no. 1, with built up area 22 18 sq.mtr. ( without Terrace Rights ) it's N.A. known as "shyam Park – 2, of Dist. Morbi, the said property is bounded as under Boundaries of the said property :- East : Shop No.2 West : Land of S.N. no. 291/2 P North : Land of plot no. 16 P South : N.A. Road and shutter .,

1) **For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer the website of Truhome Finance Limited (Formerly Shriram Housing Finance Limited) website.**
2) **The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of sub- section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.**
3) **The intending bidders have to submit amount to be deposited by way of RTGS/NEFT to the account details mentioned herein below: BANK NAME: AXIS BANK LIMITED BRANCH: BANDRA KURLA COMPLEX, MUMBAI BANK ACCOUNT NO. Current Account No. 911020045677633 IFSC CODE: UTIB0000230.**

Place : Morbi
Date : 26-03-2026

Sd/- Authorised Officer- Truhome Finance Limited
(Formerly Shriram Housing Finance Limited)