

**BJP-RSS THE  
BIG RECONCILIATION**

**INDIAN AIR FORCE  
CLOSING THE STEALTH GAP**

**HEALTH NEW TECH  
FOR PURE AIR AT HOME**

www.indiatoday.in

APRIL 14, 2025 ₹100



# INDIA TODAY



## AN UNFAIR BIAS

**THE DARK VERSUS FAIR DEBATE  
REIGNITES, EXPOSING THE UGLY  
PREJUDICE WITHIN INDIAN SOCIETY**



**CHAIRMAN AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:** Aroon Purie  
**VICE CHAIRPERSON AND EXECUTIVE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:** Kalpi Purie  
**GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:** Dinesh Bhatia  
**GROUP EDITORIAL DIRECTOR:** Raj Chengappa

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:** Manoj Sharma

**GROUP CREATIVE EDITOR:** Nilanjan Das; **GROUP PHOTO EDITOR:** Banddeep Singh

**EDITOR (FEATURES):** Kai Jaber Friese

**MANAGING EDITORS:** Sunil Menon, S. Sahaya Ranjit; **MUMBAI:** M.G. Arun

**EXECUTIVE EDITORS:** Manisha Saroop, Kaushik Deka

**SENIOR DEPUTY EDITORS:** Sangram K. Parhi, Sasi Nair;  
**HYDERABAD:** Amarnath K. Menon

**DEPUTY EDITORS:** Anillesh S. Mahajan, Pradip R. Sagar;  
**JAIPUR:** Rohit Parihar; **MUMBAI:** Suhani Singh

**SENIOR EDITORS:** Sonali Acharyee, Ashish Mukherjee, Saikat Niyogi;  
**PATNA:** Amitabh Srivastava

**SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITORS:** Sonal Khetarpal; **MUMBAI:** Dhaval S. Kulkarni;  
**AHMEDABAD:** Juman Shah; **BHOPAL:** Rahul Noronha

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR:** Avishek G. Dastidar, Vipul Grover; **BENGALURU:** Ajay Sukumaran

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT:** Kulkata: Arkamoy Datta Majumdar

**PHOTO DEPARTMENT:** Chandra Deep Kumar, Rajwant Singh Rawat (Deputy Chief Photographers), Arun Kumar (Principal Photographer);  
**MUMBAI:** Mandar Suresh Deodhar (Chief Photographer)

**PHOTO RESEARCHERS:** Prabhakar Tiwari (Deputy Visual Research Editor),  
 Saloni Vaid (Chief Photo Researcher),  
 Jodha Singh Adhikari (Principal Photo Researcher)

**CHIEF OF GRAPHICS:** Tanmoy Chakraborty

**ART DEPARTMENT:** Sanjay Piplani (Creative Editor),  
 Angshuman De (Senior Art Director), Rajesh Kumar Angira, Bhoomesh Dutt  
 Sharma (Associate Art Directors), Santosh Kumar Sharma (Assistant Art  
 Director), Praveen Kumar Gummadi (Chief Designer),  
 Siddhant Jume (Chief Illustrator)

**PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT:** Harish Agarwal (Chief of Production),  
 Naveen Gupta (Chief Coordinator)

**CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

Suparna Kumar

**IMPACT TEAM**

Senior General Managers: Jitendra Lad (West), Syed Naveed (Chennai)

**GROUP CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER:** Vivek Malhotra

**SALES AND OPERATIONS**

Deepak Bhatt, National Head (Distribution)

Vipin Bagga, General Manager (Operations)

Rajeev Gandhi, General Manager (North)

Yogesh Godhanlal Gautam, Regional Sales Manager (West)



**Volume 50-Number 15; For the week**

**April 8-14, 2025, published on every Friday**

- Editorial/Corporate Office: Living Media India Ltd., India Today Group  
 Mediaplex, FC-8, Sector-16A, Film City, Noida - 201301; Phone: 0120-4807100
- Subscriptions: For assistance contact, Customer Care, India Today Group,  
 C-9, Sector-10, Noida (UP) - 201301. email: wecare@intoday.com;  
 Phone / Whatsapp: +91 8597 778 778 (Monday to Friday, 10 am - 6 pm).
- Sales: Direct all trade enquiries to General Manager (Sales), Living Media India  
 Limited, C-9, Sector-10, Noida-201301 (UP).
- Regd. Office: F-26, First Floor, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001.
- Impact Offices: 1201, 12th Floor, Tower 2 A, One Indiabulls Centre,  
 (Jupiter Mills), S.B. Marg, Lower Parel (West), Mumbai-400013;  
 Phone: 022 69193355; Fax: 66063226
- E-1, Ground Floor, Videocon Towers, Jhandewalan Extn, New Delhi.
- Door No: 610, 610A, 612, 5th Floor, Block A, Imperial Chaitanya Building,  
 Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai, Tamilnadu-600018.
- 201-204 Richmond Towers, 2nd Floor, 12, Richmond Road,  
 Bangalore-560025; Phones: 22212448, 22213037, 22218343; Fax: 22825398;
- 52, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, 4th Floor, Kolkata-700071; Phones: 22825398;  
 Fax: 22827254; • 6-3-885/7/B, Somajiguda, Hyderabad-500082;  
 Phone: 23401657, 23400479, 23410100, 23402481, 23410988, 23411498;  
 Fax: 23403484 • 39/1045, Karakkatt Road, Kochi 682016; Phones: 2377057,  
 2377058; Fax: 2377059 • 2/C, 'Suryarath Bldg', 2nd Floor, Behind White  
 House, Panchwati, Office C.G. Road, Ahmedabad-380006; Phone: 26560393,  
 26560929; Fax: 26565993 • Copyright Living Media India Ltd. All rights  
 reserved throughout the world. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited.
- Printed and published by Manoj Sharma on behalf of Living Media  
 India Limited. Printed at Thomson Press India Limited,  
 18-35 Milestone, Delhi Mathura Road, Faridabad-121007, (Haryana)  
 and at Rajhans Enterprises, 134, Industrial Town, 4th Main Road, Rajajinagar,  
 Bengaluru-560044, (Karnataka).

Published at F-26, First Floor, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001.

Editor: Raj Chengappa.

• INDIA TODAY does not take the responsibility for returning unsolicited publication material.

All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of  
 competent courts and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only

For reprint rights and syndication enquiries, contact  
 syndications@intoday.com or call +91-120-4078000  
[www.syndicationtoday.in](http://www.syndicationtoday.in)



Readers are recommended to make appropriate enquiries before sending money,  
 incurring expenses or entering into commitments in relation to any advertisement  
 appearing in this publication. The India Today Group does not vouch for any claims  
 made by the advertisers of products and services. The printer, publisher, editor-in-  
 chief and the editor of the India Today Group publications shall not be held liable for  
 any consequences in the event of such claims not being honoured by the advertisers.

FOR SUBSCRIPTION ASSISTANCE, CONTACT: Customer Care,  
 India Today Group, C-9, Sector-10, Noida (UP) - 201301.  
 email: wecare@intoday.com | Phone / Whatsapp: +91 8597 778 778  
 (Monday to Friday, 10 am - 6 pm)

E-MAIL to:  
[letters.editor@intoday.com](mailto:letters.editor@intoday.com) or  
 log on to [www.indiatoday.in](http://www.indiatoday.in)



SCAN HERE TO  
 SUBSCRIBE

Illustration by NILANJAN DAS / AI

20

COVER STORY

## AN UNFAIR BIAS

The dark versus fair  
 debate reignites, exposing  
 the ugly prejudice within  
 Indian society

### UPFRONT

MUSLIM PROPERTIES:  
 WAR OVER WAQF PG 5

CHHATTISGARH:  
 STORM AT BAGHEL'S  
 DOOR PG 11

# INSIDE

### LEISURE

BOOKS: A MASTER  
 STORYTELLER PG 51

Q&A WITH  
 SHOVARA NARAYAN  
 PG 58

32

RSS-BJP

### THE NEW STRATEGIC SYNERGY

PM Modi's visit to the RSS headquarters  
 ends talk of the BJP's rift with its mentor,  
 showcases march towards shared goals

40

HEALTH

### FRESH AIR FOR SALE

As air pollution worsens, a wave of  
 innovations emerge to promise cleaner,  
 healthier breathing spaces

36

FIGHTER JETS

### CLOSING THE STEALTH GAP

As world powers prepare for sixth-gen  
 aerial warfare, India is racing against time  
 to field a fifth-gen stealth fighter jet

44

TOURISM AWARDS

### TRANSFORMING THE TRAVEL TRADE

India Today celebrates the country's evolving  
 tourism scene, highlighting innovation,  
 sustainability and standout destinations

#### Note to the reader

From time to time, you will see pages titled 'An Impact Feature' or 'Focus' in INDIA TODAY.  
 These are no different from advertisements, and the magazine's editorial staff is not  
 involved in their creation in any way.

Cover Photograph by BANDEEP SINGH; Models: Ritika Anil Kumar and Moksha Fotedar  
 MUA: Sweta Bhola & Vineet; Hairstyling: Ankita & Md Mateen





**BILL OF DISCORD**  
An All India Muslim  
Personal Law Board  
protest against the  
Waqf (Amendment)  
Bill in Delhi, March 17

PTI

MUSLIM PROPERTIES

## WAR OVER WAQF

By Kaushik Deka

**T**he passage of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in Parliament this week signifies a watershed moment in the governance of religious endowments in India, fundamentally altering the administrative structure that has overseen Islamic charitable properties for decades. The legislation, now renamed the 'Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development Act (UMEED), 1995,' has ignited

fierce debate about religious autonomy and property rights. For supporters, the amendments promise transparency and accountability; for critics, they threaten nothing less than state appropriation of religious heritage.

The reforms target longstanding challenges in waqf administration. Waqf boards, established as statutory bodies under the Waqf Act, administer these properties at the state level. Each board includes government nomi-

nees, Muslim legislators, Bar Council members, Islamic scholars and property managers. The Central Waqf Council, established in 1964, provides national oversight (see *What's Waqf?*).

However, encroachments remain a concern, with messy documentation problems across the country. Several states, including Gujarat and Uttarakhand, have not even begun surveying waqf properties; others like Uttar Pradesh continue to struggle with