

Split decision

The ECI and the office of the Speaker have not played fair in cases of defection

n the run-up to the impending election to the Maharashtra Assembly, the rivalry bet-ween the two factions of the Nationalist Con-gress Party (NCP), now operating as separate par-ties, will have its inevitable influence on political developments and electoral outcomes. In the lat-est development related to the rift, NCP founder Sharad Pawar has approached the Supreme Court for a direction to the NCP led by Ajit Pawar Sharad Pawar has approached the Supreme Court for a direction to the NCP led by Ajit Pawar to opt for a new symbol in the Assembly elections. The NCP's 'clock' symbol is with the Ajit Pawar group, following a ruling by the Election Commission of India (ECI) in February, recognising it as the official NCP. There is some logic to the demand that the Ajit Pawar group give up the clock' now. The ECI's order has already been challenged in the Supreme Court. Oral observations in early hearings indicated that there are some doubts about the 'legislative majority' test adopted by the ECI while recognising the Ajit Pawar faction as the NCP and allotting the 'clock' to the group. The ECI's order had justified the use of the legislative majority test by observing that the test on which group had organisational majority was inconclusive, as was the test based on the party's 'aims and objectives'. Mr. Ajit Pawar revolted against his uncle and joined the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance and became part of the ruling Mahayuti coalition, while the NCP (Sharad Pawar) is part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi, the opposition combine that includes the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the Congress.

the Congress.

However, in the Lok Sabha elections, Mr. Ajit
Pawar's group won only one seat, while Mr. Shaard Pawar's party, using the symbol of a 'man
blowing a turha' (trumpet), won eight, besides
polling a much higher number of votes. The outcome raises the question whether the legislative
majority during a given period could be used to
gain or lose recognition. Further, Mr. Sharad Pawar has argued that the 'clock' has been the
NCP's reserved symbol for many years and alloting it to one group may cause confusion in the
voters' minds. The court will have to decide
whether to have a level-playing field by denying
the 'clock' symbol to both sides, or let the recognised faction use the symbol as long as the ECI order is in force. Such disputes, including the other
major rift in Maharashtra over who represents
the Shiv Sena, pose a challenge to the ability of
parties to maintain organisational unity in the
face of attempts to split them through defection
and rebellion. The fate of the individuals and parties involved often depend on the Speaker under
the antidefection law and the ECI which accords However, in the Lok Sabha elections, Mr. Ajit ties involved often depend on the Speaker under the anti-defection law and the ECI, which accords recognition to parties and allots symbols. Both institutions seem to need the Supreme Court to keep them honest.

Desert storm

Women's cricket gets the spotlight as the T20 World Cup gets underway

f West Asia is in the news as a conflict zone, the desert sands of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) may offer some relief over the next fornight. The ICC T20 Women's World Cup that commenced at Sharjah on Thursday will oscillate between this venue and Dubai. Featuring IO teams split into two groups of five each, the championship will conclude on October 20. The churament was supposed to be held in Bangladesh, but the unrest of the previous months in Dhaka meant that though India's eastern neighbour holds the hosting rights, the matches had to be shifted to the UAE. While Australia will step in with the swagger of a defending champion, having seized the cup after vanquishing host South Africa in the 2023 edition, India will walk in with the hope of finally claiming the trophy. In the 2020 final at Melbourne, India willed against Australia. Cut to the present, Harmampreet Kaur's tralia. Cut to the present, Harmanpreet Kaur's strong unit will clash against New Zealand at Du-bai on Friday and a good first outing is essential. India has moved on from the era of Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami and those are massive shoes of fill, but Harmanpreet, Jemimah Rodrigues Smriti Mandhana, and others have tried their best to chart a fresh path.

Smriti Mandhana, and others have tried their best to chart a fresh path.

The tournament is also invested with a larger cause layered with gender sensitivity. While male players get accolades and commercial heft through cricket, female players have always fought for their rights. Even in the latest event, despite being pitted against each other as rivals, here is a sisterhood at play. Through interactions with the press, all the leading female players have sought more games and also more Tests. Often the women are resigned to playing just limited-overs cricket. While Mithali turned out in 232 ODIs and 89 T201s, it is a travesty that she played only 12 Tests in a long career. Harmapreet and company have often sought comfort in diverse franchise leagues but there is nothing like a solid bilateral contest to toughen up the stars. Having won the title on six occasions, Australia remains the behemoth. Alyssa Healy and her merry bunch will be the team that most squads, including of the property of the benemon. Anyssa Heary and ner merry bunch will be the team that most squads, includ-ing old rival England, would want to knock off the pedestal. And for those keen on watching neigh-bourhood rivalry, India and Pakistan are placed in Group A and will face off on Sunday. Diplomatic tensions have ensured that the two nations compete against each other only in global events. nations

An obsession with ranking is harming India's universities

n this digital age, we reduce everything to numbers. This trend has consumed the education ecosystem, as seen in the rise of global ranking agencies, which assign ranks to universities across the world every year. India has its own National Institutional Ranking Framework to rank universities in the country. The purpose of a university is to teach and mentor future citizens; and to acquire and create knowledge through research. Research and teaching are two sides of the education coin: knowledge creation and dissemination. A university needs to excel in both in order to fulfi its obligations to students and society. Through its activities, a university also has social and economic impacts. It is impossible to capture a university is multidimensional nature with a single metric, represented by a global or national rank. Yet, this is what ranking systems claim to do.

Overemphasis on research

The global university ranking system is one-dimensional. It places huge emphasis on The global university ranking system is one-dimensional. It places buge emphasis on research activity. A university's research output is quantified using criteria such as the number of papers published, the impact factor of the journals in which they are published, the amount of research funding acquired, and the number of PhD students who were admitted and graduated. These numbers by themselves cannot capture the quality, content, relevance, and impact of research. Sadly, despite being aware of this flaw in the ranking process, Indian universities are all in the ranking race. A world rank makes the university visible and helps attract international students, world-class faculty, and candemic partners, philanthropists, and donors. Universities and the government even tweak or alter policies to improve ranks. A university that is not ranked may as well not exist – such is the power we have accorded to global rankings.

India has bought into the American education.

India has bought into the American education system, which is shaped by a strong belief in free market capitalism and unfettered private competition. To help improve the global ranking of India's top universities and premier institutes, the green properties of the Michael Deof inclus top universities and premier institutes, the government set up the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) a few years ago. HEFA mobilises market resources to fund the country's global rank-aspiring institutions in the form of repayable loans at competitive interest rates. In tandem, the government also granted full autonomy to several public higher education

Retired professor and

institutions. This encompasses financial autonomy as well, which means that the government will cease to support them. In other words, public higher education institutions will need to generate their own funds by enhancing student fees. This is touted as a 'win-win' strategy for both the university and the government: the university has a shot at improving its rank and the government no longer has the onerous responsibility of funding it. But if the race for a global rank sacrifices the essential function of educating students (which is not factored into the ranking process), this is not a meaningful 'win' for either. Importantly, it is also not a 'win' for the economically weaker sections of society.

The importance of teaching and mentoring The metrics-driven, global rank-aspiring higher educational system has had an adverse impact on the teaching community. The undue emphasis on research to the exclusion of other vital functions. research to the exclusion of other vital functions, especially teaching, has created a sorry situation in which university job aspirants are often judged by the number of research papers they have produced, the impact factor of the journals they were published in, and the numbers of their citations; and not by their ability to be an effective communicator, teacher, and mentor.

effective communicator, teacher, and mentor.

Once selected as a faculty member of the university, the candidate's subsequent career advancement depends on additional metrics such as the amount of research grant funds secured and the number of PhD degrees awarded. This obsession with metrics ignores the faculty member's actual teaching and mentoring capacity as a determinant of career advancement in the higher education ecosystem. Unlike in the case of research, teaching is not amenable to quantification using metrics. It is the unmeasurable something that metrics cannot deal with. So, the role for teaching has declined in the education system. In fact, in the

in the education system. In fact, in the perspective of a typical university professor, writing a paper or working on a grant application takes precedence over teaching today. Ironically, teaching is a distraction from 'all important' research. University professors have become contractors churning out research papers to

contractors churning out research papers to improve the university's ranking.

The higher education ecosystem is pervaded by a culture of 'publish or perish' without a meaningful and transparent mechanism for accountability in place. Is this kind of research, at

the expense of educating students, really meaningful? Are instances of plagiarism, data manipulation, and other research misconduct emanating from our premier institutes and universities the undesirable and unintended universities the undestrable and unintended consequences of our pre-occupation with metrics? In these cases, are not the teachers failing in their role as mentors and role models? Students who emerge from this system either quit in disillusionment or end up propagating this situation, propelling us into a downward spiral.

Creating two tracks
There is no doubt that research is the engine that drives growth and innovation, but it cannot be an excuse to neglect teaching, which prepares students for the real world. Universities should consider separate tracks for research-focused and teaching-focused faculty members. Interests of faculty members in these two tracks may extend beyond their primary focus, but they must not be expected to excel in both at all times. Otherwise, there will be scope for researtment and lack of commitment, undermining the very faculty members whose contributions are critical to the university's mission.

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Universities must realise that the scientific content of a paper and its possible societal and economic impact are more relevant than the impact factor of the journal in which it is published or the number of citations it garners. Teaching must be recognised as an important function of the university and teachers must be encouraged to improve curricula. Careful, unbiased judgment must replace metrics. Universities must enable a paradigm shift in their institutional culture to value and enable the success of both research and teaching efforts that collectively contribute to their overall mission as being centres of higher education and learning. The metrics-focused system or 'metricoracy', if you will, which we mistakenly believe is synonymous with meritocracy, has created a situation which implies that education is a market

situation which implies that education is a market rather than a citizen's right and the state's duty; knowledge is a commodity and not a means of becoming more humane; and students are customers, instead of future citizens. This warped ecosystem views academic rigour as detracting from the business of delivering the product to the customer. It kills creativity and the enthusiasm to learn, does not prepare students for the real world, and is harmful to future generations.

Why Italy matters to India

n this age of 'polycrisis', Italy and India share common interests but also joint challenges in the Indo-Mediterranean Sea. This region is vital for global trade, especially for Italy which ranks sixth among the world's largest exporters. It is also crucial for digital connectivity: the Blue-Raman submarine data cables will soon connect Genoa with Mumbal. Piracy in the Red Sea, the conflict in Gaza and Lebanon, and the effects of Russia's aggression against Ukraine on agricultural and oil trade require our joint efforts to ensure a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Mediterranean.

Therefore, Italy has stepped up its commitment in security and defence in the Indian Ocean Region and West Asia. Apart from joining the Group of Friends of UNCLOS in 2021, it has been the second largest contributor to the European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) n this age of 'polycrisis', Italy and India share common interests but also joint challenges in

European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) Atalanta and the European Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASOH). Since the EU military operation, Eukardolf, Since in the EU military operation, EUNAVFOR ASPIDES, to safeguard freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Gulf.

Naval presence
We have also increased our naval presence in
India. After joining the Information Fusion Centre
of the Indian Ocean Region in March 2023, patrol
ship ITS Francesco Morosini visited Mumbal in
August 2023. The Italian Carrier Strike Group
(aircraft carrier ITS Cavour and frigate ITS Alpino)
is currently in Goa. We are expecting the amazing
tall ship ITS Amerigo Vespucci in Mumbai from
November 28 to December 2. It is the training
vessel of the Italian Navy. We are also planning to
build an 'Italy village' that will offer cultural,
fashion, and culinary events, as well as
conferences and exhibitions.
ITS Cavour is a short take off and vertical
landing ship constructed by the Italian naval

landing ship constructed by the Italian naval shipyard Fincantieri and has been in the service

Ambassador of Italy

Piracy in the Red Sea, the conflict in the Middle

st, and the effects of Russia's aggression against Ukraine

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of the Italian Navy since 2009. As a 'dual use' vessel, it can project maritime power, but also provide logistical autonomy and serve environmental and humanitarian interventions. We are delighted that PASSEM exercises (training exercises to develop and maintain mariner skills and strengthen interoperability are being held during the stay. ITS Carour is also hosting a workshop on defence industry cooperation. At the same time, it serves as a hospital to operate children with facial malformations: a team of Indian and Italian doctors is performing surgeries under the framework of 'Operation Smile', organised by the Smile House Foundation, Italy. of the Italian Navy since 2009. As a 'dual use

Defence ties

Defence ties Bilaterally, the Italy-India defence cooperation relies on a defence agreement signed in October 2023. This document lays the basis for a further expansion of our defence ties in many fields, from research to industrial cooperation, maritime domain awareness, sharing of information, and education and environmental issues related to

domain awareness, sharing of information, and education and environmental issues related to military activities. At the same time, our defence cooperation strongly relies on regular talks such as the Italy-India Military Cooperation Group meeting, held in March in New Delhi.

When it comes to defence production, Italy matters to India: two of our companies, Leonardo and Fincantieri, are ranked among the first 50 of SIPRI's top arms-producing and military services companies in the world (2022), while other companies, such as Beretta, Elettronica and KNDS, albeit smaller in size, possess outstanding technical know-how. Over the last few years, Italian defence companies have shown to be open to joint ventures, co-production, and joint development. Fincantieri is cooperating with Cochin Shipyard since 2020, while Eletronica signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Bharat Electronics Limited in 2019. This partnership approach is in line with India's 'Males In Most a Medican surgened to expense partnership approach is in line with India's 'Make in India' ambitions and can respond to growing

requirements by the Indian armed forces. Italy also looks at India as a valuable partner for development of the Indian Ocean Region, from East Africa to India's shores via the Arabian Sea. Both Italy and Indian are keen promoters of Africa in international fora and jointly supported the inclusion of the African Union in the G2O. During the Italy-Africa Summit in January, Italy launched a new initiative with Africa, the Mattei Plan, aimed at creating a mutually beneficial partnership to realise several important projects across the continent. This initiative mobilises Italian capabilities with €5.5 billion in public investments and the involvement of all public entities and the private sector. Among the first countries chosen for this plan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Mozambique are adjacent to the Indo-Mediterranean area. The ambition is to engage with other partners to realise sustainable engage with other partners to realise sustainable projects which will help drive economic and social development in Africa.

social development in Africa.

At the same time, Italy has supported the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). Amid the conflict in Gaza and the escalating tensions in West Asia, we believe that IMEC can be part of a long-term vision to ensure shared prosperity in the region. Railway connections, ports, logistics and custom systems can support peace endeavours along a trade route that is as essential for Italy as it is for India.

People-to-people ties
Italy matters to India as a friend. We host the
second largest Indian diaspora in the EU. Italy is a
reliable economic and defence partner, the
second largest manufacturing country in Europe,
and a robust security provider taking up
responsibilities as a member of the EU and NATO.
What persists over time are people-to-people ties.
These bonds dig deep into an ancient history of
contacts between our two civilizations and find
new inspiration with every story of cultural new inspiration with every story of cultural exchange, integration, and business success.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Crisis in West Asia The United Nations Security Council called for an emergency meeting on the Lebanon-Israel conflict, but doesn't seem to be able to do much to stop the crisis ("Israel vows to hit back at Iran, reinforces troops in Lebanon", October 3). It is time for serious reforms in the UN. The body must keep pace with a rapidly changing world order. One hopes that at least the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation will try to bring about peace in West Asia. Rohith Varon S.S.

Israel showed arrogance in declaring the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, 'persona non grata'. It is only going to get more and more isolated in the international community if its Prime Minister opens up more war fronts.

Cijo Joseph

A blow to research?

A PhD candidate must have an aptitude for research, an aptitude for research, apart from a passion for the subject, and a critical bent of mind ("The net result will be poor doctoral research", October 3). Not everyone who passes the NET will have these skills. It is critical that universities and institutes of higher learning and research have autonomy in selecting PhD candidates. Kosaraju Chandramouli

Many humanities and social science departments have exposed students to global standards of research at an affordable cost, despite challenges such as poor funding and threats to academic freedom. By

conducting interviews, universities would test skills such as writing, critical thinking, and the art of formulating research questions. The UGC's move tests none of these skills. In the long run, it will compromise our ability to compromise our ability to generate original research.

I had cracked NET and qualified for UGC-JRF in the 1990s without attending coaching classes, NET was different back then: Part A and B were multiple choice questions (MCQ) and Part C (on a particular subject) was questions (MCQ) and Part C (on a particular subject) was descriptive. Today, Part C has been replaced with MCQ. Although I do not agree that MCQ predominantly assesses our memory capabilities and recalling abilities, going back to the earlier pattern would be a more balanced and accommodative suggestion. Replacing NET with individual entrance exams across institutions is



The first paragraph of a report, "U.S. stays India's top trading ally, export destin-ation in 2024" (Business page, October 1, 2024) said that the U.S. bilateral goods trade with India in January-July 2024 as \$190 billion. It should have been \$72

ons & Clarifications arragraph of a report, "U.S. stays India's top trading ally, export destin

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IN THE LIMELIGHT



Politics of aesthetics: how Laapataa Ladies' got a shot at the Oscars

The Academy Award for Best International Film is bestowed on the country and not an individual. As Kiran Rao's social satire represents India at the Academy Awards, let's peel the layers of the comedy of manners to figure out what it says and what it implies

Anuj Kumar

owards the end of Laapataa Ladies, when Inspector Shyam Manohar foretells that Jaya, one of the two 'lost ladies', will go a long way, constable Dubey responds, "Indeed sir, she has to reach Dehradun." Since Kiran Rao's potent comedy of manners has been chosen as India's official entry to the Oscars this week, social media is abuzz with outrage from those who wanted to see Payal Kapadia's All We Imagine As Light on the road to Los Angeles. Taking umbrage to the trite citation that describes Indian women as 'a strange mix of submission and dominance', many X-crusaders – like Dubey – choose only to go by the text. In the annual din on the selection process for the Oscars, one thing that gets lost is that the Academy Award for Best

lost is that the Academy Award for Best International Film is bestowed on the country and not an individual. The natural follow-up question is what idea of India do we want our films to represent at the Oscars? This brings the government of the day and the politics of aesthetics into the mix.

On choosing a nominee
The Film Federation of India (FFI), which picks the representative feature out of a competitive pool through a jury, is the apex body of the film industry that works with the government to promote, support, and protect the interests of the film industry. Therefore, the sentiment that seeks safety over sensitivity remains ambient. Whether the deciding authority can process the winds of change, where a Malayalam film gets short-listed by France Malayalam film gets short-listed by France and Santosh, a multi-national collaborative Hindi crime drai rural north India becomes the U.K.'s shot

at the Oscars, and appreciate the spirit of at the oscars, and appreciate the spirit or vasuidaniav kutumbakam seeping into cinema, remains questionable. For now, it seems keen on saving the notion of sovereignty in cinema by leaning on what appears to be less adamant of the female voices that populated the list as Kottukkaali, Ullochukku, and the National kweet wine determines also in the

Award winner Aattam were also in the fray.

Read in context, the seemingly fossilised view expressed in the citation, that needed some serious proofreading, indicates the jury chose to reduce Laapatata Ladies to a story of two young girls, one happlily desiring to be a homemaker and the other an entrepreneurially inclined rebel. When they get swapped during a train journey, the narrative allows a humorous exploration of identity and social constructs. A deeper reading suggests constructs. A deeper reading suggests that the form and expression itself work like a safety pin to hold up the dissenting core of Laapataa Ladies.

If one deconstructs the structure of the

If one deconstructs the structure of the social satire that turns the mainstream lost-and-found formula on its head, it feels like an onion, where the layers are the story but as long as you don't cut deep, tear ducts won't come into play. Lifting the veil on centuries of everyday patriarchy, it questions the practice of women covering their face among the majority community at a time when outside the theatres, power brokers are desperate to build a narrative around the hijab of Muslim women. Rao chooses to underline how patriarchy seeps through religious divides as a passing sequence captures a Muslim man talking of preserving identity while his wife's face is preserving identity while his wife's face is completely covered.

Abdul, the disabled beggar on the platform, is an observation of Muslims in the country, caught between persecution and persecution complex. Abdul is not what he looks like but that is his survival n, not an insidious ploy

Beyond mainstream politics
On the surface, the film is safely set in a fictitious place which feels like on the border of Utar Pradesh and Bihar where a young Deepak has to get over his male ego to express his love for his wife Phool. One can feel how he pulls his entire weight to utter those simple three words in English.

The period is 2001 when Narendra Modi took over as the Chief Minister of

The period is 2001 when Narendra Modi took over as the Chief Minister of Gujarat. In the opening train sequence, a passenger is reading a Hindi newspaper with the headline of PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee visiting Bhuj implying the period of the devastating earthquake. Had it been 2002, another debilitating event for our democracy would have been on the cover. This is not the first time that co-producer Aamir Khan has steered clear of Gujarat riots, in recent times. His last

cover. This is not use mix time that of co-producer Aamir Khan has steered clear of Gujarat riots, in recent times. His last film Laal Singh Chaddha conveniently erased the episode even when creative honesty demanded otherwise.

It is not that the star with a voice has fallen silent. Along with Kiran, he has found newer ways to subvert. An independent filmmaker and the government share a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law type relationship. In the film, when an ageing daughter-in-law asks her mother-in-law whether they could be friends, the older lady tells her to give it a try. The film offers a hand by promoting organic farming and beit padhao, beti organic farming and beti padhao, beti bachao but also shines a light on darkness

beneath the slogans. Through Manju Mai, the tea stall owner kulhad, the film tries to save us from a

fraud sold to young women in the name of tradition. But in its universe, some of the cynicism of the feminist Manju melts away when the 'submissive' Phool enters her space with the recipe of sweet kalakand.

Phool doesn't wilt because she has en trained in making someone else's

benotiones in obclasse she seek skitchen her own.

However, Manju is no lawyer or social worker – noble professions that are seen with suspicion these days. She is an entrepreneur who has been hardened by the vagaries of life. Manju and Phool don't just develop a covalent bond but an electrostatic attraction – where they give and take. Like Kiran and Ravi Kishan, the BJP lawmaker and socially aware actor cast to portray the malleable system in the film. Or like Aumir and Jio Studios. According to reports, the media and content arm of Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries has garnered 700

Reliance Industries has garnered ₹700 crore at the box office in 2023-24. With 11 theatrical releases, 35 direct-to-digital releases, and eight original web series releases, and eight original web series across languages and genres, the six-year-old company's output is bigger than any other film production company in the country. But, for now, they are just numbers. The Oscar nomination brings the credibility that the group seeks in the intangible space of culture. Its deep resources and network provide the small film the legs to last the expensive campaign to attract Academy voters and possibly explain the cultural nuances in storytelling.

telling. ter the *Lagaan* and *Taare Zameen* Par's experience, Aamir is wiser in making his investments. The audiences, meanwhile, are advised to take the message of the Jagte Raho call of the retired chaukidar of Laapataa Ladies

English K. Subrahmanian "Surprise!"

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know vour

"Do I see tears of sorrow or tears of joy

"Do I see tears of sorrow or tears of joy in your eyes?"

"Neither. I was cutting onions and..."

"How many times do I have to tell you, it's onions! The first syllable 'on' is not pronounced like the word 'on'. It's pronounced like the 'un' in words like 'bun' 'sun',..."

"Fun' and 'run'. I know that. But you see, a lot of people pronounce the first syllable like the word 'on'. So when I say the word, I automatically say 'on', instead of 'un'."

of 'un'."
"Avoid making such a mistake."

"I'll try, but it's very difficult;"
"Nothing is difficult if you put your
mind to it. Why were you cutting onions,

anyway?"
"My mother needed it for the salad..." "The what?"

"The what?"
"The salad. Oh, I'm sorry. The word is propounded 'salad', right? The first

rine saids. On, I'm sorry. The word is propounded 'salea', right'? The first syllable 'sa' is pronounced like the 'sa' in words like 'sand,' sad' and 'sate.'"

"And in the second syllable..."

"The 'a' is pronounced like the 'a' in 'China'. The stress is on the first syllable, 'sa', right?"

"Excellent."

"Excellent."

"Thanks. By the way, what are you doing here?"

"No, my parents want to see the newly constructed theatre tomorrow, so..."

"You thought it would be ado dide if I came along with you. After all, I'm..."
"I didn't. come here to invite you."

"You didn't?"

"No, I didn't. I came to see our mechanic. I wanted him to give our car

"No, I didn't. I came to see our mechanic. I wanted him to give our car the once-over before.."
"The 'once-over' What does it mean?"
"When you give something the 'once-over', you look at or examine it very quickly. The principal, gave the plans the once-over before approving them.
'Once-over' and be used with people."
"Did the mechanic give your car the once-over?"

"Did the mechanic give your car the once-over?"

"Yes, he certainly did. Hey, what's the wonderful smell?"

"Must be the cake in the oven."

"You mean oven. The 'o' does not sound like 'oh. It's pronounced like the 'u' in 'gun', 'bun' and 'nun'. It is pronounced like the 'o' in 'onion'."

"So its oven, with the stress on the first svilable."

"Could I have a piece of that cake?"

"Certainly not!"

"There's no point in asking you. I'll ask your mother."

ur Initial.
"She's not here. She's gone to buy ice
gam. You see, we're having guests cream. You see, we're having gue tonight. And we'll have cake and ice-cream for des

Which desert? The Gobi or the Sahara? Ha! Ha!"

Sahara? Hal Hal"
"What's so funny?"
"The word you're looking for is not
'desert', but 'dessert'. The stress is on the
second syllable 'sert'. The 's' is
pronounced like the 'z' in 'zip', 'zoo' and
'zebra' and the 'ert' sounds like the 'urt'
in words like 'hurt' and 'curt'. The first
syllable 'de' is like the 'di' in 'dip', 'ditot'
and 'dish'.

Published in The Hindu on Aumest 3, 1993.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers dailyquiz@thehindu.co.

On October 1, Jimmy Carter became the first President of the United States to turn 100. How well do you know Carter and the events that he has lived through?

Radhika Santhanam

OUESTION 1

In 2002, Jimmy Carter received the Nobel Peace Prize. According to the Nobel Committee, he ought to have received it earlier, in 1978. Why did it think so?

QUESTION 2

The end of Carter's presidency is often seen as a disastrous period in U.S. foreign policy. Among other events, U.S. diplomats and citizens were taken hostage in country X. The citizens of country X were furious that the U.S. had granted admission to a recently deposed leader for medical treatment and wanted him back to stand trial for alleged abuses. Name country X

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QUESTION 3

Questron 3
A few days ago, it was reported that
the site of the worst nuclear accident
in U.S. history, which took place
during the Carter regime, will reopen
by 2028 and sell power to a
multinational company. What is the
site called?

QUESTION 4

This village in Haryana was renamed on the instructions of Morarji Desai in 1978. As Carter's mother had visited a haveli in the village often, he too visited the village, along with his wife What is this village called?

In 1978, Carter was warned by a politician that Ted Kennedy might rur against him in 1980. Name the



This is one of the weirdest monuments to a politician. This statue is said to even have helped Carter win the election in 1976. Why does the statue show a peanut?

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This historic event symbolically brought to an end the eastern bloc of Germany. Ans: The fall of the Berlin Wall

 This particular movement in Germany, often included as one among the Revolutions of 1989, led to the downfall of the eastern German bloc Ans: Peaceful Revolution

3. This agreement decided that Germany would be divided and ruled between the main allied vers post World War II. Ans: The Potsdam

powers post World War II. Ans: The Possuan-Agreement
4. The first person to use the term 'Iron Curtain' during the Cold War. Ans: Winston Churchill
5. This Chancellor of West Germay released a 10-point programme which called for the events reunification of the two Germanies. Ans: Chancellor Helmut Kohl
Visual: Identify this checkpoint. Ans: Checkpol Charlie

Singh Bhadauria K.N. Viswanathan Bharath Viswanathan

Word of the day

Gavage:

Feeding that consists of the delivery of a nutrient solution (as through a nasal tube) to someone who cannot or will not eat

Synonym: forced feeding

Usage: Two of the main compounds were administered by oral gavage.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/gavagepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /gaˈvɑːʒ/, /gæˈvɑːʒ/



Text & Context, please write to letters@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Text & Context'

Should EC ensure internal democracy in political parties?



ormer Chief ection





ndia's multi-party democracy thrives on diversity but often sees political parties driven by individual charisma rather than internal democracy. Despite their role in upholding the nation's democratic framework, many parties struggle to maintain democratic structures. Can the Election Commission (EC) ensure these organisations practise internal democracy? Former Chief Election missioner O. P. Rawat and PRS Legislative arch President M.R. Madhavan discuss th Research President M.R. Madhavan discuss this question with Sreeparna Chakrabarty. Edited

The EC has been thinking of nudging political parties on the issue of internal democracy. But how can they do it?

O. P. Rawat: The EC is the registering autho for all the political parties in our country. As such, the EC monitors whether they are functioning according to their Constitution, by-laws, etc. And in the process, they also oversee whether the elections to their office bearers are taking place regularly.

But there has been one important point in this whole issue. This was the 2002 ruling of the this whole issue. This was the 2002 ruling of the Supreme Court which says that the EC cannot go into the political process and anything which is part of the political process per se. That is why it has no power to de-register a political proty based on any violation of these things. They can de-register if registration has been obtained on the basis of fraud or other things, but they cannot de-register a party if they don't have periodic elections. Otherwise, to whatever extent the laws permit, the EC is doing it.

M. R. Madhavan: I have a slightly different way of looking at it: what is the EC's core mandate according to the Constitution? Their mandate is to conduct elections for Parliament, State Legislatures, and the posts of President and Vice President of India. They have to maintain electoral rolls and under Article 103, they advise the order of the Constitution of the President of the Constitution of the President of the Constitution of the President of the Preside on disqualification of any MP. There is a similar one for MLAs other than the anti-defection disqualifications, which is decided by the Speaker and not by them. That is their limited mandate.

And the question is are they carrying out this

And the question is are they carrying out this mandate well or not? So, any institution, should first do its core job and then take on more things. And my argument is that the EC has deteriorated in its core job and they are unable to do even that.

So before giving any institution an extra mandate, I would require them to do their core job first. That is my limited point and I would not give them anything more because they are not competent enough to do what they are supposed to do in any case. supposed to do in any case.



What would be your views on whether the EC should have the power to de-register parties at all?

OPR: I would like to say that the EC does whatever is mandated to it with efficiency. The only thing is that when it comes to the de-registration of parties, it will have many

different directions or dimensions. You know, elections are challenged only by way of election petitions according to our stitution. We have been monitoring this and find that these disputes are much less every time

find that these disputes are much less every timover the years. If you compare us with the democracy in the most developed country as well, they had a storning of their legislature when the results were against one candidate. This kind of thing, we never witnessed in our country after any election, and political acceptance of the election results is beyond imagination for all democracies which is borne by international conferences which I attended and which my colleagues attended everywhere. Election Commissioners from different countries say that India is a golden example where acceptance of election results by all political parties is enormous.

where acceptance or election results by an political parties is enormous.

With these credentials, if the EC is made to go with these credentials, if the political process for de-registering, we will be running the risk of getting the poll body into a model where even the main stakeholders – the political parties – will start developing suspicion. So, I think we have to take a view in totality not only in the context of political parties about registration and regulation but also about the delivery of elections time and again on the stipulated time and in a free fair manner.

MRM: So, I am not going to talk about the EC's reputation, which has been very high, but it has, in my opinion, faltered in the rating bit.

But back to the idea of political parties being regulated by them, I would agree with Mr. Rawat in saying that they should not get into that. Because then the EC becomes political, and susceptible to various political pressures, it should maintain its distance from the politics of



Election Commissioners from different countries say that India is a golden example where acceptance of election results by all political parties is enormous

the day, So, I would say whether parties hold the day. So, I would say whether parties hold internal elections or not, you cannot regulate them because even today they are required to hold. But what do they do? There is somebody who manages it so that somebody is contesting unelected or it is managed so that the people know who is going to get elected. I would say the discipline of political parties should come from the electorate. If people think that this party is not democratic and you want a democratic party, don't vote for them. If people want them, they will vote for them.

Is there any existing legal ground on which elections can be mandated within political parties?

OPR: No, I feel there is nothing except for this registration of political parties by the EC and the periodical review of compliance with their Constitution, their by-laws, and all those things. But in the end, it is a very kind of loose nce which is visible.

Probably the most well-known instance of EC Probably the most well-known instance of E intervening in the lack of democracy issue was when they rejected the YSRCP proposal or make Jagan Mohan Reddy permanent president of the party. They said that such a tep was inherently anti-democratic. Was his within its mandate?

OPR: Actually, the EC does not have that kind of mandate, but within the framework of the political party registration rules, the EC is overseeing the compliance with their Constitution and their by-laws. Now amending that is contrary to the democratic idea of periodic elections and that is the point at which the EC took shelter to reject the move.

MRM: Does it matter? Because let them make that intervention. The party re-elects the same person again, who will contest unopposed. I mean the whole thing is that what we are talking about is not the reality but what could be in the letter of the law and what can they do. But if reality, political parties are being essentially dominated by one personality who controls the whole thing, then there is nothing that stops them from having an election with one candidate who will get selected for a post. So, it will tick the boxes, but there is absolutely no difference in practice.

In a situation where we want or think that the EC should regulate internal democracy in political parties, how can such a law be brought in?

MRM: My simple answer is that it is not needed. So, the question should not arise.

OPR: I agree with Mr. Madhavan. We should leave this kind of decision to the people who are the sovereign electorate and therefore I personally feel that one should not think of that.

Why this question arises again and again, is that the EC has made certain observations in many of the cases where parties are split.

OPR: Actually, these issues fall under the political party's symbols order, 1968, Paragraph 15. And under that, EC goes by four tests when there is a split, whether every faction has been following the party Constitution, whether they have been having the majority of the party the organisation whether they have been having the majority of the legislature wing or they are proceeding according to the by-laws.

All these four tests are applied every time starting from Sadiq Ali case. It always comes down to the legislative majority, because all

down to the legislative majority, because all

other tests fail. The only test which is amenable to the summary inquiry is the number of legislatures with the splinter group. So, whoever has the majority of a number of legislators with the splinter group gets the party symbol and the party name and that has been the case with the party name and that has been the case with the EC. In the text arguments are there where the arguments cover the aspects that since this group which was in command did not hold elections, did not sort of follow these by-laws, and therefore whatever orders they have passe for disqualifying are invalid all those things are just for by way of explanation.

MRM: I will just add one thing, which is that I mean, I am looking at it as a citizen, right? I mean, it is in our interest that EC has a very high credibility on whatever it does, so that we trust

They need to have an objective way of making the decision and as Mr. Rawat said, if you are the decision and as Mr. Rawat said, if you are counting the number of legislators supporting, there is an actual number there and you can count if number A is greater than number B or is number A less than number B and make that decision. So, that is a fairly wise way of doing it without getting politically entrapped and I think they have been smart at doing that.



To listen to the full interview Scan the code or go to the link www.thehindu.com

NOTEBOOK

Endless tides in reporting Maharashtra's GPS

It is a dynamic political arena marked by constant engagement, where reporting on governance, politics, and society is anything but dull

aharashtra, the land of Chhatra-pati Shivaji Maharaj, is a relent-less battleground of political ac-tivity. In the two years since I started reporting on the State's GPS — gover-nance, politics, and society — there has not been a dull day. New controversies of ten arise before the previous ones have even begun to cool down.

ten arise before the previous ones have even begun to cool down.

The Opposition's vigorous efforts keep issues in the spotlight, while the ruling dispensation is never far behind in delivering rebuttals, whether through traditional media or a post on X.

The political landscape here is markedly different from Telangana, where I reported from 2015 to 2022. In Telangana, the K. Chandrashekhar Rao-led TRS (now BRS) government dominated the narrative, leaving little room for dissent, as the Opposition was weakened by defections and had minimal representation in the Assembly, Reporting there felt like covering a monologue, with few challenges to the ruling party's agenda. The Opposition parties struggled to make their presence parties struggled to make their presence felt. In contrast, the Opposition MVA in the western State is vocal, challenging the

government at every move.

Amid this storm, it is easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. The issues that dominate headlines one day can fade from public consciousness almost as quickly a

blic consciousness almost as quickly as they arise. This is not just a symptom of the State's volatile political climate, but a reflection of the evolving news cycle. Grave matters often do not receive the follow-up they deserve. As journalists, we try to keep pace, but the flood of news can sometimes wash away our resolve to revisit stories once they are off the front page. It is a challenge to ensure that im-portant issues are not lost in the noise. I have found myself grappling with this is-sue more than once. However, we often write long-form pieces on these issues. write long-form pieces on these issues.

hoping to provide the depth and context that gets lost in the rush. One of the first controversies I covered after shifting to Maharashtra was Vedanta aner siming to Manalastiat was vedanta Foxconn's decision to open a semicon-ductor plant in neighbouring Gujarat in-stead of Maharashtra. The Opposition criticised the Eknath Shinde-led govern-ment for its perceived failure. This story dominated the headlines, and journalists were caught in a whirlwind of press con-

dominated the headilines, and journalists were caught in a whirlwind of press conferences, statements, and counter-statements. But as with so many other issues, the noise died down. The media moved on, as did the politicians, leaving behind a trail of unanswered questions.

The latest issue where we journalists lost track of follow-up is the alleged sexual assault of two kindergarten girls in Badlapur. The streets were filled with angry voices demanding justice, and the media played its part. But then, on August 26, a giant statue of the Maratha warrior king Shivaji Maharaj collapsed. The Opposition was quick to pounce, alleging corruption in the statue's construction. The sexual assault case was suddenly overshadowed. This is a stark reminder of how quickly things can change, and how easily the media's attention can be diverted. The role of dia's attention can be diverted. The role of the Opposition cannot be overstated, as it keeps the government on its toes and, by

keeps the government on its toes and, by extension, keeps us journalists on ours. Amid the cacophony of daily news, some issues refuse to fade away. Whether it is the ongoing battle over reservations for the Maratha community or the perennial debate over development, these stories keep coming back, demanding attention.

tion. We continue to distil through the noise and deliver what matters while waiting—for the next big event, twist, and revelation. This constant churn is exhausting, but it is what makes reporting on Maharashtra's GPS so rewarding.

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

A flight to hope

ard a Hellenic Air Force C130 as they are evacuated from Lebanon, due to ongoing hostilities between Hezboliah and the Israeli forces

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Man Thindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO OCTOBER 4, 1974

Many top smugglers crippled by govt. drive

Madras, Oct. 3: The anti-smuggling crack-down launched by the enforcement agencies has more or less "crippled" some of the top smugglers, and they have lost their "morale" for dealing in contraband gold and other goods, according to Revenue Intelligence authorities here.

Some of the lesser known persons engaged in gold smuggling have lost their heart and expressed their desire to branch off into other

Some of the top smugglers detained under MISA in the South are said to have had an all-India network. Recent raids on residences, godowns, etc., of persons known to be their close associates resulted in a catch of Rs. 70 close associates resulted in a catch of Rs. 70 lakhs worth of primary gold. These men are known to have dealt mainly in smuggled gold from Sri Lanka. The gold from Sri Lanka was mainly melted from ornaments. Some of the seized gold bore the markings "People's Bank of Sri Lanka." The gold brought from Dubai and other areas was smuggled into convenien landing places along the west coast between Kasaragod and Janmagar and transported to key distribution points like Bangalore, Madras Madurai, Rajahmundry and Vijayawada. A HUNDRED YEARS AGO OCTOBER 4, 1924

Government Committee.

Simla, Oct. 3: The Government of India announce through a resolution in the Gazette of India the appointment of two officers to enquire into the question of the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking tracts. Mr. Sachidananda Sinha Oriya-speaking tracts. Mr. Sachidananda Sinha moved in the old Imperial Council a resolution recommending that a mixed Committee of non-officials and officials be appointed to formulate a scheme for the amalgamation of Oriya-speaking tracts at present administered o controlled by the Covernments of Madras, Bengal, and the Central Provinces with the existing Orissa Division of the Province of Bihar and Orissa; and in accordance with the promiss then made on behalf of the government, much information on the subject has been collected.

CM C

Text&Context

THE MODEL HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The number of cases registered under the NDPS in H.P. last year

According to po data, 3,118 peop including six foreigners, were arrested in Himachal Pradesh under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act in 2023. PT

Amount released by the UN for Nigeria flood victims

in S million. The country's monsoon has killed more than 300 people and it has affected more than 1.2 million people in at least 31 out of its 36 States, according to the National Emergency Management Agency. AFP

The total cost of the PM Internship scheme in 2024-25

800 In crore. On Thursday, the government rolled out an internship programme that will provide financial assistance of ₹60,000 per annum to 1 crore youth over five years. PR

Number of Lebanese people killed in Israel-Hezbollah crossfire

This figure includes those who have been killed since the Gaza war erupted on October 7, 2023, according to Lebanon's disaster management agency. AFP

The loan approved to support Himachal tourism

In \$ million. The Asian Development Bank has approved a loan to support sustainable tourism developmen projects in Himachal Pradesh. PTI COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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On SIPCOT and Tamil Nadu industries

When was the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited (SIPCOT) formed? Has it generated job opportunities? Where was the first ever SIPCOT industrial park established? How has it improved the State's industrial sector? What about startups?

EXPLAINER

Sangeetha Kandavel

The story so far:

Group, producer of commercial and passenger vehicles, held the groundbreaking ceremony of its new, world-class production facility to manufacture cars and SUVs, at the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited (SIPCOT) industrial Tamil Nadu Limited (SIPCOT) industrial park at Panapakkam in Ramipted district, Tamil Nadu. This is Tamil Nadu's Soth SIPCOT industrial park and the 27th SIPCOT park of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) government. The Tami Nadu government has set a target of becoming a \$1 trillion economy by 2030 and SIPCOT will play a crucial role in helping the State reach this goal. nt. The Tami

Why was SIPCOT formed? SIPCOT was established on March 25, 1971 with the objective to plan, develop, operate and promote industrial growth in Tamil Nadu. It was started with a vision to

Tamil Nadu. It was started with a vision to promote medium and large scale industries in Tamil Nadu, as the State was in the nascent stage of its industrial growth with the initial success of the MSME sector. The first industrial park was established in Ramipet in 1973, with the land extent for the first phase here being 729.79 acres. Thirumalai Chemicals Pvt. Ltd (47.25 acres), Ultra Marines & Pigments Ltd. (19.10 acres) and SRP Tools Ltd (13.5 acres) were the initial firms that booked space at the first SIPOCT park. booked space at the first SIPCOT park.

How did SIPCOT distribute itself? According to details provided by SIPCOT Managing Director K. Senthil Raj, in the Managing Director K. Senthil Raj, in the initial years, two industrial parks were established – Ranipet and Hosur, with the former focussing on leather, chemicals and pharma industries while the latter focused on automobiles and the general engineering sector.



uick rise: The SIPCOT industrial estate in Ranipet, Tamil Nadu, FILE PHOTO

Further information shared by SIPCOT shows that Kanchipuram was developed as an auto and electronics cluster, due to its proximity to the capital Chennai, and because of the presence of companies like Hyundai Motors, Yamaha, Eicher, Renault Nissan, Daimler, Foxconn, Flextronics and Samsung among others. Chengalpattu was developed as an IT cluster due to the presence of IT majors like TCS, CTS, Syntel and Hexaware to name a few and has now emerged as a data centre hub. Additionally, Hosur in Krishnagiri district was developed to have a SIPCOT park to take advantage of the human and intellectual capital of Bangalore. To promote the development of industrially backward districts, Manamadurai, Nilakotai, Pudukottai, Gangaikondan etc were also developed.

Currently, Tamil Nadu has 50 SIPCOT industrial parks. Around 17 more parks Further information shared by SIPCOT

will come up in the next one year while many of the existing parks will be expanded. Mr. Senthil Raj stated that the data showed that SIPCOT has been expanded. Mr. Senthil Raj stated that the data showed that SIPCOT has been instrumental in the establishment and growth of 3,290 industrial units with a cumulative investment of about ₹1.85 lakh crore over the past 53 years, generating over 8.20 lakh job opportunities.

What efforts is SIPCOT taking to What efforts is SIPCOT taking to improve industrial growth in T.N.? Currently, SIPCOT is focusing on promoting sector specific industrial parks such as an international furniture park at Thoothukudi; a medical devices park at Thoothukudi; a medical devices park at Oragadam; electronic manufacturing clusters at Manallur and Pillaipakkam; mega food parks at Manapparai, Tindivanam and Theni; a future mobility park and a e-vehicle park at Shoolagiri and Manallur respectively. Efforts are also

being taken to provide accommodation to the workforce, with SIPCOT developing the workforce, with SIPCOT developing an industrial housing facility with 18,720 beds at Vallam-Vaclagal. Apart from this, it has also formed a Special Purpose Vehicle called the Tamil Nadu Industrial Housing Private Limited (TINHIPL) to provide affordable and sustainable housing for industrial workers. Currently, TNHIPL is developing a 807-bedded working womens' hostel in the SIPCOT Industrial Park. Siruseri. Park, Siruseri.

Additionally to manage water, Tertiary Acamonany to manage water, retriary Freatment Reverse Osmosis (TTRO) water is being supplied to industries located in the Kanchipuram district from the 45 MLD TTRO plant established by the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Supergrave Rapad (CMWSR) in Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) in Koyambedu. SIPCOT is also establishing a 20 MLD TTRO plant at Kelavarapalli to cater to the water requirements of industries located in the Hosur area.

What is SIPCOT trying to do in the

startup eco-system? SIPCOT Industrial Innovation Centres (SIIC) have been established in SIPCOT industrial parks at Hosur and Sriperumbudur at a project cost of ₹33.46 Sriperumbudur at a project cost of ₹33.46 crore by availing a grant of ₹14.20 crore from the Tamil Nadu Innovation Initiatives (TANII) scheme under the State Planning Commission, Government of Tamil Nadu.

According to Mr. Senthil Raj, these centres are envisioned as world-class incubation centres capable of nurturing and accelerating industrial innovations.

and accelerating industrial innovations and technology powered startups, boosting the growth of the high-technology sector in Tamil Nadu and further strengthening the productivity and competitiveness of the manufacturing sector. SIPCOT envisages to evaluate over 1,000 innovative ideas, over 200 prototypes and promote 30 startups' graduation till the seed investment stage. SIPCOT is also developing a state-of-the-art skill development centre in SIPCOT Industrial Park, Shoolagiri, Krishnagiri district. and accelerating industrial innovations

THE GIST

SIPCOT was established on March 25, 1971 with the objective to plan, develop, operate and promote industrial growth in Tamil Nadu.

Currently, Tamil Nadu has 50 SIPCOT industrial parks. Around 17 more parks will come up in the next one year come up in the next one year while many of the existing parks will be expanded. SIPCOT has been instrumental in the establishment and growth of 3,290 industrial units with a cumulative investment of about ₹1.85 lakh crore over the past 53 years, generating over £.20 lakh job opportunities. opportunitie:

SIPCOT envisages to evaluate over 1,000 innovative ideas, over 200 prototypes and promote 30 startups' graduation till the seed investment stage.

What is the status of the **Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0?**

What are the various health and environmental risks arising from legacy waste dumpsites?

Sreeparna Chakrabarty

The story so far:

ndia has more than 3,000 legacy waste dumpsites, with 2,424 of them having a waste load of more than 1,000 tonnes. The Central than 1,000 tonnes. The Central government launched the legacy waste management project as part of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBA) 2.0 in October 2021, for a period of five years till 2026. However, more than halfway through the time period, only 471 out of the 2,424, that is 19.43% of dumpsites have been completely remediated.

What are legacy waste dumpsites: Legacy waste dumpsites are dumpsites that contain solid waste that have been collected and stored for years in an unscientific and uncontrolled manner Municipal solid waste generation in India is estimated to be around 1,50,000 tonnes per day, according to the State of India's Environment 2023 report. With almost no installed facility in India for handling solid

waste, the municipal corporations, municipal councils and *nagar* (city) panchayats have traditionally opted for creating man-made garbage hills.

These dumpsites originally developed on the outskirts of the cities. However, with the expansion of cities, these sites with the expansion of cines, these sites are now often found in the heart of cities on barren land or in landfills. According to estimates of the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, approximately 15,000 acres of prime real estate is buried under nearly 16 crore tonnes of legacy waste across the country.

What are the health hazards?

Legacy waste dumpsites can pose a number of health hazards for citizens Exposure to emissions from hazardous te can irritate the mouth and throat. Inhaling methane from landfills can cause nausea, vomiting, and loss of coordination. Ragpickers who work at landfills can develop skin allergies from years of exposure to waste. People who live near landfills may be prone to

developing tuberculosis, asthma, diabetes, depression, cholera, malaria, and other diseases. They are also a source of greenhouse gas emissions, such as me and carbon dioxide.

What is the Swachh Bharat Mission? What is the Swachh Bharat Mission? The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) or Clean India Mission is a country-wide campaign launched by the Central government on October 2, 2014 to eliminate open defecation and to create Open Defecation Free (ODF) vilages. The mission aimed to achieve an "open-defecation free" India by October 2, 2019 coinciding with the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi through the construction of toilets. the construction of toilets.

In 2021, the Government launched its second edition – the five-year Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0), committing to making all cities "garbage-free cities" by 2026, while maintaining ODF status across 4,372 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). It also has a vision of 100% source segregation, door

to door collection and scientific management of all fractions of waste, including safe disposal in scientific landfills. The SBM 2.0 aims to remediate all legacy dumpsites and convert them into green zones. The mission has also

into green zones. The mission has also made provisions for scientific landfills to dispose of untreated inert waste and process rejects, in order to prevent fresh dumpsites being created.

Action plans amounting to ₹3,226 crore of Central Share (CS) assistance on remediation of legacy waste dumpsites has been approved so far. An advisory has also been issued to the States/Union Territory administrations on landfill reclamation. As per financial norms of retritory administrations on landing reclamation. As per financial norms of centrally sponsored schemes, State/ UT governments are required to put in a matching share from their own side, whi disbursing the funds to respective ULBs.

What has been the progress so far? According to the dashboard of the Swachh Bharat Mission website, as on September 24, out of the 2,424 dumpsites, 471 sites have been remediated, remediation in 1,226 has been approved and is on-going, and 727 sites have been untouched. As far as area is concerned, of the total 17,039.71 acres 27 % has been reclaimed and 73% is yet to be reclaimed.

Among States, Tamil Nadu has the maximum area reclaimed from dum at 837 acres (42%). Gujarat is the bes performing State with 75% area (698 of 938 acres) of landfills reclaimed.

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THE GIST

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) or Clean India Mission is a country-wide campaign launched by the Central government on October 2, 2014 to eliminate open defecation and to create Open Defecation Free (ODF) villages.

In 2021, the Government launched its second edition — the five-year Swachh Bharat . (Clean India) Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0), committing to making all cities "garbage-free cities" by 2026.

Exposure to emissions from hazardous waste can irritate the mouth and throat. Inhaling methane from landfills can cause nausea, vomiting, and loss of coordination.

CM CM

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2024

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

OVERPOWER, OVERTAKE, OVERCOME,

- SERENA WILLIAMS

The Indian EXPRESS

S FOUNDED BY S RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

THE LONG ARM

Income Tax should address alleged tax transgressions, not raise foreign bogeys or behave like a corporate's hired gun

HE INCOME TAX department's crackdown on five NGOs — including one of the country's most respected public policy think tanks, the Centre for Policy Research — reeks of disquieting overreach, it is a heavy-handed bid to shrink spaces for free expression and civil society action in a democracy. As a report in this paper has shown, the 'intimation letters' issued to the NGOs are loose and voluminous, straying far beyond the I-T department's remit. On the one hand, they seek to weaponise the rule book's fine print against the targeted NGOs. And, on the other, they indulge in free-style spectre-painting and broad-brush conspiracy-mongering. There are several pointed references to 'foreign funding', unsubstantiated allegations that it was being 'misused' for at the way less." "retiridies contrast to the objects for which those the print of the contrast to the objects for which they several pointed references to Toreign funding , unsubstantated allegations that it was being "misused" for, at the very least, "activities contrary to the objects for which they (the NGOs) were formed", and, in fact, to fulfil agendas that seek to stall this country's "economic development projects". The I-T department does not just go beyond its man-date of assessing and collecting taxes by arrogating to itself the onerous responsibility of safeguarding "national interest" from NGOs allegedly bent on hurting it. It also sees in-ter-connections and linkages of processes and personnel between these separate entities when the properties of the process of the properties of the proper

ter-connections and initiages of processes and personner occewer these separate entities where none exist, and tries to paint in sinister buse those that do.

Several concerns are sparked by the I-T department's bid to squeeze the living spaces of these NGOs, by surveys, summons and bulky notices. In tandem with a freeze on inflow of foreign funds through suspension of their FCRA registration, it is a two-pronged attack that is designed to wound, if not to dill. To begin with, the indiscriminate sighting and demonisation of the "foreign hand" is strikingly outdated and ill-fitting in a country that celmonisation of the Toreign hand' is strikingly outdated and ill-litting in a country that cel-ebrates foreign direct investment in other sectors and congradulates itself for seizing its opportunities in an increasingly interconnected global economy. There is also a larger dis-trust at work here that is even more disturbing. The ruling establishment at the Centre, now in its third term, has been visibly ill at ease with civil society actors. Be it think tanks and research institutions and universities, or protests and agitations geared towards a spe-cific governance cause or policy goal, the onus has been on them to prove their innocence. They have been called upon to perform their allegiance to a "national interest" defined by the powers-that-be. This constant bainting by the state of non-governmental organisation and institutions that are autonomous and outside its direct control, its insecure and restrictive view of their legitimate activities, is taking a toll. After all, a deliberative democratic

strictive view of their legitimate activities, is taking a toll. After all, a deliberative democracy thrives on ideas and innovation, it needs free and open spaces to spread and grow.

The I-T department must be reined in by those who pull its strings, NGOs must be allowed to do their work without constantly looking over their shoulders. The country's coal mines and thermal power plant projects that the I-T department seems to be so protective about will go on. Development is not threatened by the People. It certainly does not require the taxman's ministrations. Surely, corporates like the Adain Group and JSW, the two named in these reports, can and should address legal challenges to their projects — the Income Tax department should not behave like their hired gun.

ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

Shelving latest elephant census shows government's conservation efforts in poor light

RELIABLE POPULATION estimate is a basic prerequisite for conserving endan realizate. For Unital Investments a basic prerequisite for conserving endam-tion of the property of the prope big cat, the Tiger Census today provides a more accurate picture of the status of the animal compared to the early years of this century. Other animals, however, have not received comparable attention. The country's other charismatic mammal, the elephant, is a case in point. A census is conducted every five years to measure its population. After 2017, the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), the surveying agency, changed its method. From relying on direct headcount or dung count of elephants, the WII adopted the statistical modeling approach used to monitor tigers. Its report, which shows a substantial decline in the animal's population could whe be a reflection of the long-terms status of the elephant— and not the five years of the Census. The findings could have led to a debate on the conservation of the animal, which has come into frequent conflict with humans in the last two decades. However, as an investigation by this newspaper shows, government has chosen to she've the report. The elephant's habitat has undergone changes in recent years due to the conversion of fregaren-forest areas to agriculture and development projects. As the WIII report points out, fragmenbig cat, the Tiger Census today provides a more accurate picture of the status of the animal

The eepnant's habitat has undergone changes in recent years due to the conversion of forest areas to agriculture and development projects. As the Will report points out, fragmentation of habitats "has prompted long-ranging elephants to venture into unoccupied areas." Unable to find food or dispersal areas, the large animals become crop raiders. Population estimates that map the animal's distribution and herd structure—not just in reserve forests, but also in human-dominated landscapes—could be the first step to reduce such conflicts. The data can spur discussions on a viable population that can share space with humans. This information is not also the properties of the

The data can spar discussions on a value population that can share space with number. The information can also lay the ground for eco-sensitive developmental planning, in 2010, an Elephant Task Force, constituted by the environment ministry, advocated a "robust science-based assessment and monitoring" of the large mammals. The then UPA government did not do much by way of working on the panel's recommendations. The NDA government claims that the elephant's status has stabilised in the country, its prevarication over the latest survey, however, casts its efforts in conserving the elephant in poor light and also goes against claims of finding solutions to human-animal conflicts.

IN THE GAME

With some of the best players fortified by the Women's Premier League, India are strong contenders in the T20 women's cup

NDIA BEGIN THEIR women's T20 World Cup campaign with a genuine belief in ending their long wait for an ICC title. Having faltered in summit clashes in both the 50-over and 20-over formats, they have leaned on a sports psychologist this time. Blessed with some of the best players in the world, fortified by experience in the nen's Premier League, India look like real contenders. This coincides with six-time

champion Australia's waning win-percentage in the last one year. England have been quiet in ICC events, but are coming off a successful season of England have been quiet in ILC events, but are coming of a successitus season of Hundred — cricker's latest variation. South Africa were runners-up last time and West Indies are past champions. New Zealand can't be taken lightly and even Sri Lanka and Pakistan have had some impressive results of late. But this World Cup seems a pivotal moment when an Indian triumph could launch the women's game into the stratosphere. There are still some who don't treat women's cricket on par with the men's game. The women's competition needs to be judged on its own merits. The elegance of a Smriti

Mandhana, the bat-swing of Harmanpreet Kaur, the pace of South African Shabrini Israail, the all-round skill of Aussic Ellyse Perry and smarts of Shreyanka Patil need to be appre-ciated for their athletic excellence. Shafail Verma can hit the ball into the stands on any ground in the world, but Richa Chosh pulling off a successful low-score chase against Australia with tail-enders, could provide an equally compelling storyline. Women's cricket is happily grooving to its own cadence.

Both for and against



On One Nation One Election, arguments are limited. Democracy needs an imagination beyond timing of polls

Many of the criticisms seem to employ the same formalistic logic the government does. One election equals lower expenditure. It equals more

national unity, and more efficiency. But the critics also seem to fall into a similar

formalism: Staggered elections equal diversity and more democracy. Critics of

the proposal are right in one respect — there are lots of small reforms in elections, in Parliament that are more low-risk and have a high beneficial impact for democracy.

PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

IMUST CONFESS to a somewhat more agnostic view of One Nation, One Election (ONOE) than most of my colleagues in Political Science. Ido not find the government's rationale for it compelling. The language of the Kovind committee report is full of howders. The idea that this is necessary for rational unity, governmental efficiency or reducing election expenditure is speculative at best. But the more! lear the grounds on which the proposal is critically a state of the proposal is critically a state of the proposal is critically a state of the proposal is critically and a state of the proposal is critically a state of the proposal is the sea are merely assumptions that online and an admitted and a state of the proposal is the sea are merely assumptions that in all illectibood, will be subverted by the dynamics of politics. Actual dynamics under-determine outcomes. First, it is not clear why ONOE is thought to be incompanied to when the state of the proposal is the sea of the proposal is the sea of the proposal in the calendar of elections in the proposal is the sea of the proposal in the calendar of elections. It's a rhetorical red herring. Second, it is not clear why such a proposal necessarily entails an impatience with the clutter of democrate politics. It still takes elections seriously, Yes, there are elites who might be impatient with the so-called clutter. But he proposal by itself has no such implication. It seems that many of the critics seem to want to reduce democracy just to staggered elections. But democracy requires much more. It requires the formation of considered public.

Der Will rethantsmilar], and partisant compe-tition. But democracy requires much more. It requires the formation of considered public opinion, civil society mobilisation, the match-ing of public accountability to time horizons of policies. The most considered challenge with policies. The most considered challenge with frequent elections is that we operate only no mode of our democratic being — the mode of partisanship, ONOE might actually be good for social movements, since one of the ways in which our democracy has been impoversibled is that we have let partisanship colonise democracy all the way down. Bections are no mode, and their essence is not just voter accountability but partisanship.

It is at least as likely that other modes of mo-bilisation and accountability can emerge if we are not under the constant shadow of parti-sanship. We actually might get other, more creative forms of democratic clutter. Third, it is not clear why ONOE necessar-ily entails presidentialism, or that it will 'na-tionalise' state elections. People worry that if national and state elections are held to-gether, somehow national issues will domi-nate. In part this claim is based on ambigu-ous evidence from a few states which experience simultaneous elections with the Centre. But there is a fallacy of composition. It is not clear that if simultaneous elections were to happen nationally, the same result would follow. Moreover, there is an anti-dem-ocratic elitism in this argument, as if voters are not intelligent enough to distinguish lo-cal versus national issues or candidates. In fact, national leaders may have to rely more not call celaders may have to rely more

orante causain in this argument, as it voters are not intelligent enough to distinguish local versus national issues or candidates. In fact, national leaders may have to rely more onlocal collaborators since they cannot spend as much time in each state, as they can do now when elections are staggered. They could also have to worry that local anger can rebound nationally it fively only tap attention. Our current system did not prevent semi-presidentialism. Whether ONOE turns presidential is vastly under-determined as is whether the direction of influence will be from national to local or vice versa.

Fourth, there is a worry that this signifies the diminiution of the power of the representative, and hence, the dignity of legislative assemblies like Parliament. This argument is perplexing. For one thing, the anti-defection Bill already effectively killed the power of the individual representative and made them creatures of their party. Second, no-confidence motions almost newer succeed. Since Independence, of the 27 motions, arguably only one succeeded. State legislatures are already defunct as institutions of accountability. The dignity of partiament has to be restored, but agon NOVE may be orthogonal to it. There is the tricky issue of what happens if a government falls midway. Voucould argue that if you bring a government down, it is more hones to have to face an election for the remaining duration of the assembly. This is actually more democratically account-

able than relying on backroom deals. Having an occasional assembly term be for less than five years so that the clock can be reset might not be aesthetically symmetrical, but there is nothing undemocratic about it.

five years so that the clock can be reset might not be aesthetically symmetrical, but there is nothing undemocratic about it.

Septicism about some of the criticisms of the ONOE proposal on the grounds that it is anti-democratic does not mean that the arguments for the proposal are strong, It is just that many of the criticisms seem to employ the same formalistic logic the government does. One election equals lower experiently and the criticism seem to employ the same formalistic logic the government does. One election equals lower experiently and more efficiency. But the criticis also seem to fall into a similar formalisms. Saggered elections equal diversity and more democracy. Critics of the proposal are right in one respect. There are lots of small reforms in elections, in Parliament that are more low-risk and have a high beneficial impact for democracy. These should be tried first.

Moving to ONOE will be constitutionally cumbersome. It is actually not clear that this reduce expenditure, especially if we think of openditure by candidates. It is not clear it will reduce the pressures for "fiscal populism" (this should be less of awony for us than oliganchic power, but let us leave that aside for now). In a competitive political system, if there is no consensus on norms, all parties will continue to outbid each other in what they offer the electorate, no matter when the election. And clearly the biggest risk of the proposal is not having any electoral mechanism for expressing discontent for a full five years.

There is one kind of democratic dutter that it would be good to have more of — more empowered local governments. More than frequent elections, one of the things holding India back is the state of local governments, empowered panchayats or municipal bodies. These elections are firecely contested but have never had the dignity or investment they deserve. They need major reform. But it is not clear whether though the good of the proposal is not the state of local governments, empowered posities and the sta

WRITERS IN AN AI FUTURE

AI can't replicate what inventive writers can do. But writing must keep up

MERU GOKHALE

EVERYWHERE I TURN these days, some

EVERYWHEREITURN these days, someone is asking me, "Will Al replace writers?" With all the buzz around artificial intelligence and its rapid advancement, it's only natural to wonder about its impact on writing. Having spent 20 years in the publishing industry and the last two immersed in Al, Ifelit it was time to share my thoughts. First off, Ibelieve the answer isn't a simple yes or no. It really depends on which writers we're talking about. There are those who bring fresh ideas, innovative concepts, groundbreaking research and profound emotional depth to their work. These writers push boundaries, challenge norms and introduce perspectives that shift our cultural conversations. In my view, they're not at risk of being replaced by Al anytime soon. Then there are writers who tend to re-hashold ideas or stick to formulaic patterns; they don't add much to the dialogue. For them, the situation is a bit more complicated. I don't foresee a moment when Al suddenly replaces these writers. But it's important to recognise that soment when Al starts to become a significant factor. Writing isn't just about putting words on a page. It's about conveying ambiguous thoughts, emotions, and experiences in a way that connects with readers. It's about sparking imagination, provoking thought,

and sometimes even inspiring change. Al, impressive as it is, doesn't possess consciousness or genuine creativity. It can minic patterns, generate text that follows certain rules, and even produce content that follows creatin rules, and even produce content that follows. For writters who are innovators — those who pour their hearts into their work, who explore uncharted territories of thought and emotion — Al is more a tool than at theat! It can assist with research, help organise ideas, or even suggest alternative phrasings, But it can't replace the human element that makes their writing unique.

the numan element that makes their writing unique.

On the flip side, writers whose work is largely derivative or formulaic might find Al encroaching on their territory. Al can efficiently produce content that fits established templates or covers well-trodden topics. If a writer's primary contribution is delivering large volumes of predictable "content", it's worth worrying about how Al might affect their role.

But even here the situation isn't black.

Al might affect their role. But even here, the situation isn't black and white. Writing, at its core, is a human endeavour. Even formulaic writing often re-quires a level of understanding, nuance, and adaptability that Al hasn't mastered. Tone, voice, context, cultural references—all these elements contribute to effective communication and are areas where human writers still have the upper hand.

Readers value genuine voices. They seek connections with the author through their ideas, shared experiences, emotional resonances. Al can't replace a writer's personal journey, their failures, triumphs, and everything in between.

So where does this leave us? I think it's wise for each writer to reflect on their own work. Are you pushing boundaries? Bringing new ideas to the table? Offering perspectives that challenge or inspire? Or are you sticking closely to established patterns without adding anything?

This isn't about inducing fear but about bringing awareness to what I think has been a black-and-white conversation. The land-scape is changing, and being realistic about these shifts allows writers to adapt and grow. Embracing Al as a tool where needed, rather than viewing it solely as a competitor can open up new possibilities.

The act of writing is a deeply personal journey that Al can't replicate. But even within that, there's room for adaptation. Writers are great at evolving and finding ways to infixe more or reinality into their

within that, there's room for adaptation Writers are great at evolving and finding ways to infuse more originality into their work. The key is to stay curious, keep learn-ing, and not shy away from new things. The future sin's tein stone. It's shaped by how we respond to the changes around us. Keep withing, keep pushing boundaries and keep the conversation going.

The writer is founder, Editrix ai

OCTOBER 4, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

NO POPULAR RULE YET

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work, who explore uncharted territories of thought and emotion — AI is more a tool than a threat.

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on their territory.

THERE ISNO possibility of popular rule being restored in Punjab this month, according to authoritative sources. The present one-year term of President's rule in Punjab expires on Cother 5.1 is being extended by another six months. However, depending upon the law and order situation in the state, this aspect will be studied next month.

AKALIS IN A FIX

THE AKALI LEADERSHIP finds itself in a dilemma. It does not know what course of action it should adopt in Punjab now. With senior party leaders under detention, the second rung leaders have informally dis-cussed at different levels the question of the party's future line of action.

ZIA FORMULA REJECTED

PAKISTAN'S OPPOSITION PARTIES rejected a PARKI JAN'S DIPOSITION PARTIES rejected a formula designed to secure their support to Gen Ziaul Haq's rule for another five years in the elections promised by him. Under the for-mula suggested by a faction of the Muslim League, which supports Haq, parties would not only propose him for presidentship but also support him in office for five more years. Opposition leaders, living-in-exile in London, see it as a move inspired by the military regime to create confusion among people.

INDIA-UN TALKS

THE IEADER OF the Indian delegation to the General Assembly, C Parthasarathy, and the UN Secretary General, Pierze de Cuellar, held talks on the international situation and issues facing the current Assembly. They welcomed the dialogue initiated at recent meetings be-tween leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union. Cuellar expressed that a great deal would depend on how contact was fol-lowed up after US Presidential elections.

The Ideas Page

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The responsibility for restoring the court's writ lies with the senior-most judges of the Supreme Court. They must prioritise their institution over their personal differences and make a sincere, concerted effort to resolve their problems."

—DAWN, PAKISTAN

DIS/AGREE THE BEST OF BOTH SIDES

A fortnightly column, which offers not this-versus-that, but the best of both sides, to inform the debate



In the season of university elections, the question is: Is student politics relevant to national politics today?

Student politics is A tale of narrowing future facing

I am its product. It shaped the role I have played in public life ever since C IIIC EVET SINCE

Jayant and Priyanka contested JNU's presidential elections on Chhatra RJD tickets in 2018 and 2019. Now, they are putting forth our party's vision and stand on national platforms. The youth we support have the energy and courage to challenge the status quo, and I couldn't be prouder of how they represent us.

I want to emphasise that these are not isolated examples. Afroz Alam, another bright activist from a poor background, contested the JNU presidential poll in 2023. Tejashwi Yadav, my son, is carrying forward our party's vision to nurture and support these young leaders. Even our leader, Naval Kishore, has been instrumental in strengthening our presence at Delhi



DEMOCRACY THRIVES ON the active par without student politics is incomplete, mere farce. I say this from my experience

without student politics is incomplete, a mere farce. I say this from my experiences — I am a product of student politics, it shaped me, my understanding of the world, and the role I have played in politics ever since. For me, student politics is not just an element of democracy — it is lifeblood. When young people, especially those in universities, engage with politics, they bring fresh perspectives. Their ideals are sharp and they can see society with a clarity that we, the older generation, may sometimes lack. It is this clarity and idealism that makes students capable of understanding the struggles of society and charting out the vision to take it forward.

I was born and raised in a poor, backward-class family where education was almost non-existent. My parents and ancestors were illiterate, as were most people in my village. My life could have followed the same path, but everything changed when I joined B N College at Patna University in the late 1960s. At the time, I had no idea that entering the university would shape my life in such profound ways. But it was here, under the tutelage of my guide, guru, and philosopher Jayaprakash Narayan, that I was introduced to student politics. Through my activism on campus, I became deeply

and philosopher Jayaprakash Narayan, that I was introduced to student politics. Through my activism on campus, I became deeply sensitive to the issues of poverty, deprivation, social inequality and economic injustice. The university had little ton prepresentation from marginalised communities. Those from backward classes who managed to make it to university struggled — many didn't have enough to eat or a means to commute to campus, let alone focus on their studies.

This stark inequality angred me, and I knew something had to be done. My activism started with small protests — demanding free college buses, more hostels, better food in the mess. These may seem like simple issues, but for students likes they were seemant and the seemand of the mess.

buses, more hostels, better food in the mess. These may seem like simple issues, but for students like us, they were essential. And this was where my politics truly began. Fast forward to today, and I can proudly say that my party. the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), remains deeply rooted in students' politics. Our existence as a political force would be unimaginable without the foun-dation laid by students and their activism. And this commitment to nutruring young political leaders continues. Privanka And this commitment to nurturing young political leaders continues. Priyanka Bharati, Jayant Jigyasu, and Kanchana Yaɗav — all three have been students at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and were recently appointed as national spokespersons of our party.

These are not random nominations. Priyanka Bharati led fierce protests against fee hikes at JNU, Delhi University, and Ilfs, and was even injured during these protests.

ambitions In post-1991 India, student politics has taken a

back seat. Students are caught up, not in a larger calling, but in immediate aspirations



MANISH TEWARI

THE ANSWER TO the question — "Is stu-dent politics relevant to national politics" — necessitates traversing student politics from its evolution to organisations across decades to where it stands currently vis-a-

from its evolution to organisations across decades to where it stands currently vis-avis national politics.

An all-India conference of student activists was convened in Karachi in March 1931, under the presidentiship of Jawaharlal Nehru to establisha na All India Students' Federation (ASF). Over 700 delegates attended it. The objective was to mobilise young people against British inpresidism. It took five years of intensive ground work before the first conference of the ASF could be held in Lucknow in August 1936. Ironically, Nehru in augurated the proceedings and Muhammad All Jinnah presided over the conference Speaking on the occasion, Nehru administered a note of caution, "When you are trying to build up a student's federation, you cannot afford to make it narrow and shut out persons holding different views," The sage advice was but in vain. It took less than two years for the national students' movement to splinter along religious and political lines. The Muslim Sudents Federation, under the patronage of Jinnah

Federation, under the patronage of Jinnah and Muhmmad Iqbal, came into existence

Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad was es-tablished in July 1949. Balraj Madhok and Yashwantrao Kelkar were behind its incep-

tabismed in July 1949. Sariaj Madriok And Yashwantrao Kellar were behind its incep-tion. Its main objective was to counter com-munist influence in university campuses. An all-India socialist youth conference was held in Varanasi in April 1953 under the presi-dency of Ram Manohar Lohia. When Lohia formed his own socialist party in December 1955. a student organisation called Samajwadi Yuvjan Sabha was concurrently constituted. Finally, under India Candit, the National Students' Union of India (TSNI), the student organisation of the India National Congress was established in April 1971. It is thus evident that the doyens of the liberation struggle and the new leadership of Independent India were responsible for founding student organisations to harness the energy, creativity and potential of stu-dents for larger national purposes. Those were the decades when ideological cleanages

The reset of the

economy in 1991, coupled with the global

collapse of communism and political transformations in

eastern Europe suddenly brought an era

of ideology-driven debates — a staple of student politics — to a close.

Federation, under the patronage of jinnah and Muhmmad Iqbal, came into existence in 1937 itself.

In December 1940, at the Nagpur session of the AISF, the students' movement split on the question of what came first—the question of Indian Independence or the larger solidarity against the global struggle against fascism, It led to the formation of the National Congress Student Organisation (NCSO), also known as the All India Student Congress (AISC). The first conference was held in Patan in 1945 and Ram Sumer Shukla was elected as its first president. He was succeeded by Ravinder Vermain 1946. After Independence, at the Alkill Bharatiya Vidyarth I Parishad was establed to the CSS, the Parishad was establed to the CSS of the Parish

opportunities for the majority of India's population, who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The RSS, the declogical parent of the BJP, is allow overling to infiltrate campuses with its divisive communal agenda. They are altering our history, culture, and even the Constitution tiself, promoting the ideas of M S Golwalkar and V D Savarkar, figures whose indiging the society and the vision to orward.

Savarkar was accused of conspiring in Mahatma Gandhi, B arthughal the society and the vision to orward.

In such a situation, it is even more upgent to promote students politics, especially those rooted in the principles of Mahatma Gandhi, B R Ambedkar, Jayaprakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia, Perivar and bottlip Bruke These leaders found the proposal of the of Mahatma Gandhi, B R Ambedkar, Jayaprakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia, Periyac and Jyotha Phake These leaders fought for an inclusive, democratic India, and it is their teachings that should guide us today. Wheneed students to be actively involved in politics: If we want to purge campuses of divisive forces. India is a poor country, largely inhabited by farmers and labourers. But with rising educational awareness, more and more stu-dents from marginalised communities are entering universities. It is essential that po-litical parties rooted in the nationalist spirit

strengthening our presence at Delhi University, Jamia Millia University, and

University, Jamia Millia University, and other campuses.

All of this is to highlight one simple truth: Student politics is essential to shaping not only the future of individual leaders but the future of our democracy as a whole. Democracy thrives when it is nourished by the wisdom, passion, and energy of young minds. Every era presents new challenges, and it is the youth who must rise to meet them. That is why it is so important for political parties and leaders to encourage and promote students' politics. Without this, democracy ties frisks stagnation.

Today, we face a grave threat. The current government led by the BJP is doing everything in its power to destroy our education system. It is no secret that they are working to privatise educational institutions. This is a direct attack on democracy because it blocks access to education and

because it blocks access to education and opportunities for the majority of India's population, who come from disadvan-

Young people's ideals are

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charting out the vision to take it forward.

entering universities. It is essential that po-litical parties rooted in the nationalist spirit of Gandhiji support these students. By supporting and promoting students' involvement in politics, we are investing in the future of our country and ensuring that our democracy remains strong, vibrant, and inclusive.

The writer is president of the Rashtriya Janata Dal

were sharp across the world and great de-bates, if not outright disagreements, ani-mated university campuses globally. It pro-duced leaders who went on to play prominent roles in national politics in various countries

prominent roles in national politics in various countries. It was also the era of student movements and struggles, some secular, others sectarian. The Paris student movement in 1968 caught the imagination of young people globally. It represented a universal yearning for a change in status quo, It mainstreamed left-wing politics, anti-war sentiments, the thrust for civil rights and the institutionali-sation of a counter culture that found reso-nance in the histoge movement of the 1970s.

nance in the hippie movement of the 1970s The anti-Hindi agitation in 1965 in south

nance in the hippier movement of the 1970s.

The anti-Hind agitation in 1965 in south India and the anti-English agitation in north India in 1967 were linguistic in character but soon gave way to more pluralistic student agitation such as the Narwirman Andolan that convulsed Gujaratin 1974-and He Sampoorna Kranti protest by Jayaprakash Narayan in 1974-75. The last major students' agitation was against the recommendations of the Mandal Commission in 1990 in north India.

The reset of the economy in 1991, outpeld with the global collapse of communists an amnifested by the fall of the Berlin Wall, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and policial transformations in eastern Europe suddenly brought an era of ideology-driven debates—a staple of student politics—to a close. These epoch-making changes were summed upin Francis Fuluspant's rather es-uberant exhortation, The End of History and the Last Man (1992).

Globalisation, the liberalisation of the

Globalisation, the liberalisation of the

the last Man (1992).
Globalisation, the liberalisation of the Indian economy and its alignment with the Washington Corsensus opened up newvistas for young people. No longer were medicine, engineering, civil service, and student politics, and ast deep not the sas a stepping stone to national politics, the only orad to careers that were intellectually challenging materially satisfying or providing public visibility. The opening up of the broadcasting space to priority opening

et i nie averlagg youige via dent now thought that unnecessary ac-tivism was but a waste of time. Except for the ideologically blinkered far left and the bigoted far right, the space at lee tentre gradually became an 'apolitical space' where you still had young people with po-titical aspirations but no busyancy in terms of a community willing to be mobilised for causes, or a larger calling that went beyond their own immediate aspirations. As the national president of the NSUlfor five years between 1988 and 1993, and as the only Asian who was elected as the pres-ident of the International Union of Students in a post-communist word in 1992, I saw these transitions — trends that have held the field for the last three-and-a-half decades now — play themselves out in front of my eyes rather rapidly.

The writer is lawyer, third-term MP and former I&B ministe

The American alternative

US's International Development Finance Corporation, unlike China-backed projects, is in the long-term interest of emerging economies



AMI BERA

CHINA'S BELT AND Road Initiative (BRI), ne-ferred to as "Vidaiy ilu" in Chinese, has re-shaped global infrastructure financing and investment. It promotes a "China-centred model" of development, which often does not set terms with regard to human righta-transparency or Western legal and market-based principles. BRI emphasises flexible, voluntary cooperation without the stringent legal frameworks and infrastructure finan-ting that host governments might find ben-eficial in the short term to start projects. Such a model comes with risks for participating countries. As we navigate this landscape, the US must offer a compelling alternative that prioritiess transparency, rule of law and sus-tainable economic models. Projects associated with BRI have fre-quently led to substantial financial obliga-tions for participating countries. These

Projects associated with BRI have frequently led to substantial financial obliga-tions for participating countries. These arrangements typically involve long-term repayment commitments to Beijing, creating financial dependence on the People's Republic of China (PRC or China) and giving the PRC significant leverage over host nations. This influence extends beyond loan terms and project implementation to broader political pressures China may event on these countries. China frequently prefers to extend or renegotate loans rather than offer debt for-giveness, thereby maintaining or even increasing its economic and political sway over host governments. In contrast, institutions like the World Bank and IMF have shown greater willingness to forgive debt, particularly for highly indebted poor countries. The Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka has become a focal point in discussions about China's lending practices and the stress they place on recipient countries. Here's what happened: In 2017, Sri Lanka lassed a 70 per cent stake in the Hambantota Port to China Merchants Port Holdings Company Limited for 99 years in exchange for \$1.12 billion. This deal was not a debt-for \$1.12 billion.

Company Limited for 99 years in exchange for \$1.12 billion. This deal was not a debt for \$1.12 billion. This deal was not a debt-cutify swap or debt cancellation, but a sep-arate transaction from the original loans used to construct the port. Facing a dire fi-nancial situation, the \$11 Lankan govern-ment used the \$1.12 billion to strengthen its foreign reserves and make short-term foreign debt repayments, rather than pay off PRC loans for the port's construction. This decision reflected \$51 Lanka's broader economic problems, stemming from per sistent trade and budget deficits, low for ssterit trade and budget delicits, low feign direct investment, and sluggish export growth. While the PPK monies for the lease provided immediate financial relief, they did not address Sri Lanka's underlying economic challenges and did not provide a sustainable solution to its debt problems. Instead, the loans contributed to the transfer of a strategic Sri Lankan asset to a PPK. ter of a strategic Sri Lankan asset to a PKC entity, raising concerns about Sri Lanka's sovereignty and the effectiveness of such PRC deals in addressing underlying economic challenges. The Hambantota Port, strategically lo-cated in the Indian Ocean, is part of China's

broader geopolitical strategy to secure es-sential trade and energy supply routes. It is one of many PRC port projects in the Indian Ocean Region including Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Maldives and Burma.

isangiadesh, the Madines and Burma.
According testimates by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), as of September 2023, China had active investments in 101 port projects globally. Among these, 10 are strategically located around the Indo-Pacific and can potentially be used for naval purposes. The Hambantota port is one of them. The development of these ports not onlyen-bances China's economic interests — it also extends its geopolitical influence.

To counter China's influence, the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) has emerged as a vital player. Last year, it committed half a billion dollars toward the development of the West Container Terminal in the Port of Colombo, which is the largest and busiest transhipment port in the indian Ocean. Unlike China-based lenders, the DFC supports projects led by the private sector that are strategically and economically sound. Shipping and indigent of the Port of Colombo, which is the largest and busiest transhipment port in the Indian Ocean. Unlike China-based lenders, the DFC supports projects led by the private sector that are strategically and economically sound. Shipping and indigent in the Port of Colombo, which is the Largest and busies transhipment port in the Indian Ocean. Unlike China-based lenders, the DFC supports projects led by the private sector that are strategically and economically sound. Shipping and indigent the Port of Colombo, which is the Largest and busies transhipment to Sri Lanka's CDP, sustaining more than 40,000 jobs and bolstering the country's status as a global logistic centre.

The US-backed terminal will not serve as a panacea to Sri Lanka's CDP, sustaining more handle of the private sectors — advancing America's strategic interests, avel as theirs, and promoting stability and prosperity. Usinestements prioritise transparency, high standards, and strategic interests, avel as theirs, and promoting stability and prosperity. Br. Dr. Sri Lankan leaders didn't need to appeal to Washington or support or vorry about falling in

The writer is a Democratic Member of the US House of Representative

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

REJECTING HUSTLE

THIS REFERSTO the editorial, The slow life (IE, October 3). Gen Zaims to adopt a deliberate, mindful pace in their prosessional lives instead of meeting onerous expectations of modern work culture. This thought encourages individuals to prioritise well-being, balance, and sustainability over end-less productivity. Sustainability in organisations thrives with quality work culture, and not by elorifying long ganisations thrives with quality work culture and not by glorifying long working hours. Slight flexibility can lead to remarkable accomplishments by nurturing people rather than en-couraging the hustle. Manmeet Kaur, Noida

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The slow life' (IE, October 3). When it comes to corporate life, the older and younge generations' views are poles apart. The '70-hour work week' outlook, and the consequent burnout in the young are proof. With a constant decline in nutritional quality and an increase in mental health issues, choosing to run on the hamster wheel is a recipe for disaster. A healthy workforce can lead to more transformational outputs.

Abirami S, Chennai

AGAINST THE LAW THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Taking sanatan out of dharma' (IE, October 3). Criticism must indeed be contoxt-based. But the claim that the application of Sanatan Dharma's knowledge remains relevant is ironic. If everything is so virtuous in Sanatan Dharma, how has the dehumanising practice of caste system persisted? Even Hindutwai con VD Savarkar was critical of Sanatanis' reluctance to even if it is clearly harmful in practice. LR Murmu, New Debi A REALITY CHECK

AGAINST THE LAW

A REALITY CHECK
THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Atul goes
to III' (IE, October 2), It draws attention to
the struggles faced by middle-class famtiles and daily-wage workers in our country, It is hearthreaking to see that many
families find it difficult to gather even Rs
17,500 for their children's education. The
government often speaks of Gog
growth, of Becoming a developed nation
by 2007. But the reality is that it sidifficult
for a daily wager to make ends meet, let
alone save money, Is this how our nation
desires to progress?
Sandflya Yadav, Dhenkand

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained indianexpress.com

Inescapable, inevitable: Why North Bihar sees floods every year

wome. 13.7b LAKH people in 17 districts have been affected bythe ongoing floods in North Bihar, the state Disaster Management Department said on Thursday, North Bihar is flooded every monsoon, crops and live-stock are destroyed, and people are driven from their homes, forced to survive on air-dropped food and relief materials. SOME 15.76 LAKH people in 17 districts

GEOGRAPHY

What makes North Bihar so prone to flooding each year? The reason this year is extremely heavy rainfall and floods in Nepal, and the release of 6.6 lakh cusec from the limit have the release of 6.6 lakh cusec from the

and the recease of 6.6 Jakin cusec from the Birpur barrage on the Kosi river there, the largest volume in almost six decades.

In general, the reason for the recurrent floods lies in the geography of North Bihar—and attempts at finding a solution that has instead made the problem worse.

Geography of the region

Numerous snow- and rain-fed rivers criss-cross Bihar, the state which the government's

Flood Management Improvement Suppor Centre describes as "India's most flood-prone with about 76% of North Bihar's population liv-ing under the "recurring threat of flood devas tation". The Disaster Managemen Department identifies four kinds of floods. Management

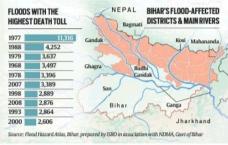
(i) Flash floods that occur due to rainfall iagement (i) Flash floods that occur due to raintal in Nepal have a short lead time (between forecast and flood) of eight hours, but the water recedes quickly; (ii) river floods have a lead time of 24 hours, but it could take more than a week for the water to recede; (iii) "drainage congestion in river confluence" has a lead in the confluence water to recede; (iii) "drainage congestion in river confluence" has a lead to the confluence water to recede; (iii) "drainage congestion in river confluence" has a lead to the confluence water to recede; (iii) "drainage congestion in river confluence" has a lead to the confluence water to recede the confluence water to recede the confluence water to reinfluence water to recede; (iii) "drainage congestion in river confluence" has a lead to reinfluence water to recede; (iii) "drainage congestion in river confluence" has a lead time of water to recede; (iii) "drainage congestion in river confluence" has a lead time of water to recede; (iii) "drainage congestion in river confluence" has a lead time of water to recede; (iii) "drainage congestion in river confluence" has a lead time of water to recede; (iii) "drainage congestion in river confluence" has a lead time of water to recede; (iii) "drainage congestion in river confluence" has a lead time of water to recede; (iii) "drainage congestion in river confluence" has a lead time of water to reinfluence water

time of more than 24 hours the flood could last throughout the mon

ons; (iv) there are some "permanent wa ter-logged area[s]". The first three types of floods are mainly

The first three types of nooss are manny due to Bihar's location immediately to the south of Nepal, from where Himalayan rivers carry massive volumes of loose soil and sediment downstream. As rains swell rivers like the Kosi, Gandak, Burhi Gandak, Bagmati, Kamla, Balan, Mahananda, and ara, they overflow their banks easily

The fourth category, permanent waterlog



Hazard Atlas of Bihar, prepared by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) with the

The Kosi embankments

The most destructive of the state's rivers is Kosi, the "Sorrow of Bihar". In the 1950s, embankments were built along the river in an attempt to contain it, and their height was raised in 1987 and 2008. These were meant to be a lasting solution; however, they have been breached repeatedly — this year, seven breaches have been reported in four districts — and have created a problem of their own.

'The embankments narrowed the river's course. The Kosi could earlier distribute its course. The Kost cound earlier distribute its sediments; it was now put in a straitjacket. The mass of accumulated sediment has been raising the river's bed by about 5 inches annually, making it more prone to overflowing. Dinesh Kumar Mishra, convener of the NGO Barh Multit Abhiyan, who has spent decades working in the Kosi belt, told The Indian Express.

The embankments were built for a flow of 9.5 lakh cusec. But they are being breached or93 labricuses. But they are being preached even with lesserd discharge because the river is now shallower. As many as 380 villages, home to at least 15 lakh people, lie within the embankments. They have no escape from the annual floods. The government gave them land for rehabilitation, but almost half of that was waterlogged land," Mishra said.

Non-engineering solutions

ago, but in the absence of an agreement with Nepal, the plan has not progressed. On September 30, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary met Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Paatil in Delhi to ask for "an ad-Minister C R Paatil in Delhi to ask for "an additional barrage" on the river. The state is also considering building barrages at Dagmara (Supaul) on the Kosi, at Averaj on the Gandak, and a third barrage on the Bagmati. But engineering solutions may not be enough.

Anil Kumar Sinha, who served as the founder vice-chairman of the Blans Tsate Disaster Management Authority from 2010 to 2016, said: "There are two ways to deal with floods — through structural solutions.

such as dams, embankments, etc., and through non-structural solutions, which in through non-structural solutions, which in-clude laws, policy, risk reduction, mitigation, etc. Since the geography of Bihar can't be changed, there is a great need to work on as-pects like adequate warnings, quick reaction times, awareness and training in dealing with floods, etc."

The Flood Malas says: "Minimising the risk and damage from floods may be a more ra-tional way of flood management than formu-lating structural measures along dynamic rivers such as the Kosi."

HOW CYCLONES LEAD TO LONG-TERM INCREASES IN HUMAN MORTALITY

THE UNITED STATES' southeastern co was rocked by Hurricane Helene over the past week. More than 200 people are med dead. Hundreds are missing

contirmed dead. Hundreds are missing. But the toll of the tropical cyclone (TC) —referred to as hurricanes in North America — is likely to be much higher. A study published in the journal Nature on Wednesday found that these storms lead to a "robust increase in excess mortality" for almost 15 years after they strike.

Calculating excess mortality

Stanford researchers Rachel Young and Solomon Hsiang tracked the effects of 501 historical storms that hit the US between 1930 and 2015, Specifically, they analysed how mortality rates within a

nalysed how mortality rates within a state changed after it was hit by a TC. "A big storm will hit, and there's all these cascades of effects where cities are rebuilding or households are displaced or social networks are broken. These cascades ebuilding or households are occial networks are broken. Th

have serious consequences for public health," Hsiang, professor of environmental social

public health, "Hisiang professor of environmental social sciences at Stanford's Doers School of Sustainability, said. But these effects are hard to calculate in detail. This is why the researchers chose the excess mortality method." If mortality systematically rises after TCs, conditional on other factors, we may infer that it was plausibly caused by the TCs," they wrote. This approach allowed the researchers to study the long-term impacts of TCs on mortality, without having to model every single pathway. Drawing from pre-existing analysis on the long-term economic impacts of TCs in the researchers decided to study changes in monthly mortality rates in states for a period of 20 years after they were hit by a TC. They took into account the effects of previous TCs, and other miscellameous factors. They took into account the enessary, vious TCs, and other miscellaneous fact such as state health care systems and de mographics into their analysis.

Long-term impacts

CLIP

NEW RESEARCH

Fectious diseases, and war in the same period.

The results show deaths as many period.

The results show deaths are stated in the same period.

The results show deaths are stated in the same period in the same period.

Why the long sterm impacts? The researchers point to a few notable factors. First, economic loss caused by TCs may lead to families eshausting their financial resources, leaving less money available for future healthcare. Secound, Tcs Salo lead to families dispersing, and thus weaken so-cial networks that are crucial to maintain one's health. Third, in the aftermath of Tcs, government spending on healthcare may be diverted towards recovery.

These factors particularly impact infants, children, and young adults, the researchers found, resulting in a quarter of all infant deaths in the US.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE



A gas station in North Carolina, US, destroyed by Helene. Reuters

atically increased for about 172

months (14.3 years) following a TC".
This excess mortality" resulted in 7,000–11,000 excess deaths" per TC on average, much more than what official tallies record. Between 1930 and 2015, these examounted to anywhere be-tween "3,6 million to 5,2 mil-

ra deaths --more than the combined fatalities caused by motor vehicle accidents, in-fectious diseases, and war in the same period.

region, and the Ministry of External Affairs has said "It is important that the conflict doesn't take a wider regional dimension and we urge that all issues be addressed through dialogue and diplomacy." Could India play a role in the crisis that goes beyond its appeal for "restraint" by "all concerned"?

FOR THE second time since April, Iran and Israel are on the brink of all-out war. On Tuesday, Iran fired almost 200 missiles at Israel, which has vowed to respond. India has high stakes in the West Asian region, and the Ministry of External Affairs he said "It is important that the conflict."

Friend to both sides

Shubhajit Roy

Friend to both sides
New Delhi has so far not offered to play a
mediatory role. However, Prime Minister
Narendra Modi has spoken to both
Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and
sraef's Prime Minister Benjamin Netaryahu
over the last 10 days.
Modi met Abbas on the sidelines of the
Mod met Abbas on September 23, expressed' deep concern' at the humanitarian
situation in Gaza, and reaffirmed India's support for the early restoration of peace and
stability in the region.
In October last year, Modi had spoken to
Abbas to convey condolences at the civilian

In October last year, Modi had spoken to Abbas to convey condolence at the civilian deaths at Gaza's al-Ahli Hospital, and reiter-ated India's 'long-standing principled posi-tion on the Israel-Palestine issue". On September 30, the Prime Minister spoke to his Israeli counterpart to underline that "terrorism has no place in our world". The priorities were to "prevent regional esca-lation", the "safe release of all hostages", and "early restruction of peace and stability". early restoration or Modi told Netanyahu. oration of peace and stability"

Modi told Netanyahu. But to play any meaningful role as a pos-sible mediator, India will need, apart from communication channels with both sides, significant leverage with them as well.

Relationship tightrope

Six months ago, Iran had launched a mof drones, ballistic missiles, and cruise

OTHER PLAYERS IN THE REGION

EXPLAINED STRATEGY & FOREIGN POLICY

India and the W Asian crisis

India has high stakes in the West Asian region, and communication channels with all sides in the conflict.

But could it play a meaningful role that goes beyond appealing for 'restraint' by 'all concerned'?

OATAR: Hugely influential

QATAR: Hugely influential
Qatar has been a consummate navigator of regional faultilines. It has engaged with all sides, given billions of
dollars as aid to Palestine, hosted the
leaders of Hamas, and pumped money
into Gaza. Both the US and Israel have
depended on Qatar for mediation efforts. Alfazeera, which is part funded by
the Qatari government, wields tremendous influence in the Arab world.

EGYPT: Israel's neighbour

EGYPT: Israel's neighbour Egypt borders both Gaza and Israel. It lost the Sinai Peninsula to Israel in the 1967 war, but recovered it in 1982 after the 1979 peace treaty. When President Mohamed Morsi was in office (2012- 13), there was apprehension that Cairo might be colluding with Hamas, but un-der President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, it has focused strongly on countering terror-ism and Islamist movements. Worried about a refugee influx from Gazz, Egypt has put forth ceasefire initiatives.

SAUDI ARABIA: Peace stake

Saudi Arabia views itself as the leader of the Islamic world and, under Prince Mohammed bin Salman, has been trying to advance connectivity initiatives in the region. However, Riyadh's relationship with Shia Iran has a complicated history. Progress on the Swid. Irangle search life hosping. Saudi-Israel peace talks have been

UAE: With eye on its future
The UAE, too, is keen to see stability
and peace in the region in order to build
on its own prosperity and to futureproof itself. Under its ruler Mohammad
bin Zayed, it wants to drive the IMEEC
initiative. The LUAE signed a normalisation agreement with Israel in 2020.

missiles at Israel in response to a suspected Israeli strike on an Iranian consular building in Damascus in which a senior Iranian gen-eral was killed. The wave of aerial attacks on Israel this week was in line with the Iranian response

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani with Iran's Proad al-Thani with Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian Reu

TURKEY: Key back channel

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has criticised Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; yet, after Iran's April 13 at-tack on Israel, Turkey was among the key back channels between Tehran and Israel's western allies, Turkish officials are among the few who speak directly to the US, Israel, Hamas members, and Iran

US: Traditional arbiter

The US has been the traditional inter-national mediator in the region, and its envoy Amos Hochstein has been trying to prevent escalation. "We continue to believe that a diplomatic resolution is achievable." he has said. However, there is no trust between the US and Iran, and

CHINA: Positioning itself

CHINA: Positioning itself
As Washington's influence and credibility wanes, Beijing has tried to castifelf as a possible mediator and peacemaker. China's attempts to forge a
Saudi-fran deal and accilitate HamasFeatah talks are driven by its geo-economic and geo-political interests in
Iran, Saudi, and UAE. They are also an
indicator of its rising global profile.

seen both in April and in January 2020, when it responded to the assassination of Quds Force chief Qasem Soleimani by firing ballistic mis-siles at a US military base in western Iraq. Neither of Iran's two attacks on Israel caused much damage, probably by design.

Israel responded to the April attack with a limited strike near Isfahan a week later. But a stronger response this time could tip the region into full-blown war. This is a major worry for India, which has strategic ties with both Israel and Iran.

strategic ties with both Israel and Iran.
The strategic relationship with Israel, especially the defence and security partnership, has grown and deepened under the Narendra Modi government. The two sides have strong shared concerns over extremism and terrorism. Israel has emerged as a major defence supplier alongside the US, France, and Russia—and New Delhi memembers that the Israelis had stronged un a tie. bers that the Israelis had stepped up at it time of crisis during the Kargil war in 1999

Iran, on the other hand, has been a majo supplier of crude to India. Also, the two cou supplier of crude to India. Also, the two coun-tries share concerns on terrorism emanating from Palistan and Afghanistan, and on the Talibarh's treatment of minorities and lack of an inclusive and representative government in Kabul. The Chabahar port is a project of great strategic and economic importance to India. Past tensions between Israel and Iran— after, for example, the attack on an Israeli diplomar's wife, allegedly at Iran's behest, in Palist in Edward. 2012. and wheal constitu-

diplomar's wife, allegedly at tran's behest, in Delhi in February 2012, and verbal jousting between the ambassadors of the two countries to India – have brought discomfiture to New Delhi. Widening of the conflict in the Middle East will make it difficult for India to stay ambivalent.

India's own stakes

An escalation of tensions could impact India with regard to its people living in the region, its economic interests, and its strate-■There are about 18,000 Indians in Isl

about 5,000-10,000 in Iran, and some 90 lake in the region as a whole. A wider conflict will

put this huge Indian community at risk.

The West Asian region provides India
units BCG of isol supplies. Avaient warvaillalmost inevitably raise energy prices. Also, major Arabcountries have been keen to invest in
the Indian economy; those plans will likely be
disrupted in the event of a vider conflict.

India has invested in its relationships
with major Arab countries. Iran, and Isaal

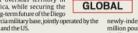
■ India has invested in its relationships with major Arab countries, Iran, and Israel. New Delhi sees the region as its extended neighbourhood, and has been working with all sides to push for the India-Middle East-Burope Economic corridor, which promises both strategic and economic benefits. It is keen to see that the consensus around peace is not unravelled by war.

Why Chagos Islands matter, why UK keeps Diego Garcia after Mauritius deal

RISHIKA SINGH NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 3

THE UK on Thursday said it would cede soy

THEUK on Thursday said it would cede sovereignty of the strategically important Chagos Islands to Mauritius. British Foreign Minister David Lammy said the deal settled the contested sovereignty of Britain's last overseas territory in Africa, while securing the long-term future of the Diego Garcia military base, jointly operated by the UK and the US. **EXPLAINED**



The Chagos archipelago, comprising 58 islands, lies roughly 500 km to the south of the Maldives archipelago in the Indian Ocean. These islands were uninhabited until the late 18th century, when the French brought in slave labour from Africa and

India to work in newly-established coconut plantations. In 1814, France ceded the is-lands to the British. In 1965, the UK constituted the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), of which the

Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), of which the Chagos Islands were a central part, Chagos was attached to Mauritius, another British colony in the Indian Ocean, for administra-

INED

AL

When Mauritius gained independence in 1968, Chagos remained with Britain. UK government gave the newly-independent country a grant of 3 million pounds over the "detachment" of the Chagos archipelago.

Strategic military base

Behind Britain retaining sovereignty over the Chagos Islands was its strategic lo-cation. In 1966, Britain signed an agreement with the US which made the BIOT available for the two countries' defence needs. Land



was acquired in 1967, and four years later, the plantation on Diego Garcia — the largest in the archipelago — was shut down. The BIOT administration then enacted an

Chagos Islands

Immigration Ordinance, which made it un-lawful for a person to enter or remain in Diego Garcia without a permit, and enabled the re-emoval of those who remained on the island. Around 2,000 civilians were subsequently loiced out —an issue that has been central to the dispute between the UR and Mauritius. Diego Garcia became a fully operational military base in 1986. According to an article in the Foreign Policy magazine. "Thanks to its vital location, the island houses a military base that served as a critical node for American air operations during the Gulf War and the wars in Iraq and Afighanistan. Post—9/11, it has also been allegedity used as a detention centre by the US intelligence agency (LOA." Given the ongoing tensions in West Asia, maintaining a presence in the Indian

Given the ongoing tensions in West Asia, maintaining a presence in the Indian Ocean remains critical for US interests. Diego Garcia also gives the Americans an outpost to monitor the Malacca Strait, a chokepoint for world trade that is espe-cially vital to China.

Treaty's significance

Treaty's significance Maurities has long claimed that the UK illegally occupies Chagos, and has raised the matter many times in international fora. In 2017, the UN General Assembly voted to ask the international Court of Justice to examine the legal status of the Chagos archipelago. Two years later, the UNCA adopted a resolution welcoming an KJ advisory opinion, demanding that the United Kingdom "unconditionally withdraw its colonial administration from the area within six months."

within six months."
Then K[J President Abdulqawi Ahmed
Yusuf had said the detachment of the
Chagos archipelago in 1965 from Mauritius
was not based on a "free and genuine expression of the people concerned".
The agreement between the UK and
Mauritius strikes a balance. The UK has
coded claims exert he is lands, and Mauritius

ceded claims over the islands, and Mauritius is now "free to implement a programme of resettlement on the islands of the Chaoss

Archipelago, other than Diego Garcia". The UK has also promised to create a new trust fund "for the benefit of Chagossians". However, the agreement allows the Diego Garcia base to remain operational for an "initial period" of 999 years. The LIK will continue to exercise sovereign rights over the island. In resolution of the dispute has broader implications. As the Foreign Policy article noted: "If left unresolved.", the issue could drive countries such as Mauritius to seek redress with alternative partners like China." As a nation formety colonised by Britain, India has maintained steadfast support to Wauritius Caims over the Chagos Islands. It voted in favour of the island country at the UNCA in 2019, In recent years, India has astempted to deepen its ties with Mauritius

tempted to deepen its ties with Mauritius amidst China's ever increasing assertiveness in the Indian Ocean. Earlier this year, an Indiabuilt airstrip and a jetty was inaugurated at Agaléga, a two-island dependency of Mauritius in the Western Indian Ocean

Hinduslan Times

Going ahead for Swachh Bharat

The mission must now focus on urban waste management, clean air and water

e Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), which has he Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), which has just completed 10 years, is one of the big successes of the NDA-II government: The campaign to make India open defecation free (ODF) has been largely achieved, though the challenge lies in sustaining it that way. Many international studies have documented the health benefits of SBM — one such, by US and India-based researchers that was published in Nature Scientific Reports last month, estimated that 60,000-70,000 additional infant deaths were avoided yearly because of the sanitation programmes. That said, though often talked about as a mass action programme, it has more or less remained a mass action programme, it has more or less remained a mass action programme, it has more or less remained a government scheme — with consequent limits on its reach and outcome. The challenge now is to shift gears

and make sanitation part of our public culture.

This is important as SBM enters the next phase, the goal for which is being described as sampoorna swachhata (complete cleanliness). On solid waste management, and clean water and air, much work needs to be done. In the absence of scientific waste and garbage collection and disposal, India's cities are acquiring small hills of waste and rotting garbage, a health hazard in multiple ways. Streams and rivers have turned into drains, carrying untreated or undertreated transatination in the property of the administration was the water are many technological solutions to handle these problems if the administration, political leadership and civil society show the intent, engage the necessary expertise, and put in the required funds. A start can be made by training sanitation workers in modern technology and driving awareness about categories of waste and segregation at source among both households and those who work with waste. This can lead to efficient waste management, without it being hazardous for the workers. In fact, this has to be the primary responsibility of local bodies. Clean air is slowly becoming a part of civic conversation. The same has to happen with water and urban waste disposal. The judiciary has intervened multiple times in the past to push the administration to act. The lack of intent in the local bodies is clear. On the rural front, states like Maharashtra devised schemes to reward the cleanest village, helping making cleanliness

reward the cleanest village, helping making cleanliness a public movement. Such models could be replicated elsewhere by adapting them to local cultural conditions.

The benefits of clean air and water, and better garbage management are too many to list — from health to tourism. It can boost the economy, in fact, create new spheres of economic activity, and save precious resources, especially water. SBM should take this as its goal for its next phase.

Political start-up's bid to change Bihar story

he crowded political space in Bihar will now have The crowded political space in Bihar will now have one more player. Poll strategist turned politician. Prashant Kishor has just launched the Jan Suraaj Party, which will contest the 2025 Bihar assembly polls

Farty, which will contest the 2022 Binar assembly point Kishor, after a two-year outreach campaign, believes there is scope for a "party-with-a-difference" in Bihar. The traditional trajectory of political parties in India suggests two trends. One, a party emerges from a large social mobilisation, acquires a programme in due course, and enters electoral politics. Two, activists inspired by an ideology create an outfit to further their ideological agenda. The Congress represents the first It emerged as the voice of the national movement and under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, transformed under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, transformed into a programme/values-oriented political party. The Communist parties, the DMK (inspired by the Self-Respect Movement), the BJP, and the BSP could be termed ideology-driven while also being associated with mass movements and struggles. A third, recent trend is represented by the AAP, which emerged from public anger with corruption. The AAP, claiming to be a post-ideological formation concerned with governance, caught the national imagination but took off in a meaningful way only in Delhi. Kishor's model seems to be the AAP.

to be the AAP.

But can such a party make a difference in Bihar, which has a layered history of political mobilisation? Kishor is projecting civic politics, which he believes can transcend the fault lines of caste, religion, and region on the amorphous and abstract idea of development. He is discussing education and employment, which he believes will attract young voters. There are, of course, examples of voters trusting outliers over established players. Bihar, however, is a more complicated story. Still, Kishor's project will be keenly watched.

Bridging political rifts in India's neighbourhood

Khalistan, India and the United States need to engage in sustained political dialogue and find common ground. It's hard but possible

It's hard but possible

It's hard but possible

It has been a highly productive time in the India-Daited States (US) corridor. This newspape has extensively reported on the tangible progress in the blatteral partnership between Prince Minister (PM) Narendra Modi and President Jose Biden. But recent week labs: India the Possible of t

Americans view the regime change as positive and as a direct consequence of internal factors, perimarily Hasina's outright repression. The US was sympathetic top protests, and had consequent to the security forces that billing students was a red line, but Americans adarmarily reject the premise that they orchestrated the change. Western diplomatis recognise both the fragility and fragmented nature of Dhakirs polity. It is fragile because Bangdalesh has a government with political is egittimacy but no electronal legitimacy; it is fragmented because there are multiple power correlations of the control of the control



stanl intelligence is a recipe to earn Indian distrust. Nuanced US explana-tions about separation of powers that result in court summons, the need for the executive branch to engage with all voices, or the higher threshold for speech due to the first amendment, are greeted with scepticism. The worst is assumed, with many in findia left won-dering whether the USs using the sounces between the court of the court of the sounces become, though to what end is

secular compact to incentives aligned with migration and networks of orga-nised crime. Engaging with the com-munity through credible, moderate political interlocutors has becom-incentially in the com-

can soil and institute some degree of iccountability.

The India-US partnership is deep, more and strong, But reading political wounds early will ensure that it remains healthy and forces that wish to leepen mistrust between Delhi and DC re defeated.

Navaratri and the federal character of Hinduism

any have often wondered how the ancient Indic religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism (Sikhismis Indicated and Prospered for millennia — without a designated holy book like the Bible or the Koran and with no Mecca, Vatient or Jerususlem to guide. With a little introspection, we come to realise that it is actually this absence of a that it is actually this absence of a that accounts for this. In fact, it is the intrinsically tolerant and federal structure of these faiths, especially Hinduism, that historically brought tolerant and federal structure of these faiths, especially Hinduism, that historically brought tolerant and federal structure of these faiths, especially Hinduism, that historically brought tolerant and federal structure of these distinct foods, diets, languages, and customs. To appreciate this phenomenon, we may need to understand how major pan-Indian festivals offered different meanings to Hinduis and different regions. The overarching common thense served the hinduism of the server of the server of the server of the hinduism o

he framework.

Broadly, we can decipher three zonal hemes in Nawaratri — in the North and west the second in the East and parts of the fortheast; and the third in the South, in the irst zone, the goddess is worshipped hrough fasts and rigorous dietary restraint were nine days, but it is ultimately Ram's vic-ory over the evil Rawan that is really the climax of Dussehra. The East and Northeast elebrate not Ram but Durga, in her most elligerent form, and the tenth day, Vilipia



celebrate neither Ram nor Durga, but the victory of the Pandawas.

In the South, different devis are wonshipped during Navarantr, and Tamils dedicate the first three days to Laishmit, the next three days to Parvati or Durga, and the last three days to Saraswati. We come across fascinating displays of many doils placed on wooden planks, called Bomma Kolu and other similar names. At the end of Navaratri, the southern states, Malamatitin and Odishis adoesner Anyulta to which, incidentally, is done in the Gangetic plains, Bengal and the East during Vishovakarama Pujas month before. Then, while both the North and the South agree on worshipping nine forms of the goddess on nine days, the East remains ambivalent. Bengal and neighbour the North and the South agree on worshipping nine forms of the goddess on nine days, the East remains ambivalent. Bengal and neighbouring states celebrate only the last three days and the tenth one. They observe no dietary restrictions, but the Cast remains ambivalent. Bengal and neighbouring states celebrate only the last three days and the tenth one. They observe no dietary restrictions, but the Cast remains ambivalent. Bengal and neighbouring states celebrate only the last marked the state of th

[S JAISHANKAR] EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

It cannot be that one democracy has a right to comment on another, and that's part of promoting democracy globally. But when others do that, it becomes foreign interference. Foreign interference is foreign interference irrespective of who does it and

Where it is done



says about mo

ain't been calling me and hanging out the way we used to hang
out." It may all turn out to be
nothing, but Justin Bleber fans and followers are correct in highlighting this old
exchange between the pop star who shot to
fame at 15 with rapper Sean "Diddy" Combs.
Diddy was arrested on September 16 on
multiple charges, including sex trafficking,
racketeering, and sexual assault. Bleber is
said to have been mentored by Diddy, the
music mogal, during the early days of his
career when he was still a child.

The problem with sexual abuse, as suspected in the Diddy-Bleber case, is twofold
— the impact and the per petrator-victim
dynamic. Researchers Carly D Larsen,
Jonathan G Sandberg, James M
strated through their study that
"there may be more gender similarities than differences in experiences of childhood abuse and relationship quality than previous
research has shown". There is an
increased risk of "developing a variety of mental health difficulties
in adult life" in survivors of child
sex abuse, researchers like Hilberg, Hamilton-Gaichristis, and Dixon said. Additionally, as Tom Luster and Stephen A Small
suggest, "Adolescents who had been both
physically abused and sexually abused
exhibited more problems than those who
experienced only one type of abuse."

Academic studies on the impact of sexual
abuse aside, there is plenty of abuse."

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abuse aside, there is plenty of a a similar therarchical set-up, rendering,
Proverful abusers, too, with very few exceptions, are also make. The perpetrator-victim
dynamic in male sex abuse, esset, therefore,
is to be seen as a grotesque play of patriarchyramic in male sex abuse cases, therefore,
is to be seen as a grotesque play of patriarthere are an advanced a

ception that often leads to variegated manifestations of the impact of sexual abuse along gender lines. This gendered response to the experience of sexual abuse along gender lines. This gendered response to the experience of sexual abuse is more pronounced when it comes to the parenting experience of survivors. In a 2018 literature review, Joe Wark and Jo-Ann Vis found that male survivors dealt with concerns like "lear of becoming an abuser, and physical and emotional distance from their children of the control of the control

Whether Justin Bieber will clear the air whether Justin Bieber will clear the air remains to be seen; it has shone the spot-light on child safety, the price of celebrity, and the horrible world of men asserting their dominance through sexual aggression.

IN KAPOON for and on behalf of HT Media Ltd. 18-20. Kasharba Gandhi Maro, New Delhi-10000 and printed at HT Media Ltd. Prosess at Plot No.-6. Udyoq Vilur, Greater Noids, Distt. Gastam Budh Nagar Bouses: 0010 2000000 6 Escripsia: (001 6/64274 Sci. 1254 1258 6 Circularises: 0010 6/64276 6 Escripsia: (001 6/64274 Sci. 1254 1258 6 Circularises: 0010 6/64276 6 Escripsia: (001 6/64274 Sci. 1254 1258 6 Circularises: 0010 6/64276 6 Escripsia: (001 6/64274 Sci. 1254 1258 6 Circularises: 0010 6/64276 6 Escripsia: (001 6/64274 5 Escripsia: (00





TOWARDS VIKSIT BHARAT

Union minister Jitendra Singh

India 2047 requires us to transcend rigid rules and adopt a flexible, role-based approach that enhances our global competitiveness

West Asia jitters

Besides costlier oil, India's exporters fear an impact with disruption to shipping and trade

FULL-BLOWN WAR in West Asia is in prospect following Iran's ballistic missile strike on Israel to avenge the killing of Hezbol-lah leader Hassan Nasrallah, and its Islamic Revolutionary ate at the time of its choosing even as it has expanded its millitary objectives to take on Hezbollah — the most powerful non-state actor — by invading southern Lebanon. A multi-arena conflict has opened up as the

invading southern Lebanon. A multi-arena conflict has opened up as the year-long war in Gaza still rages and Israel has also launched strikes against Houthi forces in Yemen. Israel's imminent attack on Iran for supporting Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis has ratcheted up tensions in the region amidst speculation on the likely targets of its retaliation. Will it be a tit-for-tat response on Iran's military and airbases or its oil facilities? For a long time, Israel has eyed taking out the country's nuclear enrichment facilities in Natanz. There is no telling exactly how much global oil prices will spike upwards if the US does give a go-ahead for an Israeli strike on Tehran's oil or nuclear facilities which can turn West Asia into a ball of fire.

Israeli strike on Tehran's oil or nuclear facilities which can turn West Asia into a ball of fire.

The prospect of costlier oil is bad news for India that imports the bulk of its energy requirements. Brent spot prices rose to \$75-plus a barrel after softening last month amidst fears of weakening oil demand, especially in the world's second largest economy, China. Although they still remain lower than the average of \$82.60 a barrel from January to September, the markets are extremely jittery about the prospects of strikes on Iran's oil facilities and supply disruptions through the Red Sea and Strait of Hormuz. More consequential for India is that less than half of its supplies were sourced from West Asia through the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz through which a fifth of global oil supplies passes through daily. An Israeli strike on the facilities of the third largest Opec producer would take wit 4.32 million barrels aday or 4.2% of global crude oil supwould take out 4.32 million barrels a day or 4.2% of global crude oil sup-plies. And if Tehran retaliates by blockading the Strait, all bets then will be off as oil prices would zoom and adversely impact the highly energy import-dependent Indian economy.

Indian exporters, too, are nervous about the escalating tensions in

West Asia as they confront rising shipping costs and further disruptions to trade. Attacks on container shipments by Houthi forces in the Red Sea have been going on since last October-November and could further intensify with full-blown hostilities. The Suez Canal is the quickest way for goods to transit between Asia and Europe, accounts for 30% of all containers ship traffic, and is a vital conduit for crude oil shipments. The Houthi attacks have forced our exporters to reroute their vessels around Africa via the Cape of Good Hope, which inflates costs as journeys take two weeks longer. India's exports to Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon have witnessed contractions in the first seven months of this year. As if all this weren't bade nough, exporters could also be hit by the ongoing workers' strike in the East and Gulf Coast ports of the US, India's largest trading partner. For such reasons, India's ministry of external affairs has expressed deep concern over the likelihood of a wider regional conflict and urged all parties to exercise restraint and address issues through dialogue and diplomacy.

TECH IMPACT

THINK CRITICALLY ABOUT IMPACT OF AI, INDUSTRY 4.0, GEOPOLITICS & OTHER DRIVERS OF CHANGE

The future of work

HE GLOBAL LANDSCAPE of work is undergoing a pro-found transformation driven by artificial intelligence (AI) and Industry 4.0 technologi-ical advancements, shifting demograph-ics, and evolving social and economic expectations. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2023 pro-vides a view of these drivers, highlighting their impact on the waywe work, where we work, and who does the work, presenting both opportunities and challenges. The thoughts outlined here build on my pre-sentation at the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), Japan, and serves as a guidet ot the document published by ADBI titled"The Future of Work, Artificial Intel-ligence, and Digital Government: Policy Perspectives for Asia" that delves deeper into these themes and provides a road map to reflect on the future of work.

Drivers of change

Drivers of change
The world of work is influenced by a variety of supply- and demand-side drivers. On the supply side, factors such as demographics, migration, public health, cost of living, and social trends are reshaping the availability and expectations of workers. For instance, ageing populations in many countries are leading to labour sortages, especially in care sectors, while migration patterns are shifting as people seek greater economic stability and security. The increasing cost of living is also forcing workers to reconsider wage norms and social protection, while growing and social protection, while growing

rity. The increasing cost of living is also forcingworkers to reconsider wagenoms and social protection, while growing recognition of work-life halance is influencing how people approach work.

On the demand side, technology is playing a pivotal role. All and automation are taking overroutine tasks, making roles that require cognitive, creative, and emotional intelligence more important. Other drivers such as yebrescurity concerns, sustainability, and geopolitics are further shaping the demand for labour force, as businesses reassess global supply chains and operational practices. Moreover, globalisation continues to create new markets,

S RAMADORAI

but at the same time, requires organisa-tions to adapt to the diverse regional expectations and challenges.

Impact of AI

Impact of AI

The large-scale adoption of AI and
automation is resulting in production and
processes becoming more agile, cost-feterities, and high-yielding. These effects,
along with increased consumer demand
for high-value products and services, are
likely to act as a catalyst for economic
growth and innovation that will creat
higher-order jobs. For example, in industries like finance, healthcare, and logistics,
AI is helping us achieve

triesilise finance, healthcare, and logistics, Al is helping us achieve unprecedented efficiency in data analysis and decision-making, but human oversight remains crucial in a case requiring ethical judgement. The increasing impact of technology is also leading to new work models in the form of remote work and gieg economy — creating a shift towards more flexible and inclusive labour markets. However, they also raise important questions about the Lifelong learning must be embraced as a way of life. Those who take it up will thrive in

the future

Data sovereignty in the age of surveillance

infra, it is equally important to nurture domestic digital platforms

workplace

inclusive labour markets. However, they also raise important questions about the need for worker empowerment and the adequacy of social protection, as these new models do not come with traditional employment benefits like healthcare and retirement savings.

Competency development

In this evolving world of human pro-ductivity, competency will be the cur-rency. As traditional roles get disrupted, workers will need to consistently upskill and reskill. Lifelong learning must be embraced as a way of life. Those who

embrace continuous learning will thrive in the future workplace. This is underscored by the Skill Disruption Index published by the Boston Consulting Group, which highlights the extent of transformation that job roles will undergo. There an urgent need for upskilling and broadening our interdisciplinary capabiliting and broadening our interdisciplinary capabiliting and some seek of the workforce of the future needs to possess a mix of domain expertise, technology skills, leadership acumen, and emotional intelligence to navigate the complexities of an increasingly automated and/al-driven world for workers in

complexities of an increasingly auto-mated and Al-driven word. for ownsters in the lower end of the value chain, as is the sace in the gig economy, peer learning networks and wenues for credentialing skills must be created to sure expertise is translat-tive in and long-term career ensure expertise is transla able to other opportuniti and long-term care

India's digital public infrastructure

infrastructure
As countries navigate
these shifts in the labour market, the
development and integration of digital
and open-source infrastructure remains
equally-critical as a too if or fostering inclusive growth. In India, we are leading the
way with India Stack initiatives. Our pubite digital platforms such as UPI are not
only promoting financial inclusion but
also providing a framework for innovation and entrepreneurship. The iGOT Karmayogi is another platform that aims to
democratise learning and improve the
competencies of public servants, enabling
them to remain adaptable to face future
challenges. Other nations are now adopt-

ng similar digital public infrastructure at cale and leveraging their potential to frive economic growth and social welfare.

Policy and governance

Policy and governance

To cater to these energing needs, the nole of policymakers cannot be overstated. It is essential that governments create frameworks that support both workers and innovation. This includes devising policies that encourage learning and competency building, ensure social protection systems are in place, and foster environments where new industries can thrive. One approach that could prove effective in naivgating these changes is the application of the principal-agent theory to public sector governance. It addresses the complexities of delegation and accountability and can help policymakers develop new models of governance that promote transparency, adaptability, and impact measurement. We will require robust frameworks to evaluate how well programmes, platforms, and initiatives are translating to real-world growth and impact.

An invitation to reflect and act

An invitation to reflect and act

It is imperative that we think critically bout the impact of AI and Industry 4.6 chnologies, geopolitics, and other dri-ers of change on the work ecosystem ew work models and lifelong learning technologies, geopolitics, and other dri-vers of change on the work ecosystem. New work models and lifelong learning will define the path forward, and policy-makers must ensure frameworks are in place to support people in this transition. India's technology leadership promises great potential for solutions, offering valu-able lessons to the world. This article is just the beginning of the conversation. For a more detailed explo-ration of the trends and possibilities, I encourage you to visit the ADBI website and read the policy brief that provides actionable insights for policymakers and other stakeholders to navigate the future of work in a technology-driven world.

To read the full document, please visit: shorturLat/FFxHL

Boeing's frail finances give strikers all the power

WHILE A STRIKE by East Coast port workers is strangling the flow of goods from Maine to Texas and grabbing headlines, news of machinists at Boeing Co. about to enter their fourth week of picketing near Seattle has receded a bit into

The background.

The impact from the port workers' strike will increase by the day as the dam age to the economy and consumers begins to bite. That's not the case for Boeing and it workers. The effects won't be visible to the public. Delays of plane deliveries, unfortunately, are nothing new to Boeing customers. They've been grappling with a dearth of new planes for years after the grounding of the 737 Max following two deadly crashes and the quality snags that had halted shipments of the 787.

The pressure on Boeing, though, is acute. The company is in a dire financial position, burning through billions of dollars of cash and teetering at the edge of having its credit rating cut to junk. The company has floated the idea of raising \$1.0 billion or more by selling shares, which wouldn't happen until the strike is resolved.

The approximately 33,000 machinists on strike know this. Time is on their

strike is resolved.

The approximately 33,000 machinists on strike know this. Time is on their side. In fact, many have been preparing for this moment for years, stuffing away savings to stick it to a company that cereced them into signing contract extensions that slowedwage gains and eliminated their defined-pension benefits, Gig-economy jobs also give the union members an outlet to earn money during the strike, as Bloomberg News' fulle johnsson and Anna Edgerton highlighted.

The workers "seem angrier than in 2008 when the strike lasted 57 days", Cai won Rumohr, an analyst with TD Cowen, wrote in an October 1 note in which he cut his price target on Boeing stock by \$30 to \$200. This strike will hurt beeing's revenue by more than the \$100 million a day in 2008, he said.

Boeing tried to force a best and final offer last week



THOMAS

Boeing tried to force a best and final offer last week of a 30% raise over four years, a signing bonus, and a sweeter match to the employee 401(s) savings plan. It didn't work. The machinists lost their company-paid beauth bealth benefits on October 1, but that hasn't moved the needle, either. This doesn't come as a surprise given that the first offer of a 25% plan par raise was rejected by an astounding 96% of the employees who belong to the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

Boeing needs to reach a deal with its striking workers and crank up aircraft production. The backlog of aircraft orders is piling up. This is cash and financial relief just waiting to be unlocked. No doubt a hefty pay raise will squeeze future profit margins, but it's unlikely the company, being in such as weakened state, can outlast the determination of its workers. The machinists know they are in the strongest position ever to claw back what they felf forced to give away years ago when the company was threatening to build planes in non-union states. Not only are Boeing's finances in a precarious position, but the planemaker's awaller suppliers will also begin to feel the squeeze. This is a supply chain that's only now beginning to be all from the sudden drop in volume during the pandemic and the loss of experienced workers whom they have struggled to replace. Meanwhile, airline customers are losing patience, giving more ammunition trival Airbus SE to add to its lead as the largest commercial aircraft maker. It's time for new chief executive officer Kelly Ortherg to settle this strike and equality to the point where the Federal Aviation Administration had to intervene. The union earlier this week urged Ortrberg *to truly engage at the proposal-based level and to take the reins* of the negotiations. Ortherg should take up that offer.

K YATISH RAJAWAT **DEV CHANDRASEKHAR**

AS INDIA STRIDES towards becoming a digitally empowered society, the notion data sowereignty becomes not just relevant, but also pivotal. We have so far conceptualised "digital" through infrastructure owned and operated by foreign entities. In light of global surveillance practices being pursued by countries where such infrastructure are created and monitored, it becomes imperative to question the constructs of data owner-ship, protection frameworks, and control over data infrastructure. We must establish a comprehensive regime that includes ownership and control to counter threats of global surveillance, mainly from the US and China.

In April 2023, US President Joe Biden AS INDIA STRIDES towards becoming a

the US and China.

In April 2023, US President Joe Biden signed the Reforming Intelligence and Securing America Act, renewing Section 70.0 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). The legislation authorises US firms to transfer foreign users (communication data to the American government without a warrant for national security purposes. This affects data on popular cloud platforms like AWS, Google Cloud, and Microsoft Azure — widely used by Indian businesses, individuals, and even government entities. As a result, foreign users including from India face the risk of their data being accessed by the US government.

including from India face the risk of their data being accessed by the USg overnment without their consent or knowledge. This underscores the urgency for a country like India to overhaul data governance. Given India's population and the rapid expansion of its digital infrastructure, it is a repository of massive quantities

of data. Establishing data sovereignty isvi-tal for safeguarding privacy, as well as bo-istering economic and national security. Data sovereignty means that a coun-try's data should be subject to its own laws and stored within its territorial bound-aries. This concept is not only about adher-ing to legal norms; it represents a strate-gic necessity as India seeks to assert itself as a technology frontrunner, Crucially, it also acts as a bulwark to protect India's democratic principles in an increasingly connected world. A robust data sovereienty framework

ure sensitive government and

trom data breaches and secures ensitive government and military operations. But sovereignty should not be conflated with mere data localisation. Simply storing data within national borders, without establishing stringent protection measures or clear ownership rights, is insufficient for guarding against external surveillance threats or domestic misuse. India can take cues from global frameworks like the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation which grants citizens significant control over their data and imposes strict regulations on companies over data access and management. It prioritises safe data handling, privacy, and algorithmic transparency, creating a foundation for digital independence while fostering innovation.

Another relevant model is the UK-US

A robust data sovereignty can protect Indian citizens from data breaches and sec Besides building

Data Access Agreement which addresses concerns of surveillance under FISA's Section 702. The bilateral agreement, effective since Ctotoer 2022, doesn't eliminate the risks of mass surveillance but provides a framework for balancing law enforcement with privacy concerns. It emphasises judicial oversight, data minimisation, and human rights safeguards, prohibiting bulk data collection. However, this approach alone is not enough for India, given the scale offits digital landscape and the complexity of its data needs. India should consider establishing similar bilateral or multilateral agreements with other

eral agreements with other nations, such as those of the

ations, such as those of the equally attempting the protection was honored to the protection and the protection are should establish individual ownership of data, ensuring that citizens, not corporations or governments, hold primary rights over their presonal data. India's vision for true digital sovereignty requires more than regulatory requires more than regulatory tesps; it demands investments in domestic infrastructure. India must develop its own data centres, cloud storage, and processing facilities. A domestically controlled digital infrastructure would also open doors to economic opportunities in open doors to economic opportunities in high-value, tech-driven industries. India also needs to control the physi-cal pipelines through which data flows,

especially undersea cables. These cables carry nearly 99% of global internet traffic, yet they are mainly owned by the US-dominated G7 group. China has been aggressively expanding its stake in this space. Allegations of espionage involving Chinese ships repairing undersea cables underscore the geopolitical risks. To mitigate such dangers, India must urgently invest in its own undersea internet infrastructure. India can then safeguard its national security while ensuring resilient and uninterrupted global communication. India's path to digital sovereignity must be multifaceted. Besides building infrastructure, it is important to nurture infrastructure, it is important to nurture specially undersea cables. These cable

India must establish a comprehensive regime that

includes ownership and control to counter threats of global surveillance, mainly from the US and China

infrastructure, it is important to nurtur domestic digital platforms and ecosys

domestic digital platforms and ecosys-tems that can compete with global tech glants. This will contribute to economic growth, job creation, and innovation too. India may also consider adopting industry-specific data localisation mea-sures. This would mean applying stricter controls on highly sensitive data, such as financial or health records, while allowing more flexibility on less sensitive informa-tion. Such stratified policies could main-tain sovereignty without stifling global commerce and collaboration. Moreover, equipping Indian citizens with knowledge about data vulnerabilities will empower them to make informed decisions. Trans-parency and accountability must be the them to make informed decisions. Trans-parency and accountability must be the cornerstones of India's data policies. Judi-cial oversight should be mandated for sur-weillance, ensuring that the right to pri-vacy is protected and citizens are informed when their data is accessed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR UN and Israel at odds

Antonio Guterres' calls for ceasefires in Gaza and Lebanon and an end to the deadly cycle of tit-for-tat violence in West Asia ser in sync with the role the organisation that he helms is supposed to Joak But Israel holds him biased in favour of the "axis of resistance". Denouncing him as a "friend of Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran",

it has taken the extreme step of declaring him a persona non grata and banning him from entering its "territory". Its open hostility towards Guterres is explicable in terms of its self-righteousness, Israel has justfied its killings of Palestinians in Gaza savino it was only "mowing the grass only "in the grass". saying it was only "mowing the grass" What West Asia sees and suffers is the demonstration of the principle of "might is right". In speaking against Israel's use of its superior military strength for the wholesale slaughter of innocent people in Gaza and Lebanon, Guterres has shown great strength of character. —G David Milton, Maruthancode

Delhi's AQI problem

Apropos of "Hazy action plan" (FE, October 3), Delhi's toxic air is caused by a combination of vehicular and industrial emissions, construction activities, and crop residue in nearby

areas. The Delhi government has taken a few measures to tackle these but air quality has consistently worsened. A multi-pronged approach by all stakeholders from media, civil society, educational institutions, state and central government is needed. They must come out with feasible plans to achieve sustainable results.—Bal Govind, Noida

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जेल में भी जातिवाद

जेलों में जाति आधारित भेदभाव को समाप्त करने संबंधी सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के फैसले की जितनी प्रशंसा की जाए कम होगी। इतनी ही प्रशंसा उस रिपोर्ट या याचिका की भी होनी चाहिए, जिसने सदियों से चली आ रही इस बेशर्म कुप्रथा पर प्रहार का जरूरी साहस दिखाया। हकीकत से वाकिफ न्यायालय का यह एक ऐतिहासिक फैसला है। क्रमाना न्यायाभीश घनंजय वाई चंद्रचूड की अनुवाई वाली पीठ ने गुरुवार को जेल संहिता में संबंधित प्रावधानों को असांविधानिक घोषित करते हुए जेलों में जाति-आधारित भेदभाव की इस प्रथा को समाप्त कर दिया है। अदालत ने केंद्र सरकार और राज्य सरकारों को दोटूक निर्देश जारी करते हुए कहा है कि जेलों में बॉदियों को जाति के आधार पर काम या आवास की सुविधा न दी जाए। अदालत ने माना कि प्रत्यक्ष या परोक्ष रूप से जाति के आधार पर किया जाने वाला भेदभाव औपनिवेशिक शासन का अवशेष है। संविधान के तहत सभी कैदियों से समान व्यवहार सुनिश्चित किया जाना चाहिए। जाति लिंग व विकलांगता के आधार पर जेलों के अंदर होने वाला भेदभाव पूरी तरह अवैध है। यह बहुत आश्चर्य की बात है कि एकाध कानूनों और जेल नियमों में भेदभाव के प्रावधान अब तक दर्ज हैं।

सभी राज्यों और केंद्रशासित प्रदेशों को इस फैसले के तीन महीने के अंदर अपने जेल नियमों में संशोधन करना होगा। यह केंद्र सरकार

की प्राथमिक जिम्मेदारी होनी चाहिए कि वह जेल मैनुअल 2016 में सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने सुधार करने के साथ ही आदर्श जेल स्पष्ट कर दिया है कि व सुधार सेवा अधिनियम, 2013 जाति, लिंग और में संशोधन करते हुए दर्ज जाति आधारित भेदभाव को दर करे। यह विकलांगता के आधार बात बहुत चौंकाती है कि विचाराधीन या दोषी कैदियों के पर जेलों के अंदर होने रजिस्टर में जाति का कॉलम होता है वाला भेदभाव पूरी तरह और जेल अधिकारी ही नहीं, स्वयं अवैध है। इसे तत्काल कैदी भी जाति देखकर व्यवहार करते हैं। जाति देखकर कैदियों को रोकना जरूरी है। काम दिया या काम लिया जाता है। अतः जेल में जाति आधारित किसी

जता. जरा न जाता जायातर करते में क्रांलिम को समाप्त करते में ही भलाई है। आगामी वर्षों में जेल अधिकारियों की बड़ी जिम्मेदारी होनी चाहिए कि जेलों में जाति प्रथा का अंत हो। साफ-सफाई के काम से हर जाति के कैदियों को जोड़ा जाए। काम किन्हीं खास कैदियों पर लादने के बजाय क्रमवार सभी से कराया जाए, ताकि हर किसी को हर तरह के काम का मौका मिले। यह एहसास कैदियों में पैदा न हो कि किन्हीं खास जातियों के कैदी जेलों में ज्यादा आराम फरमाते हैं। वास्तव में, पिछड़ी जातियों के नेताओं को भी भेदभाव के अंत के

लिए युद्ध स्तर पर सक्रिय होना चाहिए। सवाल यह भी है कि इस बड़ी समस्या की ओर पहले क्यों इशारा नहीं किया गया ? सवाल यह भी है कि क्या भारतीय समाज या भारतीय व्यवस्था में अभी भी ऐसे क्षेत्र हैं जहां अघोषित रूप से या सामान्य रूप से ही जातिगत भेदभाव की कुप्रथा बेधड़क चल रही है? यह पूरा प्रकरण इस बात का संकेत है कि पिछड़ों के नेताओं को ज्यादा सजग होने की जरूरत है। जेलों मे सदियों से जिनका शोषण हो रहा था, क्या उनकी ओर से आवाज उठाने वाला कोई नहीं था? विशेष रूप से सरकारों को अपनी ओर से यह विस्तृत अध्ययन करना चाहिए कि जेलों में गरीबों और विशेष रूप से आदिवासियों की क्या स्थिति है ? क्या जेलों में समानता का व्यवहार हो रहा है ? बेशक, जहां भी संविधान के अनुरूप समानता या मानवीयता का व्यवहार नहीं हो रहा है, वहां जिम्मेदार अधिकारियों के खिलाफ कड़े कदम उठाने की जरूरत है।



न्याय औरशासन

मदाम सरकार ने गांधीजी के जन्मदिवस पर न्याय और शासन को पृथक करने की दिशा में जो कदम उठाया है, वह ध्यान खींचने वाला है। यह सुधार शुरू में दो जिलों में जारी किया गया है और अगले वर्ष तक सारे ही प्रांत में इसे लागू कर दिया जायेगा। मद्रास हरिजन मंदिर प्रवेश, मद्य निषेध आदि सामाजिक कर दिवा जाया। महास्त्र हिरान मारद प्रवक्त, महा निषय जाद सामाजक मुखार्थ के मामले में भारत के अन्य मोत्री के हमेगा ही आहे कहा है। उसने दूतन कदम में अपनी पुतनी ख्वाति को कायम खा है। लोकतंत्र में अद्वा रखने वाला हरेक व्यक्ति उसके इस कार्य का अभिनन्दन करेगा। काहिस चीकाल से इस मुखार कि लिए आंदोलन करती आई है। जब विदेशी राज्य था, तो न्यायालयों को शासन संचालकों की नाराज्यी अथवा

प्रसन्ता का बहुत ज्वादा ख्यालर स्वाना पढ़ेगा वाश साधारण मानलों में तो न्वाय की अपेक्षा हो भी सकती थी, किंतु उजनीतिक मामलों में तो न्वाय क्वींचत ही मिलता था। अवश्य ही वह स्वींकार करना पढ़ेगा कि चन्द हाईकोर्टी ने उस । भारता था। अवस्य हा शह र त्याकार करना पड़गा कि चन्द्र दहकार न उस समय भी स्वतंत्र नमांचृति का परिष्य रिया, किंद्र गावता उठावार्त स्वतंत्र न वृत्ति का परिष्य गहीं दे सकीं। इसका नतीजा वह हुआ कि ब्रिटिश न्याय-प्रणाली की जो भाक की, ब्लाहुत कुछ जाती और यह माना जाते त्या कि अंग्रेडारी जज में न्याय करने वाले और मुकरमा चलाने वाले में मेंडों चैन यहीं हैं। दोनों एक हीं हैं। किंदु स्वतंत्र भारत में स्थिति बदलनी पाहिए। आंद्रोलन-काल में कांग्रेस ने न्याय और शासन विभाग की पृषकता की डुट्डाई दी थी। उसको वह सत्तारूड़ होने पर क्वों न पूरा करे ? न्याय और शासन दोनों राज्य के अंग हैं, किंतु अगर शासन न्याय की प्रभावित करता है, तो राज्य के प्रति नागरिकों की श्रद्धा कम हो जायेगी। लोकतंत्री राज्य नागरिकों के सहयोग औ समर्थन पर ही जीवित रह सकता है। ऐसी दशा में लोकतंत्री राज्य को नागरिक राभाग र रह आधार कर करना है। एसी स्पार राभाग रहा भाग स्थान है। अब इस में महार प्रसाद करना चाहिए। ज्यान और शासन का प्रथमक रण इस दिशा में विशोध रूप में सहरायक होगा। अगर नागरिक किसो कारण ग्रन्थ का कोण्याजन बन जाता है, जो बक केवल न्यावालयन से ही खड़त था सकता है। शासनिक अधिकारी कभी-कभी राग-द्वेष से प्रीरत होकर भी काम कर जाते हैं।... ऐसी दशा में नागरिक उसी अवस्था में गहत पा सकता है जब न्यायकर्ता पूरी तरह स्वतन्त्र हों। न्याय और शासन विभागों का पृथक करने का वही आशय है।

हरियाणा पर टहरती हरेक निगाह



रुवार की शाम हरियाणा में जुनाव प्रचार का शोर धम गया। अब शनिवार का इंतजार है, जब बोट डाले जाएंगे। नतीजों का एलान 8 अक्तूबर को जम्मू-कश्मीर के साथ किया जाएगा। यहां इस बार दिलचस्प युनाव के कयास लगाए जा रहे हैं। बादशाहपुर निर्वाचन चुनाव क क्यांस लगाए जो रह । बादशाहपुरानवाचन क्षेत्र में, जब एक डाबे पर मौजूद कुछ झुझवरों से मैंने बात की, तो उनके जबाब मतदाताओं के बदलते मिजाज का संकेत दे रहे थे। एक का तो वह भी कहना था कि जिस तरह मार्केटिंग में पब्लिक को नवापन चाहिए, बैसे ही राजनीति में भी वे नबीनता खोजते हैं। उसके मुताबिक, जड़ता खत्म करने के लिए भी लोग विकल्प की तलाश करते हैं। बैसे, इस बार गुरुग्राम् जिले के इस निर्वाचन क्षेत्र में मुकाबला एकतरफा नहीं है। मुख्य टक्कर तो कांग्रेस और भाजपा में है, लेकिन आम आदमी पार्टी और एकाथ स्वतंत्र उम्मीदवार भी अपना पूरा दम ट्रोक रहे हैं।

यह तस्वीर सिर्फ बादशाहपुर की नहीं, पुरे हरियाण की है। सत्ता-विरोधी रुझान, जातिगत समीकरण, खेती-किसानी से जुड़े मुद्दे, पंशन व बेरोजगारी ऐसे मसले हैं, जो इस बार नतीजे को प्रभावित कर सकते हैं। एक-दूसरे से मुद्दे हथियाने की ऐसी होड़ मची है) एक-पूर्वर सं मुद्द रक्ष्यान का एसा छात्र क्रान्य की कानुस के काग्रेस ने जहां न्युनतम समर्थन मुख्य की कानुस गार्टरी देने का वायदा अपने घोषणापत्र में किया, तो भाजपा ने 24 फसलों पर एमएसपी घोषित करने के दावे कर दिए। नई नीकरियों का सुजन करने के साध-साथ जानीन देने के वायदे भी किए जा रहे हैं। गरीब साथ जाना दन के वायद भा किए, जा रह है। गरीब तबकों को लुभाने की पूरी कोशिश चला रही है। हालांकि, ब्राइंडिंग्ज सोसाइटियों में कानून-व्यवस्था बड़ा मुद्दा दिखता है। वहां के लोग शांति-व्यवस्था को अहम मानते हैं, साथ ही बुनियादी ढांचे में सुधार को अहम मानते हैं, साथ ही बुनियादी ढांचे में सुधार को मांग भी दोहवते हैं। पिछले मुहोने के फरीदाबाद हा नान ना पाउरत है। पेक्टर नहीं के परा तो बैंक ग्रदसे का जिक्र करते हुए वे कहते हैं कि यहां तो बैंक मैनेजर तक जलभराव में अपनी जान गंवा देते हैं। हालांकि, राज्य के बाकी हिस्सों की तरह गुरुग्राम यहां हर राजनीतिक पार्टी मतदाताओं की अपेक्षाओं पर खरा उतरने के साथ-साथ अपने अंदर की चुनौतियों से भी पार पाने की जोर-आजमाइश कर रही है।



के निर्वाचन क्षेत्रों में भी जाति का समीकरण अपनी मियत रखता है। विशेषकर, बीते 10 वर्षों से गैर जाट नेता का मुख्यमंत्री बने रहना जाट समुदाव को अखरने लगा है। उनमें जातीय अस्मिता की भावना प्रबल है। कुछ लोगों का तो यह भी कहना था कि जाट अपरा हा चुन्हें प्राप्ता कर्ता पक्ष चा भवता चार करी है। समुदाय इस सार एकतरफा बोट करेरी और उनका भत विधायक के लिए नहीं, बल्कि मुख्यमंत्री के लिए होगा, वानी वे वहीं सोचकर मतदान करेरी कि इस बार उनकी जाति का ही कोई नेता मुख्यमंत्री बने। यहां की कुल 90 विधानसभा सीटों में 35 से अधिक सीटों पर जाटों का दबदबा है और माना जाता है कि करीब 25 जादों का दबदबा है और माना जाता है कि करीब-5 फीसदी बोटर जाद समुदाव के हैं। चुकि करीब-करीब इतने ही बोटर द्वितन भी है, इसलिए कांग्रेस इस जातीब समीकरण को अपने लिए मुफीद मान रही है। जादी और दिल्तों को एक करके ही भूपेंद्र सिंह हुड़ा ने 2005 से 2014 तक अपनी सरकार चलाई थी। इस

उनके अनुकूल है, ऐसा अभी नहीं कहा जा सकता। कुमारी शेलजा विवाद इसकी मुनादी करता है। उन्होंने पिछले लोकसमा चुनाव में शानदार प्रदर्शन किया और दलित नेता होने के बावजूद तमाम जातियाँ के मतदाताओं का विश्वास जीता। मगर पिछले दिनों क नवसाजा को गयरवार नाता गरी एकड़ी हैना की उनकी नाराजगी खबरों में रही है। कांग्रेस हाईकमान से मुलाकात के बाद वह फिर से सक्रिय हुई। बेशक, वह ऐसा कुछ नहीं करेंगी, जिससे पार्टी को नुकसान पहुंचे, लेकिन जिस हफ्ते वह नाराज थीं, उन् दिनों यहां कांग्रेस का ग्राफ गिर गया था। वहीं कारण है कि पार्टी के शीर्ष नेताओं में इस पर भी मंचन चल रहा होगा कि जाटों को नाराज करके शैलजा पर दांव लगाया जाए या फिर उनको किनारे करके दलितों की नाराजगी मोल ली जाए या फिर संभावित सत्ता का इस तरह से बंट हो कि हुड्डा भी संतुष्ट हो जाएं और शैलजा भी ? बैसे, इस बार किसी युवा चेहरे को तवज्जो देने के कयास भी खूब लगाए जा रहे हैं। उधर, भाजपा के अंदर भी कुछ इसी तरह की उधेड़-बुन चल रही है। मतदाताओं को अपने पाले में रखने के लिए तमाम तरह की कोशिशें जारी हैं। मगर पार्टी में का त्रांच तर का काशास जाउँ है। मगर पाद म एक तबका यही मानता है कि यदि नायब सिंह सैनी को कुछ समय पहले सत्ता सौंप दी गई होती, तो भाजपा में यूं भगदड़ नहीं मचती। लगभग साढ़े नी साल एक गैर-गाट नेता के रूप में मनोहर लाल खटटर ने यहां की जांट नता क रूप म मनाहर लोल खंट्रटर न यहा का सरकार संभावी है, जो शायद कर जांटों को नागाया गुजरा। भाजपा में भी नेतृत्व का सवाल बार-बार उठ रहा है। इसका चुनाव पर कितना असर पड़ेगा, यह ती 8 अक्तुबर को पता चलेगा, लेकिन भाजपा का आंतरिख सर्वे भी पार्टी में बहुत उत्साह नहीं पैदा कर रहा, जिसके कारण यहां से नेताओं की चला-चली जाये है। तब है,

गर वह सरकार बचा पाईं, तो इतिहास बनाएगी। रही बात आम आदमी पार्टी, बसपा, लोकदल जेजेपी जैसी पार्टियों की, तो लोकदल भले कुछ सीटें जजपा नहीं पादियां का, तो लोकर व्हान कुछ साद जायां प्रभाव छोड़ते नहीं दिख रहे। हालांकि, उनका प्रपाद-प्रसार अनवरत जारी रहा। आम आदमी पार्टी ने तो सोशल मीडिया का खूब इस्तेमाल किया, जिसका असर शहरी आबादी में दिखा है। हालांकि, यहां भी लोग विकल्प और बदलाव की बात करते हैं, पर वे इन दलों पर उतना भरोसा नहीं कर पा रहे। बादशाहपुर की ही एक घटना याद आ रही है। एक

बादबासपुर का हा एक घटना बाद आ रहा हा एक संसाइटों में बुजुर्गों के लिए मतदान की प्रक्रिया चल रही थी। एक परिवार में मियां-वीबी से जब मैंने पुछ कि उन्होंने जब ईबीएम का बटन दबावा, तो उनके मन में क्या चल रहा था? तो, दोनों का जवाब कमोबेश यही था कि वे बदलाव के इच्छुक हैं, लेकिन दिलचस्प वह था कि उन दोनों ने दो अलग-अलग पार्टियों को

युरुग्राम का यह चरित्र हरियाणा के लिए अपवाद नहीं माना जाएगा।जिस तरह से आक्रामक प्रचार-प्रसार तमाम दलों ने किया है, उससे वे बदलाव की बयार बनाने में जरूर कामवाब रहे हैं, लेकिन इस बदलाव का बाह्य न जिल्हें का नेपाल के हैं, शाकन इस बदाना की बाहक बनने के लिए वे खुद कितने तैयार हैं, वह एक अहम सवाल बनकर सामने खड़ा है। यहां हर पार्टी मतदाताओं की अपेक्षाओं पर खरा उतरने के साथ-साथ अपने अंदर की चुनीतिबों से भी पार पाने को जोर-आजमाइश कर रही है। ऐसे में, देखना दिलचस्प होगा कि यहां का जनादेश किसके पाले में जाएगा ? (ये लेखिका के अपने विचार हैं)

बाइडन के वक्त चतुर्भुज सुरक्षा संवाद को मिला बहुत बल

क्वाड की अध्यक्षता

अगले वर्ष भारत करेगा.

उसके पास क्वाड को नई दिशा देने का अवसर

होगा, जैसे उसने जी

20 को दिया।

जारक राजिन के बहुक जूनिक जनारकों व बहुक राष्ट्रपति हैं और उनकी दोबारा निर्वाचित होने की हार्दिक इच्छा थी। मगर कमजोर पड़ती याददाश्त, बार-बार की गलतियों और खेनाल्ड ट्रंप के साथ टीवी बहस में निराशाजनक प्रदर्शन के चलते प्रमुख डेमोक्रेटिक नेताओं

निर्पताचनक प्रत्यंत्र के स्वराद अनुस्त्र क्रमाझटक नायहर। के भारी दबाव के कारण उन्हें पद की दीड़ से हटना पड़ा। बहरहाल, बाइडन अभी भी अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति हैं और पिछले दिनों बेहद गर्मजोशी से अपने कार्यकाल के छठे क्वाड शिखर सम्मेलन पर उन्होंने हस्ताक्षर किए। छठ बताड शराबर सम्मलन पर उन्तान हरताहर करा। उन्होंने अपने गुरू नगर डेलावेलर में शिख्य सम्मलन की मेजबानी की और तीन क्वाड नेताओं- भारत से नरेड़ मोदी, जापान से पुनियत्ती किशियत और ऑस्ट्रेलिया से पंचनी अल्वानीन के लिए उन्होंने अपने पर के दरवाने खोल दिए और रिश्तों में यादगार स्मर्श जोड़ा। इस बार बाइडन विलमिंगटन घोषणापत्र जारी कराने में क रहे। सम्मेलन में बढ़ते समुद्री सहवोग को खासतौर पर

रहा सम्मातन में बढ़त संगुता सहवाग रेखांकित किया गया : पहला क्वाड समुद्री जहाज पर्यवेक्षक मिशन, क्वाड इंडो-पैसिफिक लॉजिस्टिक्स नेटवर्क, क्वाड पोर्ट्स ऑफ फ्यूचर पार्टनरशिप और सेमीकंडक्टर आपूर्ति शृंखला में सहयोग। इससे समुद्री सुरक्षा सहयोग बढ़ेगा, जो आगामी वर्षों में क्वाड़ के लिए सबसे महत्वाकांक्षी एजेंडा साबित हो सकता है। जाहिर है, बाइडन ने अपने एक कार्यकाल में ही शानदार स्थायी विग्रसत हासिल कर ली है।

रुवाया (वर्शना प्राास्ता कर रेणा हा ध्यान रहे, कबाड़ (चतुष्केत सुरक्षा संवाद) का जन्म 2004 में दक्षिण-पूर्व एशियाई देशों में सुनामी के चलते हुई तवाशी के बाद हुआ था, जब अमेरिका, जापान, भारत और ऑस्ट्रेलिया की नीसेनाओं ने प्रभावित देशों को मानबीब सहायता व आपदा राहत देने के लिए हाथ मिलावा था। वैसे, यह एक दशक से दन के लिए होव मिलावा था। वसरे, यह एक देशक से अधिक समय तक निष्क्रिय रहा, वर्ष 2017 में अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति छेनाल्ड ट्रंप ने चीन की आक्रामकता के मृद्देनजर इसे पुनर्जीवित किया। ट्रंप के बाद् क्वाड की बैठकों को शिखर सम्मेलन के स्तर तक ले जाने की बाउका को सिंच्य निमारित के रिक्त पिकार जी जी की जिम्मेदारी जो बाइडन पर थी। पहला क्वाड शिख्य सम्मेलन वस्तुत: 12 मार्च, 2021 को हुआ था। तब से बाइडन के राष्ट्रपति रहते कुल छह सम्मेलन हो चुके हैं, जिनमें से दो आभासी और चार भौतिक हैं।

बाइडन ने चीन के खिलाफ ट्रंप के अधिकांश शुल्कों को जारी खने दिया है। चीन पर बझं कड़ा प्रहार किया है, जहां सबसे ज्यादा मायने रखता है: चीन को चिप्स और





सरेंद्र कमार । पूर्व राजनिवव

ग्राधुनिक प्रौद्योगिकियों के निवांत से इनकार किय है। वैसे, बाइडन ने इस बात पर जोर दिया कि वह चीन हा वस्तु, बाइडान ने इस बात पर लिए हिया कि करा के साथ कोई टकराव नहीं, बालक उसे मात देना चाहेंगे। छलांकि, डेलावेबर में प्रधानमंत्री नेरंप्र मोदी ने भी जोर देकर कहा कि हम किसी के खिलाफ नहीं हैं। इसके बावजूद चीन ने जोर-शोर से दोहराया है कि क्वाड उसके खिलाफ है। वहां रूस भी चीन से सहमत है।

बेशक, बाइडन के शासनकाल में क्वाड का एजेंडा तेजी से बढ़ा है। वह अब संयुक्त राष्ट्र ती और जी-20 के एजेंड्रे जैसा दिखता

है। क्वाड सर्वाइकल कैंसर को कर ह। बबाड सवाइकल कसर को कम करने के लिए महत्वपूर्ण और उभरती प्रीद्योगिकयों, जलवायु परिवर्तन, आपूर्ति भूखला, हरित ऊर्जा, साइबर अपराध, आतंकवाद, ऋण राहत, कौशल विकास में भी सहयोग का वादा करता है। भारत ने भी सरकार द्वारा वित्त पोषित तकनीकी संस्थान में चार साल के इंजीनिवरिंग कार्यक्रम को आगे बढ़ाने के लिए इंडो-पैसिफिक

क्षेत्र के छात्रों को 5,00,000 अमेरिकी डॉल्टर मूल्य की 50 क्वाड छात्रवृत्तियां देने का वादा किया है। इस संगठन में हर देश अपनी ओर से योगदान कर रहा है। बाइडन क्वाड के भक्ष्यि के बारे में आशान्त्रित हैं, 'हमारे देश

रणनीतिक रूप से पहले से अधिक एकजुट हैं...चुनीतियां आएंगी, दुनिया बदल जाएगी, क्वाड वहीं रहेगा।' दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया के देशों की आर्थिक भलाई के लिए क्वाड देशों के बीच सहयोग की गति जारी रहेगी। बाइडन युग के बाद समुद्री सुरक्षा के लिए गहन सहयोग का और विस्तार होगा। यह विचार का विषय है कि हाल के वर्षों में जो क्वाड शिखर सम्मेलन हुए हैं, उनसे चीन की अपने पड़ोसियों के खिलाफ आक्रामकता में कमी आई है। खैर, अगले वर्ष भारत क्वाड की अध्यक्षता उसके पास क्वाड को नई दिशा देने का अवसर होगा, जैसे उसने साल 2023 में जी-20 को दिया था (ये लेखक के अपने विचार हैं)

मनसा वाचा कर्मणा भवित और संस्था

इरादे हमें तनाव में रखते हैं। तनाव में कभी गहन विश्राम नहीं होता। भक्ति इरादों को विलीन करती है। इरादे नहा हता। भाकत इरात का ।वलान करता है। इराद आपको भरिका में अकेतत हैं, ऐतु आनंद होशा वर्तमान में है। जो इस सत्य के प्रति जागरूक हो जाए, यह ज्ञानी है। कभी बाँद एसानंद को अवस्था में कोई इराय उरप्पन हो भी जाए, तो अग्रयास ही साकार हो जाता है। प्रार्थना स्वीकार होने के लिए तीव आकांशा की आवश्यकता है। आकांशा जितनी अधिक तीव होगी

आवश्यकर्ता है। आकाक्षा जितना आधक ताब्र होगा और उसके पूर्ण होने में जितनी देरी लगेगी, कृतज्ञता का भाव उतना ही अधिक होगा। तीब्र आकांक्षा आपको भक्ति की ओर ले जाती है। आकांक्षा के तीब्र होने के लिए समय और प्रयोजन की आवश्यकता है। जब किसी रिए सम्प आर्त्रमाओं के जीवर्गनिका है। जेन मन्त्रा तीक्र आकांक्षा की पूर्ति होती है, तब कृतज्ञता का भाव इतना विस्वत्व कर देता है कि उसकी पूर्ति का महत्व और आकर्षण खो जाता है। बहुधा लोग अपने को भाग्वहीन समझते हैं, यदि उनकी इच्छाएं शीघ्रता से पूर्ण नहीं होतीं। तीब्र आकांक्षा आपको हताश कर सकती है या प्रार्थनार्श तान्न आकार्या आपका हतारा कर सकता हु या प्रायमाशास बना सकती है। प्रार्थनाशीलता में भक्ति और कृतज्ञता है। कोई भी गहन अनुभूति आपको संपूर्ण बनाती है। दिव्यता की प्राप्त आपकी उत्कंटर की तीवृता पर निभंर है, इस पर नहीं कि आप कितना समय देते हैं वा आपकी वोग पर नहां का आप कालना समय दत ह वा आपका वाग्यता क्या है? गांवों में एक कहावत है कि फूल तोड़ने में भी कुछ वक्त लग सकता है, परंतु ईश्वर को पाने में कोई समय नहीं लगता। केवल आपकी उल्कंट में तीव्रता होनी चाहिए। वाद रखिए, इक्त और उल्कंत में अंतर है।इच्छा दिमाग का ज्वर है, उल्कंट हद्दय की पुकार है।

इसी तरह, संस्था व्यवस्था है और भक्ति अव्यवस्था। संस्था में छोटी-छोटी बातों पर ध्यान देना पड़ता है, एक भौतिक सजगता की आवश्यकता होती है; संस्था का

मतलब है सांसारिकता। भवित है खो जाना, संसार को भुला देना और आनंद में रहना। स्वभाव से भवित और नुशा बना आ जान में एकनी एक्साप्त स भावन आ संस्था दोनों विषयेत हैं, किंतु वे दोनों अलग भी नहीं हो सकतो एक-दूसरे के किना इनका अस्तित्व ही नहीं। भक्ति के बिना कोई भी संस्था नहीं बन अकती। पश्चित आपमें निज्ञा, अनुकंपा और उत्तरदायित्व लाती है। जब आप परवाह करते हैं, जिम्मेदारी महसूस करते हैं, ज्ञान

भक्ति आप में निष्टा, अनुकंपा और उत्तरदायित्व लाती है। जब आप परवाह करते हैं, जिम्मेदारी महसूस करते हैं, ज्ञान और प्रेम बांटना चाहते हैं, तब संस्था उत्पन्न होती है।

और प्रेम बांटना चाहते हैं, तब संस्था उत्पन्न होती है।

आर प्रम बांटिन चाता है, एक सर्पका उपरम्भ कात है। मांक्ट ह्वा वह संस्था विवासन रहती है। यदि आप भक्त हैं, तो बैठे नहीं रहेंगे। भक्ति का रस्तामत है कुछ देना। आप भक्त हैं, लेकिन संसार की एसताह नहीं करते, तो आप स्वार्थों है। सम्बोध मिंडन का अर्थ है, ईश्वर के साथ एक हो जाना और ईश्वर तो सारे संसार का ज्यान रखते हैं। ज्यवस्था करने में प्रायः आप भावत खो देते हैं और अक्सर भवित के नाम पर कुछ गड़बड़ करते हैं या संस्था की उपेक्षा करते हैं। भवित व संस्था, दोनों में होने के लिए आपको संत होना पड़ेगा। श्री श्री रविशंकर

मलाला यूसुफजई । नोबेल विजेता



आज पैदा होने वाली एक लडकी को लैंगिक समानता वाली दुनिया में जीने के लिए अपने ९७वें जन्मदिन तक इंतजार करना होगा। उम्मीद है, हमारे नेता इक्वल-2030 के नए डेटा को पहेंगे, ताकि वे लड़िकयों की चुनौतियों को समझ सकें।

नीतिगत अक्षमता की कीमत चुकाता बिहार

बाढ़ से उत्तर बिहार के क्येब-क्येब से जिले प्रभावित हैं। एक छोटा सा देश नीदरलैंड पानी का ऐसा प्रबंधन कर ले हैं कि वहां बाढ़ बीते दिनों की बात बन जाती है, लेकिन चांद पर पहुंचने वाला भारत नदी की धारा तक नहीं मोड़ पा रहा। आखिर क्यों ? बिहार देश के पिछड़े राज्यों में से एक है और हरेक वर्ष वह बाढ़ की चपेट में आकर उज्ड जाता है। इसे फिर से सञ्चवस्थित करने के लिए केंद्र से पैसा आता है। असली खेल इसी पैसे का है आता है। जसला खेल इसा पस की है, क्वोंकि इसका 20 से 25 प्रतिशत हिस्स ही सही मद में खर्च किया जाता है। शेष राशि का क्या होता है, यह समझना मश्किल नहीं है। बिहार में कोई ऐसा दल नहीं, जिसको सचमुच बिहार से मतलब है। उसे सिर्फ पैसे से मतलब है। उसको जनता की याद तब आती है, जब चुनाव नजदीक आते हैं। चुनावों के वक्त सभी दलों के नेता बिहार और बिहारियों के लिए

दल मुकदर्शक बन जाते हैं। काश, आने वाले विधानसभा चुनाव में हमें यह सब याद रह पाए!

👩 वीर आदित्य, टिप्पणीकार

गाद पर भी ध्यान नहीं

भाखिरकार वही हुआ, जिसकी आशं नदियों के जानकार बरसों से जता रहे थे। नादचा क जानकार बस्सा स जता रह चा दरभंगा के कीरतपुर में भुभोल गांव के पास पश्चिमी तटबंध भी टूट गया। इससे दरभंगा के दो प्रखंड घनश्यामपुर और कीरतपुर में दर्जनों पंचावतों के गांव पानी में डूब गए। यह तवाही 2008 जैसी नहीं है. लेकिन 2004 में इस इलाके में जैसी बाद आई थी, कुछ-कुछ वैसी ही तबाही लग रही है। इसकी वजह यह है कि यहां से पश्चिम में कमला नदी बह रही है और दक्षिण में कुशेश्वर स्थान झील। हालांकि बड़ी खबर है कि कोसी के पानी का

तटक्रय पार कर जाना। ऐसा कासा म शायद ही पहले हुआ होगा। इसका मतलब यह है कि कोसी के दोनों तटबंधों के बीच इतना गाद भर गया है कि नदी अब तटबंध को फलांग लगा रही है।

कोसी नदी को बांधने के लिए हमने जो पिंजड़ा तैयार किया था, वह छोटा पड़ गया है। जाहिर है, अब सरकार तटबंध की कंचाई बढ़ाने की बात कहेगी। मगर क्या यह वाकर्ड समाधान है ? सरकार नदियों का इलाज तटबंध से करना चाहती है, मगर दिक्कत वह है कि तटबंध और बैराज ही असली मर्ज हैं। अभी भी वक्त है, सरकार तटबंध और बैराज जैसे विफल हो चुके उपायी पर करदाताओं का पैसा डुबोने क बदले गाद प्रबंधन पर फोकस करे। तटबंधों और बैराजों ने नदियों को गाद से भर दिया है। तभी नदी ओवरफ्लो होने लगी है।



अनुलोम-विलोम बिहार में बाढ़



नेपाल पानी छोड़ेगा, तो यहां परेशानी होगी ही

ाबहार का बाज़ नेपाल का दन है। नेपाल क बादल मुसीबत बनकर बरसते हैं, जिससे वहां की नदियों में जल-प्रवाह बढ़ जाता है। यही पानी जब सीमा पार करके बिहार में आता है, तो यह गंडक, गंगा आदि तमाम नदियों का जल-स्तर बढ़ा देता है। नतीजतन, बिहार की एक बड़ी आबादी बाढ़ की चपेट में आ जाती है। इस बार एकाएक बाढ आई। इससे आधा बिहा ठप हो गया. लोग जहां-तहां फंस गए हैं। उप हा गया, लाग जहा-वहर करत गए है। उनको बचाने का काम लगातार जारी है। वह काम भी सरकार के लोग ही कर रहे हैं। सरकारी बचावकमीं पानी में उतरकर लोगों को बचाने में जुटे हैं।

बाढ़ के लिए पूरा दोष सरकार पर डालना गलत होगा। 1950 के दशक में भारत सरकार और नेपाल सरकार के बीच एक समझौत के तहत कोसी नदी परियोजना की शुरुआत हुईं थी, जिसका मूल मकसद बाढ़ को नियंत्रित करना ही

था। अगर सब कुछ योजना के अनुसार होता, तो 1960-70 के दशक में ही बिहार बाढ़ से मुक्त हो गया होता। हां, यह कह सकते हैं कि कुछ मोचौं पर गलतियाँ हुईं और बाढ़ को अब तक नियंत्रित नहीं किया जा सका है, लेकिन इससे सरकार क्ती मंशा को कठधरे में नहीं खड़ा किया जा सकता। उसकी नीयत ठीक है। तभी तो 'बिहार का शोक' कही जाने वाली यह नदी अब उस तरह से लोगों को जान-माल नवा जब उस तरह सं ताना का जान-म का नुकसान नहीं पहुंचा पाती। इस बार इसलिए हालत खराब हुई, क्योंकि नेपा ने अप्रत्याशित मात्रा में पानी छोड़ा। वह रोजाना करीब दो लाख क्यूसेक पानी छोडता रहा। खबर यह भी है कि भीम छाड़ता रहा। खबर पर पा है। के नाम नगर बैराज से उसने एक साथ करीब छह लाख क्यूसेक पानी छोड़ दिया। जब इतनं मात्रा में पानी का सैलाब नीचे के इलाकों में आएगा, तो तबाही लाएगा ही। यही हुआ है बिहार में। पानी का सैलाब आ

गया। वहा तायफ करना हागा राज्य सरकार की कि उसने समय रहते बचाव के त्वरित उदाय किए, जिससे लोगों का तुलनात्मक रूप से कम नुकसान हुआ। यह सही है कि बाढ़ हमेशा मुश्किल लेकर आती हैं, लेकिन हमें यह भी देखन रोबार कार्या है, शावन हमें पेट मा पेखान होगा कि प्राकृतिक आपदाओं पर इंसान का कोई वश नहीं चलता। हम सिर्फ उनसे बचने के उपाय कर सकते हैं। इस मामले में सरकार का काम पहले के मकाबले न संरक्षार का काम कुटत के चुका बटा अच्छा कहा जाएगा, क्योंकि इतने कम समय में उसने गांव-गांव तक जरूरी स्चनाएं पहुंचाई, अपने प्रशासन को सक्रिय किया, छुट्टियां रद्द करके सभी कर्मचारियों-अधिकारियों को अपने

कार्यक्षेत्र में मौजूद रहने का निर्देश दिया और राहत-बचाव के उपाय में जुट गई। इसलिए हर बात में सरकार को कोसना 👛 स्वाति, टिप्पणीकार

बंद कीजिए।