INDIA TIGHTENS GRIP

-n the boundless skies of the digital world, where voices rise and swirl like the winds, India has drawn La firm line-an act of vigilance, a shield for truth. In a decisive move, the Indian government has imposed a major curb on Pakistani YouTube channels, accusing them of spreading propaganda, false narratives, and misinformation designed to destabilize peace and public harmony.

With the precision of a master archer, India's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting targeted a web of Pakistani channels that had been sowing seeds of distrust among Indian audiences. These channels, often posing as neutral news outlets or social commentators, were reportedly engaged in spreading fake news related to Indian military operations, Kashmir affairs, and communal issues-attempts, perhaps, to light sparks in a land striving for unity.

Over 50 YouTube channels have been either blocked or heavily restricted within Indian cyberspace under emer-

This action, taken under the Information Technology Rules, 2021, showcases India's commitment to defending its digital sovereignty

The channels, according to official reports, had amassed millions of unsuspecting viewers, weaving narratives that were not only misleading but at times dangerously provocative.

Officials stated that many of these platforms were orchestrated with clear coordination-using similar logos, voiceovers, content formats, and even synchronized posting schedules.

It was not a mere coincidence; it was a deliberate dig-

By curbing their reach, India has signaled: freedom of expression is sacred, but manipulation and deceit will not be tolerated.

This move also shines a spotlight on the changing battlefield of modern conflicts-where wars are waged not only with guns and tanks, but with pixels, rumors, and emotional triggers.

In this new era, information is ammunition, and protecting the minds of citizens is as vital as guarding the borders.

But the government has not acted in isolation. Indian fact-checking agencies, cybersecurity experts, and alert citizens had raised the red flag over these toxic streams of content.

Together, they formed an invisible yet unbreakable chain of digital defense, proving once again that democracy's strength lies in an aware and vigilant populace.

Meanwhile, Pakistani authorities have criticized the move, labeling it an attack on freedom of speech. Yet India stands firm, stating that the ban is not about silencing dissent but preserving the truth and safeguarding national integrity.

Experts predict that more robust actions could follow. Monitoring mechanisms are being tightened. AI-based detection systems are being enhanced.

India's vision is clear: a digital Bharat where freedom blooms but fakehoods find no fertile ground.

Waqf Amendment Act 2025: A Boon for Muslim Community

■ DR. GANESH MALHOTRA

he Waqf Amendment Act, 2025 marks a historic and progressive step in India's legislative journey towards modernizing the administration and governance of waqf properties. It brings clarity, transparency, and renewed purpose to an institution deeply rooted in Islamic charitable traditions while aligning it with contemporary constitutional values of justice, equality, and good governance.

Far from being detrimental, the 2025 amendments are a boon for the Muslim community, ensuring better protection, management, and utilization of waqf assets, which are crucial for uplifting marginalized Muslims and empowering social welfare initiatives.

Understanding the Waqf System

Waqf, in Islamic law, represents the permanent dedication of movable or immovable property for religious, pious, or charitable purposes. This noble institution ensures that wealth and assets serve not just individual interests but continue to benefit society over generations. In India, the Waqf Act of 1995 created the legal framework for the management of these endowments, establishing the Central Waqf Council (CWC) and State Waqf Boards (SWBs) for oversight.

The effective management of waqf properties can act as a strong catalyst for the socioeconomic development of the Muslim community, especially the underprivileged sections. However, over the decades, inefficiencies, mismanagement, political interference, and administrative hurdles have prevented waqf assets from realizing their full potential. Persistent Challenges in the Waqf Sector

Despite the legal framework, the waqf sector has suffered from:

Rampant Encroachments: A large portion of waqf land has been illegally occupied by private entities and even state authorities.

Poor Record Management: Lack of digitized, updated inventories has led to confusion

and fraud. Political Interference: State boards have often been marred by political appointments

Limited Financial Autonomy of Mutawallis: Waqf managers often lack resources and independence

Judicial Delays: Waqf-related disputes languish for years, reducing the utility of these properties.

Recognizing these persistent problems, the Waqf Amendment Act, 2025, introduces comprehensive reforms to make Waqf institutions more robust, transparent, and community-oriented.

It is important to reiterate a crucial legal principle: while waqf itself is a religious concept, the administration of waqf properties is

In Tilkayat Shri Govindaji Maharaj vs. State of Rajasthan (1964), the Supreme Court of India ruled that managing religious property is a secular matter. Similarly, in Syed Fazal Pookaya Thangal vs. Union of India (1993), the Kerala High Court affirmed that Wagf Boards are statutory bodies created for administrative purposes, not religious representative bodies.

Thus, modernizing the administration of wagf properties does not infringe on religious practices but rather strengthens the very spirt of Islamic charity.

Key Provisions of the Waqf Amendment Act, 2025

1. Inclusion of Non-Muslim Members in Waqf Institutions

Sections 9(2) and 14(1) of the Act now mandate the inclusion of two non-Muslim members each in the Central Waqf Council (CWC) and State Waqf Boards (SWBs).

This inclusion aims at: Bringing professional expertise in property management, auditing, and administration. Enhancing efficiency and reducing possibilities of corruption. Ensuring broader accountability in Waqf administration.

Historically, the Sachar Committee and Rangnath Misra Commission, both chaired by non-Muslims, made landmark recommenda tions for Muslim welfare. Similarly, Islamic jurisprudence allows non-Muslims to serve as mutawallis, given the secular nature of property management, as affirmed by the Allahabad High Court in Hafiz Mohamed Zafar Ahmed vs. U.P. Central Sunni Waqf Board (1965).

Thus, fears that non-Muslim inclusion would undermine waqf institutions are misplaced.

2. Removal of 'Waqf by User' and Mandatory Written Waqf Deeds

The concept of 'Waqf by User' — where mere usage could establish waqf status — has been abolished. Now, a written waqf deed is mandatory for any new waof declaration.

Benefits of this move: Prevents arbitrary claims over public or private property. Brings clarity to property titles. Protects existing registered waqf properties, including mosques, madrasas, and graveyards. Islam itself emphasizes documentation. As

mentioned in Surah Baqarah, commitments, especially financial transactions, should be recorded in writing — reinforcing the legitimacy of this requirement.

3. Restriction on Who Can Declare Waqf The 2025 Amendment clarifies that only a

practicing Muslim can dedicate a property as

This correction reinstates the original position prior to the 2013 amendment that ambiguously allowed 'any person' to create

It ensures that: Waqf dedications remain authentic and rooted in Islamic values. No misuse or contrivance occurs under false pre-

Moreover, the amendment safeguards women's and children's rights in cases of Waqf-Alal-Aulad (family waqf), ensuring that widows, orphans, and divorcees are prioritized beneficiaries.

4. Penalties for Mismanagement by Mutawallis

A new provision, Section 61(1A), imposes stricter penalties, including fines and imprisonment, for mutawallis who fail to maintain accounts or comply with lawful directives.

This is necessary because: Many mutawallis have failed to submit balance sheets for years. Despite managing crores worth of assets, waqf revenues are shockingly low.

Efficient administration could generate over Rs 12,000 crore annually, compared to the meager Rs 166 crore currently.

Thus, stricter laws against mismanagement directly help the Muslim community by enhancing the resource base for welfare activ-

5. Transfer of Waqf Survey Authority to District Collectors

The responsibility for waqf surveys, previously with the Survey Commissioner, has now been transferred to the District Collector.

Reasons: Collectors are custodians of land records. They possess better resources and expertise to verify property ownership. In case of disputes, a higher officer (Designated Officer) will conduct independent inquiries to ensure fairness. This shift enhances efficiency without compromising community interests.

6. Provision for Separate Waqf Boards for Bohras and Aghakhanis

Section 13(2A) allows the establishment of separate waqf boards for Bohras and Aghakhanis, based on necessity and scale of properties.

Advantages: Greater representation of all sects within the Muslim community. Ensures democratization and inclusivity in waqf governance. Aligns waqf boards with ground realities of diverse practices and traditions within Islam. This provision fosters social justice rather than creating division. 7. Deletion of Section 40: Safeguarding

Property Rights Section 40, which allowed Waqf Boards to

declare properties as waqf without proof, has been deleted.

Impact: Protects property rights under Article 300-A of the Constitution. Reduces social unrest and inter-community conflicts. Upholds natural justice by ensuring due

Incidents like the waqf claims over ASIprotected monuments and private lands in Telangana and Tamil Nadu had generated unnecessary tensions.

The deletion of this clause promotes peace and harmony among communities.

8. Appeals to High Court Against Waqf Tribunal Decisions

Previously, Waqf Tribunal decisions were final. Now, parties aggrieved by tribunal orders can appeal to the High Court.

Benefits: Strengthens access to justice; Upholds constitutional rights under Articles 32 and 2261 Reduces backlogs by involving superior judicial forums; Tribunal backlogs have surged from 10,000 cases (2013) to 32,000 cases (2024) — a clear indication that reforms were urgently needed.

9. Centralization of Rulemaking Powers

The amendment grants certain rule-making powers to the Central Government but retains key authorities with the states.

Clarifications: States still appoint Waqf Board members, CEOs, and manage budgets. The Centre oversees secular activities, ensuring uniformity and transparency across states. This structure promotes balanced federalism without disempowering states. Thus, the fears of centralization adversely impacting the Muslim community are unfounded.

Conclusion

The Waqf Amendment Act, 2025 is not just a set of administrative changes — it is a landmark reform that:

Protects wagf properties from misuse and encroachments.

Empowers the Muslim community by ensuring better management of waqf assets. Promotes inclusivity and transparency, making waqf institutions stronger and more democratic

Resolves long-standing disputes and litigation.

Aligns waqf administration with constitutional principles of justice, fairness, and secular governance. Far from weakening waqf institutions, the

amendments strengthen them, allowing the Muslim community to reclaim its rightful stewardship over its charitable assets with dignity, legality, and modern efficiency. By modernizing waqf governance, the Act

ensures that waqf properties continue to fulfill their intended purpose — supporting the poor, empowering the marginalized, and serving the spiritual and social aspirations of the community — well into the 21st cen-(The writer is an eminent columnist and

expert on geopolitics)

he Man with Golden

DR. PARVEEN KUMAR

ll of us are familiar a childhood story, 'The Hen that Laid Golden Eggs'. It is the story of a farmer who had a Hen that laid a golden egg every day. The farmer presumed that the Hen must contain a huge amount of gold in it inside in the shape of eggs and a novel but wicked idea crept in his mind. He thought of getting that gold immediately at once instead of getting it in installments by waiting daily for the hen to lay the golden egg. Out of greed, he made a fatal mistake. He killed his hen only to lose the source of treasure as well as an opportunity to become wealthier. Although the story is an imagination, yet during our childhood when most of us listened to or read this story; we assumed it to be a true one. During course of time, I realized that it is simply not possible and the story is just a cautionary tale with a moral that being greedy can lead to the loss of what we have and can even bring about misery.

The story emphasizes the importance of appreciating what we have and not being consumed by the desire for more.

As years passed on until a few months back, I found a farmer who gets eggs that are not of gold, but are no less than gold for him. It happened when during one of my field visit to a village in district Ramban, I got an opportunity to meet Abdul Waheed; a progressive farmer from village Kabbi in Kabbi Panchayat falling in block Gandhri of district Ramban. The district is a rain fed one wherein cultivation of different crops is dependent upon timely and adequate availability of rainfall. The average size of holdings in the district is very less. More than 90 percent of the farming community falls in marginal and small category with land less than 2 hectares. I sought to know more about how in such a water scarce region, different crops are being cultivated and what is major source of livelihood here for the villagers? As I started conversing and observing, I learnt

that Poultry is an important allied activity and a diversification strategy for the farming community of this region.

Owing to the success of poultry farming for Abdul Waheed, it will not be wrong to say that he is a man with golden eggs. Poultry farming is giving good returns to Mr. Waheed. He raises broilers as well as chicks for meat as well as egg purpose. He is getting a handsome income from broilers which he rears only for meat purpose. Broilers are purchased by him @ rupees 50-55 per bird, these birds attain a weight of about two kilogram after two months and are than sold at the rate of rupees 130 per kilogram. Abdul Waheed further told that 1000 no. of broilers easily give him an additional income of rupees one lakh per vear after deducting the cost incurred on their feed and other miscellaneous expenses related to their rearing. Among the different breed of Hens which he usually rears for eggs are Black Australorp, Rhode Island Red

(RIR) and Sonali which have good egg lying capacity and some of them can lay can lay as much as 240-250 eggs in a vear. At present, he is also taking 50-60 eggs daily. Each egg is sold at the rate of rupees ten which fetches him an additional income of rupees 500-600 daily and 15000-18000 per month. He also does not face any issue in marketing of eggs as all the eggs are sold in local market within no time. Even peoples personally visit Abdul Waheed to

A few days back cloudburst had struck the district leading to a large scale devastation of life and property. Almost entire fruit crops of Apricot, Peach and Walnut became the causality as fast blowing winds along with hailstorms resulted in fruit drop and in some cases uprooted away the fruit plants. Vegetables were uprooted and heavy rains destroyed the standing wheat and other crops. It was only Poultry which came to rescue of poultry farmers like Abdul Waheed. Eggs and broilers ensured that he has a source of income other than crops on which majority of the farming community of the region depends. Also, the crops only give an income only once after they are harvested during their entire life cycle. But eggs are a regular source of income for Abdul Waheed giving him at least some amount on daily basis without much investment. Poultry farming in the country has

emerged as a very profitable business. While the production of agricultural crops has been rising at a rate of 1.5 to 2 percent per annum, but that of eggs and broilers has been rising at a rate of 8 to 10 percent per annum. As per a result, India is now the world's fifth largest egg producer and eighteenth largest producer of broilers. The small scale poultry farming is the widespread animal production system in India. Poultry farming has tremendous potential and is considered as one of most potential diversification strategy to augment the income and nutrition of

small and marginal farmers. The sector can help achieve country nutritional security for all. It is also true that Poultry business requires proper planning and management. For this different government agencies need to reach out to poultry farmers like Abdul Waheed residing in different nooks and corners of the country. They must be equipped with all the relevant skills, their knowledge should be updated and they should be provided with the necessary hand holding in form of market. ing, credit and insurance services.

To conclude, innovative farmers like Abdul Waheed are torch bearers for the entire farming community of the region. He has proved that eggs although not of gold; are no less than gold for him. These eggs are his valuable asset which at times becomes a main source of livelihood for him enabling him to fulfill his various domestic as well as social needs.

(The author writes on agriculture and social issues)

duty beyond octors'

MOHAMMAD HANIEF

n a world where professions are often defined by working hours, deliver-_ables, and measurable outcomes, the medical profession stands apart. A doctor's duty is not confined to clinic hours, hospital shifts, or appointment schedules. It stretches far beyond the call into the realm of compassion, sacrifice, and a sense of responsibility toward humanity that few other professions

demand. The Hippocratic Oath, taken by physicians, is more than ceremonial. It is a commitment to the service of life and the welfare of patients. While society may view doctors as healthcare providers, those within the profession know that being a doctor is a lifelong vocation, not just a job. This calling often manifests itself most clearly when doctors go beyond what's expected—working in war zones, responding to pandemics, or tending to underserved communities without

expectation of recognition or reward. Doctors do not "clock out" at 5 p.m. Emergencies don't keep office hours, and illnesses don't take weekends off. Many physicians are on call 24/7, and even when they are off duty, they may find themselves offering advice to a worried neighbour, treating someone in distress on an airplane, or volunteering in crisis situations. These acts, often unreported, highlight the true essence of the medical

profession: service beyond duty. Perhaps nothing in recent memory has highlighted the sacrifice of doctors more was moral and humanitarian obligation,

than the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the globe, healthcare workers stood on the front lines, risking their own health, staying away from families, and working gruelling hours in overloaded hospitals. Many paid the ultimate price—losing their lives while trying to save others. These doctors didn't do this for fame, money, or applause. They did it because the calling of their profession demanded

In many cases, retired doctors returned to service, students volunteered in hospitals before completing their degrees, and medical personnel travelled across countries to offer help in highinfection zones. This was not duty as defined by contracts or pay checks—this

deeply embedded in the identity of those who choose to become healers Beyond bustling city hospitals and spe-

cialized private clinics, countless doctors serve in rural, impoverished, and often forgotten parts of the world. These doctors frequently work in environments lacking even the most basic medical infrastructure—no electricity, insufficient equipment, and a dire shortage of staff.

Yet, they remain. Some travel hundreds of kilometres every week to offer care to tribal populations. Others organize medical camps where patients have never before seen a doctor. These physicians not only treat illness but also offer education, hygiene awareness, mental

health support, and emotional reassurance to communities neglected by mainstream healthcare systems.

Their work rarely makes headlines, but it profoundly transforms lives. These unsung heroes remind us that medicine is not merely about science—it is about service, equity, and compassion.

The emotional demands placed on doctors are tremendous. Witnessing pain, suffering, and loss day after day takes a toll that cannot be quantified. While they are trained to maintain professional detachment, they are still human. They grieve when they lose patients. They carry the burden of difficult diagnoses. They lie awake at night questioning decisions and wondering if they could have done more.

Yet, in spite of this emotional weight, doctors continue to show up. They offer words of comfort to grieving families, find the strength to smile at frightened children, and reassure anxious patients even when they themselves are tired or overwhelmed. It is in these momentsquiet, unseen, and deeply human—that doctors demonstrate a duty beyond anything written in a job description.

Doctors also go beyond the call of duty by stepping into roles as public health advocates, medical educators, and innovators. Many work tirelessly to raise awareness about preventable diseases, mental health, nutrition, and sanitation. Their advocacy helps change public policy, improve health infrastructure, and fight systemic inequities in healthcare

Others teach the next generation of doctors, often mentoring students without compensation, simply because they believe in nurturing future healers. Still others pursue research that can take years to yield results, driven not by personal gain but by the hope that their

work will one day save lives. The development of vaccines, surgical techniques, and lifesaving drugs has been made possible by doctors and medical scientists who dedicate themselves to tireless research—often enduring failure, skepticism, and personal sacrifice along the way. These contributions may not be visible at the bedside, but they ripple out to affect the lives of millions.

In times of humanitarian crisis—natural disasters, wars, epidemics—doctors are often among the first to respond. Organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), the Red Cross, and countless local NGOs operate because of doctors willing to serve in high-risk zones, often without adequate protection or compensation.

They perform surgeries in tents, deliver babies in refugee camps, and treat injuries amidst the rubble of collapsed buildings. They are witnesses to the worst of human suffering—and yet they carry on, driven by the simple but profound belief that every life is worth sav-

These doctors embody the highest

ideals of their profession, serving as moral compasses in a world often over-

whelmed by chaos. As a society, we owe a great debt to our doctors—not just for their clinical skills, but for their humanity. But gratitude must go beyond applause during crises. It should translate into policies that protect their well-being, fair compensation, mental health support, and respect for their time and efforts.

We must recognize the psychological toll that burnout takes, especially in underfunded public health systems. We must ensure that doctors are not forced to choose between ethics and bureaucracy. And we must remind ourselves that behind every white coat is a person someone who has chosen to spend their life in service of others.

The true duty of a doctor lies not only in treating disease but in caring for life itself. Their responsibility does not end when the shift does; it extends into how they engage with the world, respond to crises, and uphold the values of empathy, dedication, and moral courage.

Doctors serve as bridges between science and humanity. Their duty beyond the call is not just about what they dobut who they are. In a world often divided by barriers of race, class, and belief, doctors stand united by a singular goal: to heal, to help, and to hold hope.

And that is a duty that deserves not just admiration, but deep and enduring respect.