Call For Urgent Action

The recent spell of incessant rains, cloudbursts, and flash floods across Jammu and Kashmir has left a trail of devastation in its wake. With lives lost, homes washed away, roads destroyed, and livelihoods severely affected, the disaster demands not only compassion but also swift, coordinated, and intensified relief efforts from both the Union and UT governments.

The damage caused across Jammu, Samba, Udhampur, Reasi, Kathua, and other districts is unprecedented. Villages like Chashoti and Margee in the Warwan region have been worst hit, with hundreds of families displaced and basic infrastructure completely shattered. While the initial response-particularly by the Union Government, Army, CAPFs, and the LG administration-has been prompt, it is clear that more needs to be done, urgently

Relief efforts must go beyond symbolic visits and press briefings. What is needed now is a full-scale, ground-level mobilization of resources. Clean drinking water, food medical assistance, and temporary shelter are immediate necessities. The risk of disease outbreaks due to waterlogging and contamination is high, and medical camps must be set up across affected areas without delay.

The Rs 209 crore already released to the UT Disaster Response Fund (UT-DRF) is a step in the right direction, but transparent and effective utilization of these funds is crucial. Regular audits and real-time updates should be made available to the public to ensure accountability and

Equally important is the rehabilitation of affected families. Announcements of financial aid are welcome, but must be backed by speedy disbursal and ground verification to avoid bureaucratic delays. The promise of Rs 35.5 crore contributed by BJP MLAs and MPs must be translated into visible action-be it rebuilding homes, restoring roads, or assisting farmers who've lost their crops and cat-

The call by the Union Home Minister to other states for support is commendable and highlights the spirit of cooperative federalism. However, coordination between the UT government and central agencies must improve. Relief drives should not be politicized; they should reflect unity and the shared responsibility of safeguarding human lives.

The tragedy has shown once again the urgent need for disaster preparedness, especially in J&K. Long-term planning, early warning systems, and infrastructure resilience must become policy priorities.

In this hour of crisis, what matters most is empathy backed by action. The people of flood-affected regions deserve not just our sympathy but our sustained support. The time to intensify the relief drive is now-with urgency, efficiency, and above all, humanity.

# India's bold leap: A Space Station by 2035

### MOHAMMAD HANIEF



-ndia has set an ambitious course for its I future in space with the announcement that it will establish its own space station by 2035. The proposed BharatiyaAntariksh Station (BAS) marks a

decisive step in the country's long journey from modest satellite launches to becoming a recognised global space power. It reflects both confidence in the capabilities of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the broader vision of a nation determined to expand its presence beyond Earth.

The story of India's space programme is one of gradual but consistent progress. Beginning with the launch of Aryabhata in 1975, ISRO has built its reputation on cost-effective innovation and technical reliability. Over the decades, India has moved from experimental satellites to ambitious planetary missions. The Mars Orbiter Mission, Mangalyaan, placed India in an elite group of nations capable of interplanetary exploration, while the Chandrayaan-3 landing on the lunar south pole in 2023 was a watershed moment, earning India international acclaim. More recently, ISRO successfully demonstrated satellite docking technology, a crucial precursor to the assembly and maintenance of an orbital station. These achievements, layered upon one another, have given India the confidence to aim for a permanent human presence in

The establishment of a space station holds significance far beyond symbolism. A permanent orbital platform offers vast opportunities for research in microgravity, with applications in medicine, biology, physics, and advanced materials. For a country with aspirations of becoming a knowledge-driven economy, such research is invaluable. Beyond science, the space station will also strengthen India's strategic autonomy. Today, only the International Space Station and China's Tiangong provide such platforms. By building its own, India will no longer depend on others for human spaceflight or orbital research.



The decision also reflects a recognition of the growing space economy, projected to exceed one trillion dollars by 2040, where India seeks a meaningful stake.

The Bharatiya Antariksh Station is expected to take shape gradually. Designed as a modular platform, it will initially be launched in segments and later expanded to its full capacity by 2035. The first module is targeted for deployment by 2028. Once complete, the station will be able to host three to four astronauts at a time for extended periods. Importantly, it will build on the experience of the Gaganyaan mission, scheduled for the latter part of this decade, which will carry Indian astronauts into low Earth orbit for the first time. Gaganyaan will validate life-support systems, safety protocols, and recovery operations-critical elements that will later define the long-duration missions aboard

The road ahead, however, is not without for-

midable challenges. Designing systems that can sustain human life in orbit for months at a time will test India's technological limits. Developing modular architecture, reliable docking systems, and effective radiation shielding will require sustained innovation. Financially, the project demands long-term investment running into billions of dollars, even if India pursues a more economical model compared to the International Space Station. Beyond technology and funding, the challenge of human resource development is equally pressing. Astronaut training facilities. mission simulation centres, and a larger pool of space scientists and engineers must be developed in tandem with the hardware.

There is also the wider international context. By the 2030s, China's Tiangong station is expected to be fully operational and possibly expanded, while the United States and private players are working on commercial stations. India's success with BAS will depend

not only on its ability to execute the project but also on how effectively it positions itself within this competitive environment. Sustaining public and political support will also be crucial, particularly as questions may arise about spending priorities in a developing country. Communicating the practical benefits of the station-ranging from scientific breakthroughs to technological spin-offs-will help secure that support.

India's growing private space sector could play a vital role in the success of the project. Startups working on launch vehicles, satellites, and space technologies are already contributing to the ecosystem. Their involvement in BAS could bring efficiency, innovation, and cost reductions, much like the role private companies have played in revitalising the American space programme. While the station is planned as an indigenous project, selective international cooperation remains a possibility, particularly in areas like scientific experiments and advanced technologies.

The vision for a space station is not an isolated one. India has also outlined its ambition to attempt a human mission to the Moon by 2040. The experience gained through BAS will serve as a crucial stepping stone, preparing astronauts for long-duration missions and building confidence for journeys beyond Earth's orbit. Just as the International Space Station served as a laboratory for future lunar and Martian missions, the BharatiyaAntariksh Station will lay the groundwork for India's deeper space ambi-

In many ways, the space station is more than just an engineering project. It is a symbol of how far India has come and where it intends to go. From launching rockets in makeshift facilities to planning a permanent home in orbit, the journey illustrates the country's growing confidence and determination. If realised, BAS will inspire future generations, nurture scientific talent, and stand as a testament to India's ability to dream big and translate vision into reality.

(The author is a senior analyst based in Kashmir)

## Combating

### DR. BANARSI LAL

oil pollution, a hidden environmental Scrisis, poses a serious threat to ecosystems, food security and human

Soil provides living space for the living organisms as well as the ecosystem services which are essential for the water regulation, biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration etc.

In fact, the soil is under tremendous pressure due to increase in population at an alarming rate and higher demand for food. Problems like deforestation, bad agricultural practices and soil pollution have degraded soil. It has been observed that around 33 per cent of global soils are

Soil is the top layer of the earth which is familiar to everybody. It is a finite natural resource. It is non-renewable in nature. Although soil plays an essential role in human livelihood but there is worldwide degradation in soil due its inappropriate management practices, populatio and inadequate governance over this essential resource. Soil is a critical component of the natural system and as a vital contributor to the human commonwealth through its contribution to food, water and energy security and as a mitigator of biodiversity loss and climate change. The nutritional value of the food we eat is directly associated with the soil health. Soil high in organic carbon content enables better rainfall infiltration and retention and provides greater resilience to drought. Soils are vulnerable to carbon loss through degradation but regenerative land management practices can build and restore soil health. Soil is constituted of organic remains, clay and rock particles found on the earth's surface. Soil helps in food production, biodiversity and energy maintenance. Soil health is being deteriorated by the unhealthy agricultural practices, deforestation and pollution. There is urgent need to create aware-

ness among the farmers on soil health and technical and scientific advice should be provided to them. The International Union of Soil Sciences in 2002 adopted a resolution proposing the 5th of December as World Soil Day to celebrate the importance of soil, a critical component of the natural system and as a vital contributor to the human well-being. It was firstly celebrated on December 5, 2012, which corresponds with the birthday of Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who officially sanctioned the

It is estimated that natural processes take more than 500 years to form 2 centimeters of topsoil. Soil stores around 10 per cent of the worlds carbon dioxide emissions. Microbial activities controls and manipulates the chemistry of the soil. Living organisms in the soil control water infiltration, mineral density and nutrient cycling. Fungi and bacteria help to break down organic matter in the soil and earthworms digest organic matter, recycle nutrients and make the soil surface richer. In a handful of fertile soil, there are more individual organisms than the total number of human beings that have ever existed on the earth. Although soil plays an essential role for the human livelihoods but there is worldwide increase in the degradation of soil resources due to inappropriate management practices, population pressure driving unsustainable intensification and inadequate governance over this essential resource. Healthy soil is the key to sustaining life and the adoption of sustainable land management practices are becoming more and more important. Increase in the soil carbon builds a precious reservoir and helps to offset greenhouse gas emissions. It also contributes in the fertility of the soil, the foundation for all land- based natural and agricultural ecosystems which provide a major part of the world's food supply, natural resources and biodiversity. More than 10 million people have abandoned their homelands because of environmental issues including drought, soil erosion, desertification and deforestation. Soil improves our resilience to floods and droughts. Majority of the known antibiotics originated from soil bacteria including penicillin.

The consequences of contaminated soils stretch far beyond the immediate areas of pollution, affecting biodiversity ,water quality and air purity. Soil pollution affects food security by reducing the crop yield and food quality. Healthy soils are needed to produce the healthy food and zero hunger. Soil holds three times as much carbon as the atmosphere and can help us to meet the challenges of a changing climate. About 815 million people are food insecure and 2 billion people are nutritionally insecure but we can mitigate this through soil. About 95 per cent of our food comes from soil and about 33 per cent of our soils are already degraded. Soil acts as the filter for many contaminants but its buffering capacity is finite. If the latter exceeds then contaminants can seep into the environment and enter in the food chain. Agriculture is a tool for poverty eradication. The government of India is making strenuous efforts not merely as a tool to feed the country but also as a means to uplift the socio-economic status of the farming community of the country. The government has initiated a number of developmental schemes and programmes which have the potential to immensely benefit the farming community by strengthening the roots of agriculture. On 19th February, 2015 the Prime Minister of India launched the nationwide Soil Health Card Scheme from Suratgarh, Rajasthan. So far more than 25 crore Soil Health Cards have been distributed to the farmers across the nation. Soil Health Card Scheme is a national movement across the country. The objective of the scheme is to enhance crops productivity through the judicious use of inputs ,especially fertilizers. Under this experts from the farmer's field and tested in a soil health laboratory. Then the soil health card is issued to the farmers regarding the ingredients and deficiencies in the soil. On the basis of the results of the soils of respective farmer field, he can add the plants nutrients in the soil accordingly. This scheme may not only maintain the health of the soil but will also reduce the cost of cultivation. This will also help to identify the best crop suited in the respective field. Soil conservation programmes are organised by the Government and also Non-Governmental agencies in our country. Major objective of soil conservation is to keep everything in the soil in its place. It manages the soil erosion and process of sedimentation. Soil fertility needs to be restored in order to allow a satisfactory and early return on the capital and labour invested. Most of the soil conservation programmes emphasize on soil degradation than on the top-down approach in recommending and disseminating practices. Soil reduce soil degradation problems need long-term bottom-up approach. Strenuous efforts are needed to reduce the soil pollution for a healthy life. Application of chemical fertilizers and pesticides can be reduced and organic and natural farming practices can be followed to reduce the soil pollution. Both organic and natural farming rejects the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers , relying instead on natural processes and inputs to maintain soil fertility and plant health. These methods emphasises the use of organic and natural farming formulations, encouraging a vibrant ecosystem of microorganisms that support plant growth and help to control pests and diseases in plants. These practices create a balanced and productive environment that sustains yields overtime without harming the planet.

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## SCO at Tianjin...Ushering into a New World Order

### MANMOHAN DHAR

rime minister Modi gives a very pragmatic meaning to SCO terming it as "Security, Connectivity and Opportunity"

And when he said so he meant global peace, socio economic stability and development and opportunity for making the world a better place to live.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Tianjin has emerged as more than a regional congregation-it has begun to shape itself as a platform for rebalancing global power equations. At a time when geopolitical uncertainty dominates the world, the discussions in Tianjin carried undertones of unity, resilience, and a collective push toward a multipolar order. Founded in 2001, the SCO initially focused on security coopera-

tion and counterterrorism. Over time, its scope has widened, encompassing economic integration, energy partnerships, and cultural exchanges. The Tianjin summit reinforced this evolution. What was once a Eurasian grouping now projects itself as a voice for the Global South, challenging the monopoly of Western-led

The presence and active participation of China, Russia, India, Central Asian states, and newly engaged observers emphasized that the SCO is not just a regional dialogue club but a geopolitical

The deliberations in Tianjin highlighted three key themes:

1. Economic Realignment: With Western economies slowing and protectionism rising, SCO members underscored the need for alternative trade corridors, digital currency cooperation, and greater intra-regional commerce.

2. Security Architecture: Terrorism, separatism, and extremism continue to be priority concerns. Yet, the focus at Tianjin also shifted toward cyber-security, artificial intelligence, and technological dominance-fields that define 21st-century power.

3. Energy and Connectivity: The summit stressed the importance of energy security and green transitions. From Central Asia's resource wealth to China's Belt and Road corridors, the SCO seeks to build an interconnected web that minimizes Western chokeholds.

India's presence in the SCO is always carefully watched. At Tianjin, New Delhi balanced its strategic autonomy, engaging with both Russia and Central Asia while cautiously navigating its differences with China and Pakistan. India's stress on counterterrorism and its vision for connectivity projects that respect sovereignty resonated well with partners outside the West.

The bilaterals between India and Pakistan, China and the one with Russia is definitely going to be a game changer in the existing geo political world order.

With Prime Minister Modi and the vision he carries about the world peace, partnership and economic prosperity with zero tolerance to violence and terrorism, this SCO is bound to pave a headway for the global unity, of course with a strong message to all those who think they can intervene at their sweet will to simply demonstrate their strategic highhandedness to disrupt the sincere efforts of interested parties to work for a better future for the mankind. The Tianjin summit signaled that the SCO is gradually transforming into an ideological counter-narrative to NATO and the G7. Its philosophy rests not on military alliances but on economic interdependence, cultural exchange, and respect for sovereignty. For many developing nations, this offers a viable alternative to Western conditionalities and interventions.

The world is witnessing a slow but steady drift from unipolarity toward multipolarity. The SCO's growing relevance, particularly after the Tianjin summit, highlights that global governance cannot remain the monopoly of a few Western powers. Eurasia is positioning itself as the heartland of the next century, where economic corridors, digital alliances, and security pacts will redraw bound-

aries of influence. The SCO at Tianjin has signaled a transformative moment in global politics. By bringing together diverse nations under the vision of collective growth and mutual respect, it has presented itself as more than a regional grouping-it is an emerging pillar of the new world order. As power equations shift, the SCO's journey from Tianjin may well be remembered as a turning point in redefining 21st-century geopolitics.

Though the SCO summit at Tianiin, China, it is observed, may transform the world into a new geopolitical entity, but constraints and challenges are bound to be met and overcome. As is said, there are neither permanent friends nor enemies, this SCO will see a monumental shift in the world order.

## Havoc of Gigantic Floods in J&K

### **SUNAINA MIR**

t is a well-established fact that human beings can compete only with those dangers which can be seen or countered from the front face. But what about those natural disasters and furies which are most unpredictable and come in the most silent hours of the night, perishing the very existence of living life and non-living structures from that stretch of land? Yes, I am talking about the most dreadful floods and cloudbursts which have badly hit innumerable areas of our Jammu and Kashmir this year. Tawi in Jammu and river Jhelum in Kashmir have taken the most gruesome shape and engulfed precious lives, destroying property worth crores of rupees. These floods have filled the beautiful homes of people of Jammu and Kashmir with dirty filth, bringing a post-flood epidemic-like situation in the region.

Since the month of August 2025, we are witnessing massive cloudbursts, landslides. incessant heavy rainfall, washed-away roads, and slipped highways in innumerable parts of Jammu and Kashmir. The first most unfortunate incident of this series took place in Chishoti village of Kishtwar en route to Mata Machail temple, where a gruesome cloudburst

engulfed 100 precious lives of our pilgrims, including children and women. After this, on 17th August, we were again badly struck by one more cloudburst in Jodh Ghati and Janglote village in Kathua, killing 7 lives and injuring dozens. This pain was further followed by the death of 34 pilgrims and injuries to 23 others after being hit by a heavy cloudburst on the way to Mata Vaishno Devi

In addition to this, one more landslide hit Reasi district, killing seven members of a single family. The story of nightmares does not end here. The same night, a cloudburst struck a village in Ramban, leaving four people dead. The grief continued as heavy rains in Jammu city flooded the Tawi river beyond the danger mark, affecting innocent lives and washing away property worth crores of rupees. In short, this natural fury has badly shaken the

normalcy of people of Jammu and Kashmir. Following are the measures to be taken on a war footing to fight this dangerous natural

(1) Natural Imbalance Pollution across the earth has caused global warming. This global warming has brought great fluctuations in seasons. Unseasonal rainfalls, melting of glaciers, and cloudbursts are the outcomes of these changes. A heavy check on pollution is the need of the hour.

scheme the soil sample is taken by the

(2) Today every Indian dreams to buy his personal vehicle. This race has deteriorated the quality of air and increased pollution to infinity. For God's sake, stop deteriorating the atmosphere just to satisfy your shallow ego.

(3) Stop using factory-made articles, refrigerators and air conditioners which are polluting our air and raising the temperature. Let us go back to our natural and old way of life which was devoid of plastic, pollution, adulterated food, encroachment on river lands.

(4) Stop blocking drains with plastic bags bottles, wrappers, shampoo packs, and other garbage of day-to-day life. These blocked drains are responsible for the waterlogging in housing colonies during floods.

(5) Construction of an Embankment

As we all know, the overflowing of a river can be restricted only by the construction of a strong embankment along its sides. Every state subject should donate as much money as possible for this gigantic project of construction. When there is unprecedented danger over lives and possessions, we should voluntarily come forward to contribute.

Money and assets without life have no meaning, so please unite hands to resolve this upcoming peril, which can come at any time and again perish everything

(6) The succeeding step towards the control of flood water is the construction of as many canals as the Government can from the rivers Jhelum and Tawi. In the time of flood, these canals can divert the water in diverse directions, thus preventing the water from rising above the danger mark.

(7) In addition to the already existing dams for hydro-power, the Government, on a war footing, should make a strategy for the erection of more dams so that we can utilize the water for hydro-power genera-

(8) Illegal intrusions must be removed as soon as possible.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, I just want to emphasize that it is high time to work on the safety of our lives from natural disasters, rather than relying on factories, industries, burning of fossil fuels, and the excessive use of plastic and rubber products. Let us totally eradicate unnatural products and unnatural habits, and let us go back to nature.