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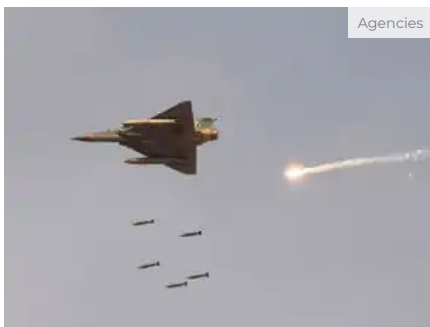
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# View: India has crossed just one battle line, but many more lie ahead

**Synopsis**

The government needs to move quickly to beef up both intelligence and paramilitary forces in Kashmir.



Agencies

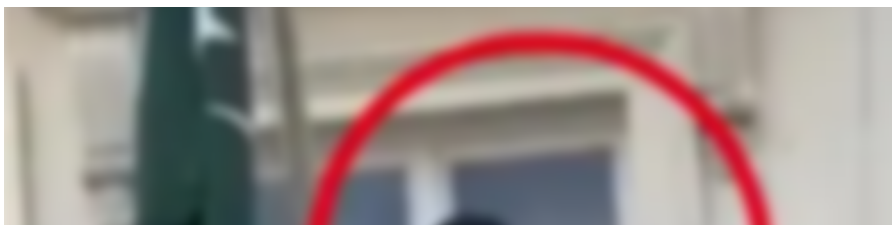
Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.

More precisely, it grows from the air-to-air missiles mounted on an upgraded but ageing MiG 21 Bison fighter-interceptor flown by the intrepid Wing Commander [Abhinandan Varthaman](#), who took on U.S.-made Pakistani F-16s on Feb.27.

The day before the IAF Mirage 2000s staged a daring pre-dawn air strike at a JeM terrorist training camp in Balakot, Modi let fly at the Congress for putting family before buying bulletproof vests for soldiers.

Around the time the young pilot was repatriated to India by his Pakistani captors, a book titled 'Mann Ki Baat - A Social Revolution on Radio' was released in Delhi at a ceremony attended by a bevy of senior officials. A government statement said "The book also gives a rare and exclusive opportunity to readers to discover several unknown facets of Prime Minister's thinking and beliefs..."

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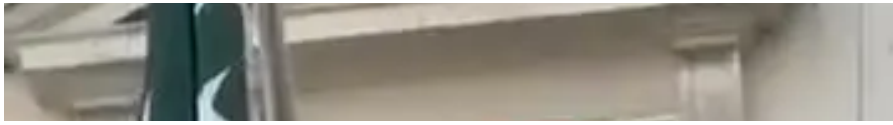
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The book contains transcripts of 50 of PM [Narendra Modi](#)'s monthly 'fireside chats'. It will sell very well - my bet is that it will be added to school curricula if Modi is re-elected. 'Quotations from Chairman [Mao Zedong](#)', a.k.a. The Little Red Book, has sold over a billion copies. During the Cultural Revolution possession of a copy even worked as a talisman against persecution.

Modi has far more tools than Mao did to propagate himself. Although our prime minister has accused the opposition of 'blatant politicisation' of the sacrifices made by our security forces, he has left no opportunity slip in attacking his rivals over the Pulwama terrorist attack, its aftermath, and the nation's security since Independence.

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The day before the [Indian Air Force](#) Mirage 2000s staged a daring pre-dawn air strike at a Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorist training camp in [Balakot](#) in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Modi let fly at the Congress party for putting (the Gandhi) family before buying bullet-proof vests for soldiers; he was speaking at the inauguration of the National War Memorial. A few hours after the Balakot strike, he delivered a strong speech in Churu, Rajasthan, backdropped by pictures of Pulwama's CRPF victims. On March 1 in Kanyakumari he accused the UPA government of never acting against terrorism. "26/11 happened, India expected action against terrorists but nothing happened. But, when Uri happened you saw what our brave soldiers did. Pulwama happened and you saw what our brave air warriors did." When opposition parties complained that Modi had not addressed the nation or held an all-party meeting, and later pressed for Balakot casualty figures, Modi accused them of playing into Pakistan's hands, coming close to labelling them traitorous.

It seems increasingly possible that the Balakot strike did not hit the intended targets. A Reuters report on Wednesday said high-resolution satellite pictures

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show at least six buildings were standing unharmed on the site of the targeted madrasa on March 4. Official claims of 300 to 350 casualties seem exaggerated. But Balakot demonstrated India's willingness to strike deep in Pakistan, confounding pundits who had warned Islamabad might hit back with its large arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons.

The Pulwama aftermath has been needlessly hyped up by all sides, and eclipsed other challenges facing the country, chiefly the sputtering economy. The invective being flung around is unbecoming. It diminishes us and makes us look like raucous teenagers, not a politically mature nation.

Pulwama and Balakot have four lessons:

1. The urgency of finding a political path out of the Kashmir quagmire. Although encounters between militants and security forces continue after Balakot, the situation is not intractable. As Ajai Sahni, executive director of the South Asia Terrorism Portal notes, in 2018, there was unrest in 40 of Kashmir's 82 tehsils, with the worst five accounting for nearly half of all fatalities.

2. The government needs to move quickly to beef up both intelligence and paramilitary forces in Kashmir, as [I wrote last fortnight after Pulwama](#).

3. Wg Cdr Abhinandan's derring-do was eerily, and uncomfortably, reminiscent of a similar feat in September 1965 when Sq Ldr Trevor Keelor, flying a diminutive Gnat, shot down a superior Pakistani F-86 Sabre. If anything, the David-and-Goliath situation only underlines the dire need to hammer out a national consensus on reinforcing the IAF (nothing has changed since [I wrote about this last October](#)).

4. It pays to be strategic. India has come out of the past three weeks occupying the moral high ground. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation's invitation to Foreign Minister [Sushma Swaraj](#) over Pakistani objections was the most visible sign of a diplomatic shift in India's favour. Clearly, Pakistan is under pressure from its benefactors, and the stilted steps it has taken this week against the fringes of the Jaish-e-Mohammad and affiliates of the Lashkar-e-Toiba. The United States, Britain and France are pushing to place JeM leader [Masood Azhar](#) on the Security Council list of global terrorists.

It is true that Modi did not address the nation after Balakot, but he has spoken volubly at his rallies. He sees no need to hold a press conference because a supine media is content to be spoon-fed with the government line when it is not performing war-dances. The opposition needs to focus on issues that the next government will have to grapple with.

It is also true that the government has unleashed a perfect storm of schemes, expenditure and propaganda backed by a humongous multimedia advertising blitz just ahead of the formal announcement of election dates and curbs on 'official' campaigning. But that's how the Code of Conduct cookie crumbles.

Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi; Congress reacts



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## Nexus Developments Australia, JITO Australia, Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry launch five-city roadshow for bilateral opportunities

ET Spotlight   Last Updated: May 05, 2025, 03:10:00 PM IST

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### Synopsis

The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry will launch the Australia-India Trade Roadshow 2025. This initiative, in partnership with Nexus Developments and JITO Australia, will explore trade pathways. The roadshow will occur in Hyderabad, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Delhi and Surat. Business leaders and policymakers will attend. The aim is to strengthen ties and encourage economic collaboration.



The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in partnership with Nexus Developments, JITO Australia, is launching the Australia–India Trade Roadshow 2025, a dynamic and forward-looking initiative set to tour five of India's most vibrant commercial centres. Anchored by the transformative Australia–India

Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (AIECTA), this roadshow brings together business leaders, policymakers, and innovators to explore new trade pathways, decode market entry strategies, and encourage co-investment in high-growth sectors. It will take place in Hyderabad, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Delhi and Surat.

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With curated sessions tailored to drive meaningful dialogue and actionable outcomes, the event aims to strengthen bilateral ties and spark the next wave of Australia–India economic collaboration.

The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry has highlighted nine priority sectors with which it can explore opportunities with India: food and agribusiness, education, digital technology and innovation, tourism, arts and entertainment, sports, environment, sustainability, and energy, health, beauty, wellness, and personal care, and manufacturing and engineering solutions.



ET Spotlight

**Here are the eminent personalities who will be present at the multi-city roadshow:**

- Prithviraj Kothari, Chairman, JITO Australia
- Vijay Bhandari, President, JITO Australia
- Pradeep Goyal, Chairman, Pradeep Metals
- Dr SK Chaddha, Hinduja Group
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The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry envisions a strong, enduring partnership between the Indian and Australian economies and societies— one built on mutual respect, shared opportunity, and a commitment to joint prosperity. It will chart out a development plan for:



ET Spotlight

- Strengthening connections for a meaningful and inclusive relationship
- Enhancing strategic economic co-operation for the mutual prosperity of India and the state of Victoria
- Deepening bilateral education, innovation, and technology ties for a vibrant knowledge economy.

Designed for business leaders, entrepreneurs, and investors, this high-impact series of events is a unique platform to explore new trade opportunities, forge strategic partnerships, and gain insights into market expansion under the AIECTA framework. Whether you're looking to establish your footprint in Australia or tap into India's rapidly-evolving economy, these roadshows will equip you with the knowledge, connections, and momentum to drive real growth. Register now to secure your spot and take the next step in building cross-border success.

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( Originally published on May 02, 2025 )

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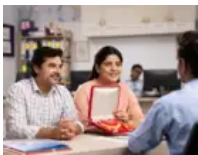
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