O HERALDO
The Voice of Goa - since 1900

The Trump showdown and what it means for Europe

The high drama that followed Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky's meeting with US President Donald Trump has opened up a rift in the international coalition in the Russia-Ukraine war that may change global dynamics in unforeseen ways.

The scene that unfolded in Washington on Friday, when Zelensky was publicly berated by Trump and Senator JD Vance, was an extraordinary and unprecedented diplomatic moment. Trump's national security adviser, Mike Waltz, even compared Zelensky to a "scorned ex-girlfriend", and the meeting left many observers in shock. The US, once the leader of the international effort to aid Ukraine, has become more isolationist under Trump – some would even say it is kowtowing to Putin. The sense of betrayal is palpable among many in Europe, who view the US as a key partner in the defence of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In contrast, Zelensky found a far warmer reception in London. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's embrace of Zelensky, coupled with an audience with King Charles III, symbolized Europe's continued commitment to Ukraine's cause. The weekend summit in London, which brought together European leaders, reflected a sense of solidarity and resolve. Starmer called for a "coalition of the willing" to continue supporting Ukraine, with European nations pledging to send troops and bolstering their military aid. It was a sharp contrast to the hostile environment in Washington, underscoring the deepening rift between the US and its European allies over the future of Ukraine.

> **The sense of betrayal is palpable among many in Europe, who view the US as a key partner in the defence of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity**

The British summit was not only a demonstration of support but also a practical step forward in shaping a European-led peace process. Starmer outlined a four-point plan that included a commitment to continued military aid, Ukraine's involvement in peace talks, and a focus on strengthening Ukraine's defences to deter future Russian aggression. While the idea of sending troops to Ukraine remains contentious, particularly with countries like Poland and Italy hesitant about direct military intervention, the underlying message was clear: Europe is ready to step up where the US appears to be retreating.

Indeed, the contrast between Washington and London reflects a much larger shift in the global order. Trump's confrontation with Zelensky and his dismissive attitude toward Ukrainian needs align with his broader "America First" foreign policy approach, which has increasingly isolated the US from its traditional allies. At the same time, European leaders like Macron and Starmer are making a concerted effort to forge a path toward peace without relying on US intervention. Macron even floated the idea of a one-month truce to provide space for negotiations—a proposal that has received mixed reactions but points to Europe's growing sense of responsibility for Ukraine's future.

Yet, while European unity on Ukraine is commendable, the reality remains that Europe cannot, at this stage, fully replace the US's role in the conflict. Despite the calls for a "coalition of the willing", Europe's military capacity is limited by years of underinvestment in defence and an over-reliance on NATO and the US for security. As European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen pointed out, Europe must focus on rearming itself, but even that will take time. The immediate challenge for Europe is whether it can sustain its commitment to Ukraine in the face of mounting pressure from Russia and internal divisions over military involvement.

The fallout from Zelensky's White House meeting has opened a dangerous rift in the Western alliance, one that Moscow is eager to exploit. Kremlin officials have already seized on the discord, with spokesperson Dmitry Peskov criticizing the European-led peace proposals and suggesting that "someone must force Zelensky to change his position." This rhetoric echoes the Russian propaganda narrative that portrays Zelensky as an obstacle to peace. The Kremlin's attempts to widen the divide between the US and Europe are part of a broader strategy to weaken the West's resolve and capitalize on the shifting dynamics in the global order.

The question now is whether the West can find a way to move forward in a united manner. For Zelensky, the path is fraught with challenges. He must balance the pressures from Washington, where some are questioning his leadership, with the growing expectations from Europe to take a more active role in securing peace. At the same time, he must navigate the complex diplomatic terrain between Moscow and the West, knowing that any concessions made at the negotiating table could come at a heavy cost to Ukraine's sovereignty.

Ultimately, the future of Ukraine and the Western alliance depends on whether Zelensky and his allies can overcome this moment of crisis and forge a path toward peace that preserves Ukraine's independence and the unity of the free world. The stakes are higher than ever, and the next steps will determine not only the fate of Ukraine but also the future of Western unity in the face of Russian aggression.

---

comment

SIDDHARTH DESAI

India's AI revolution: pioneering innovation for public good

India is making remarkable strides in artificial intelligence (AI), harnessing its potential for public good and national development. At the AI Action Summit held in Paris, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized India's commitment to technological advancement and innovation, asserting that the nation is developing AI applications aimed at benefiting the larger public. He highlighted India's diverse landscape and noted that the country is building its large language models, ready to share its experience and expertise to ensure that the future of AI is inclusive and beneficial for all.

India co-chaired the summit alongside France and the two nations had been conceptualizing the summit for an extended period. India played a significant role as a member of the steering committee and participated in five working groups, which focused on governance, trust in AI, public interest, the future of work, and culture and innovation. These working groups diligently worked over the past few months to produce meaningful deliverables for the summit, including a declaration outlining how AI will be implemented and governed.

Among the key announcements made at the summit was the establishment of a foundation dedicated to public interest in AI, backed by an investment of nearly 400 million EUR. This initiative aims to advance AI projects in India. India has become a founding member of this foundation and will collaborate with various stakeholders to democratize access to computing resources, datasets, and algorithms. This outcome is crucial for ensuring that AI technologies are accessible to all.

> **This government initiative to develop foundational models in India is poised to significantly boost not only engineering professionals but also those seeking alternative roles, such as data annotators and prompt engineers, where domain knowledge is essential**

Another significant outcome was the formation of the coalition for Sustainable AI. This coalition aims to ensure that AI development occurs sustainably, utilizing green energy for data centres that power AI solutions. India signed on to this coalition, committing to develop applications and use cases that address societal challenges at scale. Additionally, it was decided that India will host the next AI Summit, bringing together stakeholders from around the world. This event will provide an excellent opportunity to showcase the advancements India has made in the field of artificial intelligence.

The BharatGen Consortium, comprising researchers from five Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs)—Bombay, Madras, Mandi, Hyderabad, IIIT Hyderabad and IIM Indore—is actively working on developing foundational AI models tailored for India. They have successfully translated theoretical concepts into practical applications from an academic perspective. IIT Madras Pravartak has launched the Centre for Human-Centric AI, which is focused on bringing these technologies to end users.

Last year, the Indian government launched the IndiaAI Mission with an investment of over 10,372 crores to enhance AI development. A major challenge has been the availability and cost of computing resources. To address this, cloud providers are offering around 18,000 Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) at significantly reduced rates, with the government subsidizing 40% of the costs. This initiative allows researchers, entrepreneurs and startups to access GPU resources for under a dollar per hour.

Private sector initiatives, such as Krutrim, Sarvam AI, CoRover's BharatGPT, and Hanooman, are also contributing to the development of foundational AI models. With government support, there is optimism that several models trained on Indian datasets will emerge. Application development remains a critical focus, as many believe India is poised to become a leader in AI applications.

The fifth pillar of the IndiaAI Mission emphasizes skill development. Recognizing India's strength in skills, the government is providing fellowships at various levels, including for undergraduates, master's students, and researchers working on AI projects. Data labs are being established nationwide to train youth as data scientists and annotators, preparing them for the jobs that will arise in this evolving economy.

The sixth pillar focuses on supporting startups at all stages of development—pre-seed, seed, and mature. The final pillar addresses the need for safe and trustworthy AI solutions. Collaborative projects with academic institutions are currently underway to ensure that the solutions developed are responsible and ethical.

In addition to these initiatives, the Department of Higher Education has established three Centres for Excellence in agriculture, healthcare, and education. These centres, located at IIT Ropar, AIIMS Delhi, and IIT Kanpur, will foster research and innovation in their respective fields. This year's budget also announced the establishment of another Centre for Excellence in Education.

This government initiative to develop foundational models in India is poised to significantly boost not only engineering professionals but also those seeking alternative roles, such as data annotators and prompt engineers, where domain knowledge is essential. This effort will ensure that the cultural context of India is integrated into the AI systems being developed.

Technologically, one critical resource that India needs is computing power. Currently, a significant portion of AI computing resources is concentrated within a single company, NVIDIA, which produces essential chips for AI development. The Indian government has fostered a good relationship with NVIDIA, leading to partnerships that aim to enhance India's computing capabilities.

India has also replicated its Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Playbook, successfully implementing biometric identity platforms similar to Aadhaar in numerous countries. The global community is increasingly looking to India for solutions in digital payments, healthcare, and education, with countries like Brazil adopting technologies akin to India's UPI system.

As we prepare to host the next AI Summit, the focus will remain on understanding the needs of partner countries and how India can assist in adapting solutions for their specific contexts. There are, however, areas where foundational models still fall short. While they can perform certain tasks exceptionally well, they cannot replace human capabilities entirely.

As the world moves toward Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) and Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI), it is imperative to establish guidelines on what AI should and should not do. India has already published draft guidelines for AI governance, which are currently under public consultation. It is crucial to ensure that AI serves the greater good and that measures are in place to mitigate risks associated with deepfakes and misinformation.

In conclusion, as India prepares to host the next AI Summit, there is hope for greater collaboration among global stakeholders to address the challenges posed by AI technologies. Together, we can shape an inclusive and responsible AI future.

(The author is an advocate by profession)

MORALITY IS THE BACKBONE OF LIFE
BY IBONIO D'SOUZA

The social, economic, political and religious ideals are centered in ethics. The blood of life is love, and morality is its backbone. Without virtue, life cannot stand, and without love, life is dead. The development of life depends upon the development of virtue and the overflow of love rises when virtue rises.

Morality is not, for instance, a matter of clothing. The dress that is suitable for one climate, period or civilisation may be considered indecent in another; it is entirely a question of custom, not in any way involving moral considerations, yet these conventions are continually being confused with principles that are valid and unchanging.

The path of righteousness is only the right one. When righteousness has been rightly practiced, man becomes fit to proceed higher. Without a moral base, there can be no spiritual edifice. One who has not rested from wickedness, one who has not gained equanimity, one who has not controlled his senses, cannot aspire to attain this knowledge. This is the verdict of the sages of all times.

Morality and discipline amongst many members of our younger generation are deteriorating every day. Their behaviour and habits violate social standards. Innocent and peace-loving people are facing enormous sufferings, worries and miseries due to their inhuman acts and behaviour. Parents are responsible for these unfortunate incidents since they have given so much room to their children to behave as they like.

Generally speaking, there are two ideas of morality: (i) to be good and (ii) to do good. The first is the real morality whereas the second may be only a means to an end. One can be good in order to do good, but this is rare. People do good actions which appear entirely altruistic yet fundamentally are egoistic, motivated by acquisitiveness, desire for merit, bliss, heaven, reward or motivated by fear of resulting punishment or hell. All, so called, "good" actions are inspired by selfishness. The idea of "being" good is the only true morality.

One may be rich and fortunate, enjoying all the rewards of past good deeds. But, if he be not virtuous, charitable and benevolent, he is like a man living on his capital, drawing from his bank account of good deeds, without replacing anything. When it is all exhausted, can he blame God or fate for his miserable state?

If practice of religion makes no improvement in a man's outward actions - if he continues to be just as greedy, spiteful, envious or impulsive as he was before - if he cheats those who work for him, or robs his neighbour, if he shows no compassion for a suffering fellow-being, then his "practice" is largely illusory. Fine feelings, new insights, greater interest in 'religion' mean nothing unless they make our actual behaviour better. A tree is known by its fruit.

Rank, caste, colour, even wealth and power cannot necessarily make a man great and worthy of honour. It is the character that illuminates wisdom. According to philosopher Aristotle: "The ideal man takes joy in doing favours for others but he feels ashamed to have others to do favours for him". It is considered a mark of superiority to confer kindness; but one of inferiority to receive it. Poet-educator Longfellow says: "The talent of success is nothing more than doing what you can do well, without a thought of fame."

Your wealth can decorate only your house but not you. Your dress can decorate your body but not you. Only your own virtue and good conduct can decorate you.

---

letterstotheeditor

For letters to the editor contact us at editor@herald-goa.com.
All letters must contain correct postal address and telephone number. Letters are liable to be edited for brevity.

Is Goa losing its charm?
In ancestral Goa, life was beautiful, susegad (easy going), undisturbed, peaceful and people lived in the serenity of nature. Goenkars were hailed as loving, affectionate and praised for their hospitality. Our villages depicted a unique life with people living in Portuguese era houses, neighbors reaching out to one another in times of need. Our beaches were wide open and accessible to the local crowds visiting for holidays, hangouts or family picnics. Beat Groups in summer were the attractions for youngsters and a few shacks here and there and mostly foreigners seen sunbathing added to Goa's attraction. But not now anymore with only lingering memories to reflect back on the past.

Today Goa has become a mess, particularly, as one points out, with over unplanned developments. Add to that the present day scenarios with politicians seeking media publicity over any issue to credit themselves in the doings and some ill-minded groups seeking to disrupt the communal harmony Goans have upheld since ancestral times. With life now becoming a pain in the neck, most Goans in their senior years wonder and say: where's my Goa, 'mhojem Goyem khuim asa' that the next coming generation may see and remember us.

Ayres Sequeira, Salvador do Mundo

Rising issue of rental car accidents in Goa
The recent surge in accidents involving rental cars in and around Goa is deeply concerning. On Sunday at around 10:20 am, a second accident occurred near the Mahalaxmi Temple in Siolim and i immediately contacted the Anjuna Police Station to request assistance, but despite repeated calls from multiple onlookers, no officers arrived. It took almost 45 minutes for a police vehicle to reach the site from Anjuna, and even then, it arrived without an alcohol breathalyzer. It is disheartening to see that the authorities often appear only to facilitate compromises, rather than properly recording the scene of the accident and investigating the potential causes. These investigations could then be presented to the State Road Safety Committee or the RTO, offering valuable suggestions for improving safety for everyone.

The current approach sends a troubling message to tourists: "Enjoy, drink, and drive recklessly. As long as you bribe the right people, you can avoid the consequences." This laissez-faire attitude must change. I strongly urge the authorities to ensure that all accidents, whether minor or major, are properly documented, as this data is essential for identifying trends and causes. Drunk driving, unlicensed driving, failure to obey traffic rules, missing signage, and poor road engineering should all be thoroughly recorded. This is the only way to foster genuine road safety in Goa and across India.

As our local MLA has mentioned, tourists come to Goa for enjoyment, which often includes drinking. However, if we continue to allow rental cars to be easily accessed by young tourists, many of whom prioritise partying over safety, we are only putting the lives of innocent locals at risk. I propose that rental cars be restricted to individuals aged 45 and above, as we often see groups of young people, between 18 and 35, hiring vehicles for reckless roadshows. Instead, tourists should be encouraged to hire taxis or use app-based services for their own safety, as well as the safety of others.

I urge the government and the transport department to collaborate with all relevant stakeholders and take decisive action. Enough is enough. Let us work towards making Goa a safer place for all road users.

Gregory E D'Souza, Siolim

Goa govt's 'extension raj'
Recent reports reveal that 45 government officers have been granted extended tenures from January 2022 to the present. This practice not only makes them subservient but also denies deserving senior officers the opportunity to reach the top positions. The government should consider alternative solutions, such as raising the retirement age from 60 to 65, to address this issue.

Officers who have reached the pinnacle of their careers, hoping to be considered for senior positions, are now left disillusioned. The situation also sends a negative message to younger officers. Extending the tenures of certain individuals deprives competent officers, who are eligible to serve, of valuable opportunities. This approach does not inspire confidence in the system or convey the right message to the wider administration.

One can imagine the frustration of senior officers, who are qualified to serve in top positions but are instead forced to wait for superannuation. The unchecked powers of the executive only serve to demoralise the officers. These extensions are being perceived as violations of service rules and have a demotivating effect. Offering annual contract-like extensions further perpetuates the impression that the government believes no one else is qualified, casting doubt on the competence of the entire department.

K G Vilop, Chorao

Will the govt stand with Uday Bhembre?
The late night intimidation and disturbance by the controversial Bajrang Dal to Goa Opinion Poll Icon Uday Bhembre was condemned by many Goans and many Goans including (non ruling party) politicians visited him to extend support!

However, the disappointment is that none of the ruling Ministers/MLA's have come to his defence or for that matter visited him to show solidarity! If the latter does not happen, it only proves the suspicion that the Bajrang Dal has the open support of the Goa government!

Arwin Mesquita, Colva