

# VANTAGE POINT

*A Newsletter on Non-Traditional Security*



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## ISSUE COMMENTARY

### Extradition and Justice – A Cross-Border Cooperation on Non-Traditional Security Challenges

Written By **Pratyush Pran Sarma**

The rule of law capacitates democratic nations to settle internal issues of chaos and conflict, and stresses by example that law and justice ensure order in the society. In the present-day dynamics of the nation-state, maintaining order and providing justice to the perpetrators of crime is essential to its functioning and putting an end to the many non-traditional security challenges that the state faces internally. It has been seen in several situations where the convicted individuals have fled persecution to other nation-states. Here, extradition becomes an important tool for the government to maintain order and ensure that criminals cannot escape justice just by crossing the national border. Extradition is essential in bringing to justice the convicts of organised crimes such as militancy, terrorism, extortion, scam, fraud, trafficking, kidnappings and other politically perceived crimes. Such moves depend solely on the cross-border and international migration and highlight the important predicament that convicts involved in heinous crimes should not be able to find refuge anywhere else.



Representative Image. Source: India Today

The Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs order No. 11034/10/2009-IS.VI (dated 11/11/ 2009) and a case registered by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) under sections. 121A of IPC, Section 18 of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Section 6(2) SAARC Convention

(Suppression of Terrorism) Act convicted individuals like David Headley AKA Daood Gilani and Tahawwur Rana to be instrumental in the orchestration of the 26/11 Mumbai Terror Attacks. Despite the non-cooperation on the extradition of Headley on grounds of his cooperation with the USA government, Tahawwur Rana, a Pakistani-Canadian national, was arrested in October 2009 for his association in the India and Denmark terror attacks, and the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). Only in 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court permitted his extradition to India, followed by the petitions by Rana for his alleged 'non-involvement' in the attacks, which was refuted by the Court several times. However, it is only on February 13, 2025, the newly elected U.S. President Donald Trump sanctioned the extradition in a recent press conference with his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, as a symbol of cooperation for justice against terror activities and its perpetrators.



These efforts are a part of the extradition treaty between the two nations signed on June 25, 1997 and officially implemented since July 21, 1999, serving as a mutually agreed legal accord that extradites the accused (in offenses like terrorism, trafficking and financial fraud) if they are punishable under law in both the nations. While the arrangement itself is positive, this principle of 'dual criminality' also poses obstacles in the realisation of the extradition. The complexity of such a process, along with the time-consuming bureaucracy, causes hindrance in the extradition process. The legal delays and persistent counter-arguments, the diplomatic concerns for prosecuted individuals and the concerns for fair trial and torture-free investigation are some of the major issues why the extradition between India and the USA is not always successful.

While obstacles exist, the extradition of Tahawwur Rana seems like a good, stable step towards the extradition and trial of individuals involved in heinous crimes, propagation of terrorism and violence. It also highlights the growing cooperation between India and the USA, ushering in the coming of justice to the several individuals convicted in serious crimes and threats to India's sovereignty. However, further strengthening of the legal agreements and ensuring fair and just investigations and trials will definitely create more efficiency and effectiveness of the extradition politics between India and its counterpart.



## COLUMNS ON CYBERSECURITY

### Budget 2025: Fuelling Cybersecurity with Funds, But Where Are the Tax Breaks?

Written by **Meenakshi Rao**

The Union Budget 2025 has set the stage for a digitally secure India, with a strong push toward fortifying the nation's cybersecurity framework. As cyber threats continue to evolve, the government has recognised the urgency of investing in robust defence mechanisms. A substantial increase in cybersecurity funding reflects this priority, signalling a decisive step toward ensuring national security in an increasingly digital world. However, while financial allocations have surged, the budget stops short of offering direct tax incentives to cybersecurity firms, leaving room for discussion on how taxation policies could further stimulate the sector's growth.

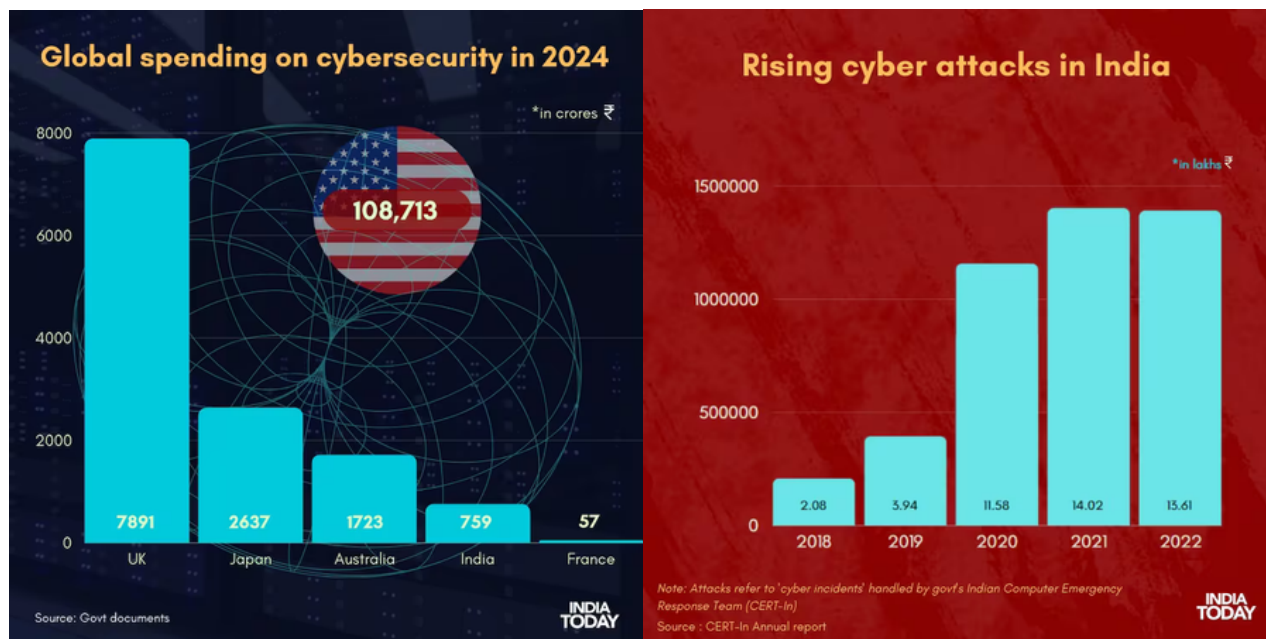
With over ₹1,900 crore dedicated to cybersecurity initiatives—an 18% jump from last year—the government is making a clear statement about its commitment to digital defence. A major portion of this funding is directed towards the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS), which has received a significant boost to ₹900 crore.



This initiative will drive innovation in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and next-generation cybersecurity solutions. Additionally, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has seen an increase in funding, reinforcing its capacity to monitor and mitigate cyber threats in real time. These strategic investments aim to create a more resilient digital ecosystem and enhance India's ability to counter cyberattacks.

At the same time, the 2025 tax regime has introduced sweeping reforms aimed at economic relief and growth. Individuals earning up to ₹12 lakh will enjoy zero income tax under the new tax slabs, offering financial relief to the middle class.

Meanwhile, changes in TDS and TCS limits provide further ease in tax compliance, particularly for senior citizens and tenants. However, despite these broad economic measures, the budget does not specifically address tax benefits for cybersecurity firms. This raises the question of whether targeted tax incentives, such as reduced GST rates or special exemptions for cybersecurity startups, could have accelerated industry growth.



Even without direct tax incentives, the increased cybersecurity funding indirectly benefits the industry by stimulating demand for advanced security solutions. Government-led investment in digital defence will likely encourage private enterprises to adopt more sophisticated cybersecurity measures, fostering a thriving market for security providers. The budget also strengthens the research and innovation landscape, particularly through NM-ICPS, which is expected to drive the emergence of cutting-edge cybersecurity startups. This influx of funding may attract significant venture capital, positioning India as a global leader in cybersecurity innovation.

While the Union Budget 2025 makes commendable strides in cybersecurity investment, it leaves room for further refinement in taxation policies that could incentivize sectoral growth. By combining financial backing with strategic tax benefits, the government could further accelerate the cybersecurity industry's expansion, ensuring that India remains ahead in the race to combat digital threats. For now, the increased allocations signal progress, but the absence of direct tax relief leaves the industry to navigate its own path toward sustainable growth.

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## HUMAN RIGHTS MONITOR

### Counter-Insurgency through State-Sponsored Militias - The Case of Salwa Judum

Written by **Ajithaa RN**

Initiated by the state government of Chhattisgarh, Salwa Judum was created in 2005 to counter the Left-Wing Extremists in districts like Bastar and Dantewada. These districts are resourceful and has significant tribal population which led the extremists to gain control over the locals. The creation of the Salwa Judum was a controversial counterinsurgency move against Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) and instead of fulfilling the main objective of counterinsurgency which prioritizes security, it led to several human rights violations, including the recruitment of minors and civilians for combatant roles. The Adivasis, who were already suffering from poor governance, faced violence, displacement and exploitation. This tactic not only failed to see the origin of this insurgency but also worsened social injustices, emerging as a source of violence and human rights abuses that unfairly affected the Adivasi population.



Courtesy: Wikimedia Commons

After signing a mining deal with the Tata group, Salwa Judum began getting heavy support from police and the military, with their operations running from the government-run camps. Several other villagers were forced to flee to camps against their will, which resulted in the burning of their houses and forcing them to flee to camps. Hundreds of Adivasis migrated to south Chhattisgarh and parts of Andhra Pradesh. The migrated individuals, who sought refuge in forest areas were deprived of essential welfare schemes, land rights, social welfare benefits and immunities from Forest Rights Act. In 2008, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) accused Salwa Judum of Large-scale displacement of villagers and recruitment of minors.



Representative Image

The movement was responsible for several human rights violations in the regions of Bastar and Dantewada districts. The members of the militia killed hundreds of Adivasi villagers who refused to follow their orders, branding them as Naxalite collaborators. Villagers were forced to relocate their houses near government-run camps. During raids, members of Salwa Judum looted belongings of the villagers often leaving them in despair. Denial of basic human needs like food, healthcare, education led to poverty and worsened malnutrition among the Adivasi. Freedom of speech was suppressed as the members threatened any activists or journalists who spoke against them. As a result, human rights violations and social injustice became rife in the region of Bastar and Dantewada districts.



On 5th July 2011, in the case *Nandini Sundar v. State of Chhattisgarh*, the Supreme Court ruled Salwa Judum as unconstitutional and illegal. The militia movement permanently ended following the court's order. The judgement was crucial but it cannot undo the permanent damages caused to the Adivasi communities. In this case, the state's involvement in creating Salwa Judum shows the lack of fundamental and democratic values in its governance. This case is a significant example that enabling human rights violations and endorsing militia movements only deepens the conflict and are never the solution.



Courtesy: FirstPost

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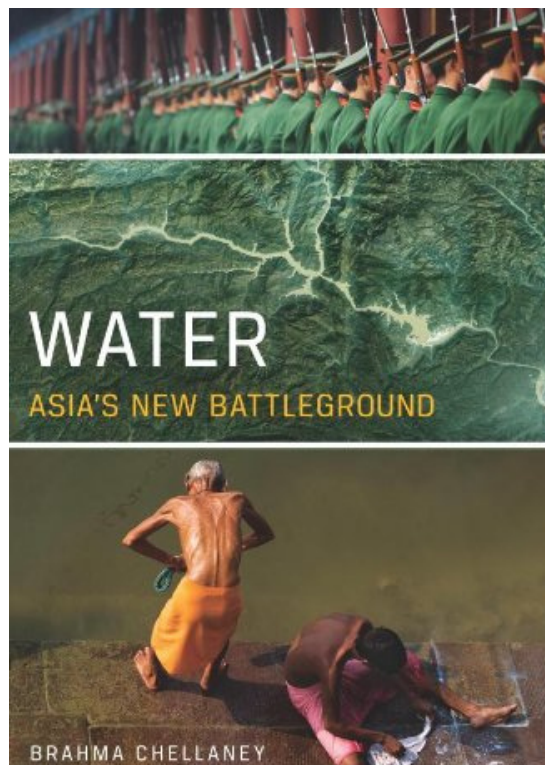
## BOOK REVIEW

### **Water: Asia's New Battleground**

Written by: **Brahma Chellaney**

Written by **N.T. Malavika**

Brahma Chellaney's 'Water: Asia's New Battleground' is an in-depth research analysis of the rising water crisis in Asia that emphasises its geopolitical and security repercussions. The book debates that water is more than just a resource, but a strategic asset shaping regional stability and international relations. Asia, despite being home to over half the world's population, faces severe water scarcity due to factors such as population growth, mismanagement, and climate change. The book contains seven chapters, each dealing with different aspects of Asia's water crisis.



The first chapter displays Asia as the global water crisis hub and its limited per capita water availability. Chapter two looks into the Murky politics surrounding transboundary rivers, where powerful upstream countries exploit water resources as strategic leverage. The third chapter talks about Tibet's role as Asia's water tower which supplies major rivers to multiple nations, and how China's control over these waters has strategic ramifications. The fourth chapter highlights how China exploits its waterfront control by constructing dams and diverting water, creating tensions within downstream nations like India and Southeast Asian countries. The fifth chapter shifts to India's internal water disputes and analyses how political, legal, and regional tensions add to conflicts over river-sharing among Indian states. Chapter six focuses on inter-country water disputes by assessing international frameworks which are often weak in implementation due to power asymmetry. The final chapter warns us of the rising risk of potential water wars. He argues that as demand rises and supply declines, conflicts over water could intensify into full-blown geopolitical crises.

Chellaney emphasises the urgent need for sustainable management, cooperative frameworks, and diplomatic solutions to prevent water from becoming a source of violent conflict. The book presents a persuasive case for policymakers to prioritise water security as a critical factor in maintaining regional peace. In summary, 'Water: Asia's New Battleground' is a must-read for individuals interested in geopolitics, environmental security, and the strategic dimensions of natural resource management. Chellaney's laborious research and articulate narrative makes it a valuable contribution to the discourse on Asia's future water crisis.

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