

Trading up

World Bank's growth prognosis for India moots some policy shifts

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In its latest India Development Update, the World Bank has raised its 2024-25 GDP growth forecast for the economy to 7%, from 6.6% estimated earlier this year. The projection is now in sync with predictions from the International Monetary Fund and Asian Development Bank, but a tad lower than the 7.2% uptick projected by the RBI and Fitch Ratings. Earlier growth hopes for India were slightly modest, partly due to its strong 8.2% growth last year, and prospects of the global economy staying weak due to restrictive monetary policies and persistent geopolitical tensions. The World Bank estimates global growth to be the same as last year's 2.6% pace, way below pre-pandemic levels. Despite this subdued external environment and the dissipation of post-COVID-19 rebound effects, the Bank's economists now expect India's growth to remain strong this year at 7%. However, external risks could cloud this, including pressures on supply chains and commodity prices, and a resurgence of inflation that could compel central banks to hold interest rates 'higher for longer'. The Bank expects private investment in the medium term, with GDP growth expected to hover in the 6.5%-6.7% range in coming years. On India's imperative to generate non-farm jobs, the Bank acknowledged ideas such as the Production Linked Incentives. But these may not be able to generate the scale of activity India needs to engage its young workforce. The Bank has emphasised the need for a rethink on India's approach of a critical growth engine – trade. India's global trade share does not match its economy's size, and it is yet to capitalise on the opportunity presented by China's withdrawal from labour-intensive production or the much-vaunted 'China plus one' global reset. A concern is a decline in export-related jobs over the past decade, flagged by the Bank, coinciding with a shift towards capital and skill-intensive exports. While trade facilitation steps and investments, and it he yet china plu new strategic trade plan that reduces tariffs, non-tariff barriers as well as FDI curbs, and a rethink of the reluctance towards multilateral/plurilater-al pacts such as the RCEP. Policymakers must heed this prescription in earnest, and urgently.

Death for rape

Homes and workplaces must first be made safe for women

Homes and workplaces must first be made safe for women

The cry for the death penalty after every her common sexual crime, and governments yielding to it by issuing ordinances or passing Bills, have become fairly commonplace. The criminal laws were amended in 2013 after the brutal rape of a woman in Delhi; subsequently, States including Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Arunachal Pradesh have sought amendments for enhanced punishment for sexual assault. On Tuesday, the West Bengal Assembly unanimously passed The Aparajita Women and Child (West Bengal Craiminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2024, by a voice vote, following the rape and murder of a doctor at a government hospital in Kolkata on August 9 and a persistent clamour for justice. The Bill introduces the death penalty or life-long imprisonment for rape by amending the relevant sections in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the new penal code. In fact, death has been sought to be prescribed for five offences – rape; rape by police officer or public servant; rape causing death or sending victim to persistent vegetative state; gang rape, and being a repeat offender. It also amends the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita to provide for special courts to try such offences in time-bound manner, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, to provide for death in cases of penetrative sexual assault and its aggravated form. The President's assent will be required for the State amendments.

There is little evidence that awarding the death penalty is a curse against humanity and social reforms are required to prevent such crimes; following the court of the death in cases of penetrative sexual assault and its aggravated form. The President's assentite often of the first amendments.

There is little evidence that awarding the death penalty was not inclined to recommend the observation of the leath penalty would be a regressive step in the field of sentencing and reformation". However, death penalty would be a regressive step in t

The onus is on every government to ensure that laws are implemented effectively, and the police work without bias to prevent and punish sexual assault. Justice will be better served if barriers to women's advancement are removed by first making workplaces and homes safe for them.

Sub-classification verdict through Ambedkar's ideals

he Supreme Court of India judgment, on August 1, 2024, in The State of Punjab and Ors. vs Davinder Singh and Ors., on the sub-classification of reservations, embodies the vision of social reservations, embodies the vision of social jurisprudence. It is a noteworthy development in indian jurisprudence, especially in social justice. The judgment provides social jurisprudence using constitutional methods and ensures that social justice reaches the most neglected and deprived sections (which includes a majority of Dalit castes) among Dalits. The idea of sub-classification also aligns with B.R. Ambedkar's principles of fraternity and Maitri, emphasising the need for cooperation and mutual respect among Scheduled Castes (SC). However, the overreaching exercise of the judgment, reflected in the comments on the varna system and creamy layer, is uncalled for.

judgment, reflected in the comments on the warna system and creamy layer, is uncalled for.

Social justice and B.R. Ambedkar's struggle B.R. Ambedkar struggled all his life to ensure social and civil justice for the most oppressed sections. He also sought to secure separate cultural rights for former untouchables. Yet, these were often met with inadequate responses and resistance from the prevailing Hindu caste order. While reflecting on the Indian social structure, Ambedkar highlights how every jati occupies a distinct position on the social ladder. It draws attention to the nuances of internal divisions within the caste order. A newspaper of his times reported Ambedkar's response to 'the welcome addresses by three scheduled castes' organisations after the resolutions were disposed of at the Scheduled Castes' Conference, held at Cawnpore on January 311, 1944... He Ambedkar) urged that they (Scheduled Castes) must realise their responsibility to wipe out internal divisions among the Scheduled Castes when they demanded of other's removal of Untouchability". His contribution to social justice goes beyond theoretical exercise. His practical measures to dismantle the caste hierarchy have been remarkable. He led movements such as the Mahad Satyagraha and the Kalaram temple entry movement, that highlighted the ritual discrimination faced by Dallis. Despite such efforts, Brahminical forces often undermined his quest for a just society. Yet, amid such challenges, Ambedkar's perseverance in fighting for justice in a hierarchical society illustrates his deep commitment.

In a media interview, Shahu Patole, who wrote a book on Dalli foot in Marchavarda, observed

a meta-ranca socy mustrates ms deep commitment.

In a media interview, Shahu Patole, who wrote a book on Dalif food in Marathawada, observed that different jatis experience varying degrees of discrimination. While talking about his experiences in the village, he says that "Mang was considered the lowest, above them were the Mahars. Mang and Mahars were deemed untouchable by Chamars, and the rest of the villages did not touch these communities". This affirms the existence of graded inequality, which affirms the existence of graded inequality, which Ambedkar also asserted in his sociological treatise.

These suggest the need for a more nuanced



Professor B.S. Waghmare

a retired professor of the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance at Jawaharlal Nehru University and who compiled the Lahuji Salve Commission report on sub-categorisation in Maharashtra in 2008



Shivam Mogha

a research scholar in sociology at the Jawaharlal Nehru

approach to social justice, which the Court's sub-classification judgment seeks to address – least partly. This judgment can be interpreted through Ambedkar's social justice ideals. It underlines the existence of different lived realities of numerous jatis that experience levels of deprivation and discrimination. Thus, the nent aims to mitigate the inequality within the SC community by addressing such heterogeneity. This is precisely where the judgment demonstrates the idea of social jurisprudence to the core because it takes se it takes into unt the different sociological realities of

cvery jati.

Criticism from within

Even though it has still to be implemented in various States, the sub-classification decision has drawn criticism from some Dalit communities, especially from leading segments of Dalits who feel their political leverage might diminish. This fear results from the assumption that the sub-classification judgment might fragment the ballit constituency and weaken the collective Dalit movement. Sadly, this argument also assumes that there is a single Dalit movement. In contrast, many sociological accounts show that there have always been different shades of Dalit politics, as reflected in the many Dalit movements.

However, this argument by the leading segments among Dalits discounts the underlying Ambedkarite consciousness of various shades of Dalit politics. In this context, 30 years of the Madiga Dandora movement are misrepresented as being detached from the suberse of an

Madiga Dandora movement are misrepresented as being detached from the sphere of an Ambedkarite consciousness. Even the movements and mobilisations of the Mang caste

Ambedkarite consciousness. Even the movements and mobilisations of the Mang caste in Maharashtra have Ambedkar's picture alongside that of Loishahir Annabhau Sathe among other leaders. This symbolises how every caste's issue may be different when they deal with other castes but are unified in the larger Ambedekarite idea of social justice.

The Bharat bandh called for by specific Dalit organisations in North India was a misstep that could affect the collective identity and mobilisation of Dalit castes. While the sub-classification debate in North India faces criticism, the situation is a bit different in South India. There, the discussion about subclassification among Dalits has largely been resolved, with most Dalit organisations supporting the demand for sub-categorisation among SCs.

The criticism from North Indian Dalit organisations — they argue that the judgment might create divisions within the Dalit movement — reflects a misunderstanding of the existing social structures among Dalits. Supporting the sub-classification movement and embracing is potential benefits for enhancing social justice politics at the fail level would be a mature approach. More importantly, sub-classification could strengthen the collective identity of SCs, approach. More importantly, sub-classification could strengthen the collective identity of SCs, furthering the Ambedkarisation process by including those on the margins. It would also

align with the principles of equitable representation articulated by leaders such as Manyavar Kanshiram, who advocated Jiski Jitni Sankhya Bhari Uski Utni Hissedari, an idea of representation based on numerical strength

Reflection of a long struggle, realities

Reflection of a long struggle, realities
The leading segments among SCs must avoid demeaning the relentless struggles of the marginalised communities, such as the Valmikis and Musshars in North India, and the Madigas and Arunthathyars in the South. This is because the judgment is not an imposition from above but a reflection of years of grass-root activism and demands for sub-categorisation. It is a testament to the ongoing struggle for justice led by organisations such as the Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi (MRPS), conferences of the Mang community in Maharashtra, and the Valmiki movements in North India.

There is much concern about its execution. Though history also tells us about the success of the sub-classification model in Punjab and Haryana before the Chinnaish judgment in 2004, which is an example of how such measures can work in practice. Despite criticism from some quarters, it is essential to recognise that the judgment is grounded in a historical struggle for equitable representation and justice.

The judges' affirmation was essential because it established that the SC category is not homogeneous but consists of distinct judis with varying needs and challenges. The trajectories of judis go beyond the idea of caste essentialism, and their behaviours are also in response to other judis. On the other hand, recognition of the

their behaviours are also in response to other jatis. On the other hand, recognition of the sociological fact that the SC community

interior belavious are ason in response to other sociological fact that the SC community represents a union of fairs within their structures is a significant step towards addressing the nuaneed needs of each group. The assumption that the SC is one homogeneous group fails in the face of prohibitions on inter-marriage even within the community. These are hard sociological facts that one must not deny.

Finally, while challenges remain about accepting this judgment, it is essential to recognise its potential to enhance social justice to the core and promote equitable representation of all Dalit castes. Embracing this judgment with the spirit of fraternity, as Ambedkar envisioned, will be crucial in achieving a more just and inclusive society that ultimately leads to the democratisation of the reservation system. While upholding Dalit civility and addressing the creamy layer issue with due seriousness, the collective Ambedkarite movement must also prevent political parties from exploiting this judgment for their gains.

In addition, the movement should broaden its focus beyond traditional reservation policies. Key initiatives should include advocating the extension of reservation policies to the private sector and pursuing land redistribution. These steps are crucial for advancing representation and securing material benefits for all Dalit communities.

Gap between allocations for health, outcomes in States

he realisation of the full potential of the allocations in the Union Budget for the health sector hinges on many State-level parameters. Many of these allocations are for Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), wherein the States not only share a substantial part of the cost but are also responsible for their implementation. The fiscal space and operational frameworks at the State-level have a strong bearing on the efficacy of the Budget allocations on such schemes.

emcacy of the budget anocations on such schemes. Currently, two major CSS initiatives are being pursued by the central government to strengthe physical health infrastructure in States: the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM), and Human Resources for Health and Medical Education (HRHME). The first is aimed at building health and wellness centres (AB-HWCs), developing block-level public health units (BPHUS), and having integrated district public health laboratories (IDPHLs) and critical care hospital blocks (CCHBs) in each district. The goal is to improve India's preparedness for future emergencies such as pandemics. The second initiative strives to scale up medical personnel b emergencies such as pandemics. The second initiative strives to scale up medical personnel by establishing new medical, nursing and paramedical colleges and also increasing seats in colleges. Another important aspect is to also strengthen and upgrade district hospitals and attach them to newly established medical colleges at the district level.

Low fund utilisation

Low fund utilisation
Estimates of central expenditure on these initiatives in the last three Budgets indicate a lacklustre performance in fund absorption. In PM-ABHIM, the ratio of 'Actual' expenditures to 'Budget Estimate' of the CSS component was only around 29% in 2022-3. In 2023-34, the 'Revised Estimate' was about 50% of the Budget Estimate, but is expected to be lower in the 'Actuals'. In HRIME too, the utilisation of funds was only

Mita Choudhury

The top court's judgment takes into account the different sociological realities of every 'jati' with the aim of

addressing the

disparity within Scheduled

Professor at the

Rolly Kukreja

Assistant Professor at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi

Nitya Chutani

Fiscal space and operational frameworks at the State-level could make a difference to the efficacy of the Budget allocations for health schemes

around a quarter of the Budget estimates in both 2022-23 and 2023-24. Interestingly, perhaps due to low utilisation, the Budget allocations for both PM-ABHIM and HRHME have been slashed in the full Budget when compared to the interim

PM-ABHIM and HRHME have been slashed in the full Budget when compared to the interim Budget.

There could be several factors behind the low utilisation of funds under PM-ABHIM. First, in the AB-HWC component, around 60% of the resource envelope was to be sourced from the health grants recommended by the 15th Finance Commission, as in the scheme's operational guidelines. A recent study by the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy indicates that only around 45% of the 15th Finance Commission health grants were utilised in the period 2021-22 to 2023-24. Discussions with State government officials indicate that the complex execution structure of these grants has posed hurdles in its utilisation. Second, in the component of IDPHLs. States were required to integrate public health laboratories under different vertical programmes to avoid duplication. This entailed extensive reorganisation of the existing implementing structure at the State-level, requiring significant planning, streamlining and coordinated efforts. Third, nearly all components, including the BPHUs and CCHBs, involve construction, where fund absorption is often delayed by rigid procedures. Overlap of funding from multiple sources for certain scheme components with similar activities has created an additional layer of complexity. complexity.

Faculty shortage Under the HRIME, even if allocations for physical infrastructure were better utilised, filling the sanctioned teaching faculty positions could have been challenging. According to a study by the Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP), there is a shortage of over 40% in teaching faculty positions in II of the 18 newly

created All India Institutes of Medical Sciences in the country. It is even more alarming in State government medical colleges in Empowered government medical colleges in Empowered Action Group States. As in a CSEP study, in Utar Pradesh, where I'z government medical colleges were set up between 2019-21, 30% of the teaching faculty positions were vacant in 2022. The shortage of specialists could affect the task of setting up medical colleges or upgrading district hospitals to medical colleges. The challenge also extends to CCHBs under the PM-ABHIM whose guidelines on staffing norms include specialists. As in rural health statistics 2021-22, more than a third of the sanctioned positions of specialists in urban CHCs and two-thirds in rural CHCs were vacant in March 2022.

Fiscal space in States

Notably, State governments will have to bear the recurring costs in maintaining the physical infrastructure built under the PM-ABHIM and HRHME, thus necessitating additional financial commitment. The Union government's support for human resources is only for the duration of the PM-ABHIM scheme, i.e., till 2025/26. The ability of States to plan and support recurring expenses beyond this period is vital for the productivity of the incurred capital expenditure. States need to create the fiscal space required to support these initiatives in addition to contributing to other CSS and their own State health schemes.

In sum, transforming capital expenditure allocations into effective health outcomes

In sum, transforming capital expenditure allocations into effective health outcomes depends on several critical factors: the fiscal capacity of States to meet additional recurring expenditures; addressing underlying structural causes of human resource shortages, and improving public financial management processes for executing schemes and grants. These elements will be crucial in ensuring that the budgetary allocations for capital expenditures are productive.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Setting the record straight We wish to point out an

egregious misrepresentation of our forebear in the article, "From Bharati to Karunanidhi" (Opinion page, September 4). The term "mercenary", which

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has been used to describe the actions of our grandfather, A.V. Meiyappan, in relation to the acquisition of Bharatiyar's songs, is not only factually incorrect but also an affront to his memory and the values that he embodied. For the

record, the Bharatiyar songs record, the Bharatiyar songs were acquired by AV. Meiyappan in 1947 from a Marwadi merchant in North Madras for the film *Naam Iruvar* ("We Two") for a sum of ₹10,000. Subsequently, when the then Chief Minister, Omandur P.

Ramaswamy Reddiyar, requested our grandfather to consider the significance of these works. A V government. The word "mercenary" distorts the truth and maligns the of these works, A.V. legacy of a man whose Meiyappan, out of his own volition, and with a deep contributions to Indian cinema and society are sense of responsibility, generously donated these invaluable assets to the beyond reproach. It has caused significant hurt to the entire AVM family. The

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legacy of A.V. Meiyappan deserves nothing less than respect. Shanmugan Meiyappan, Chennai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name.



Did animals develop complex brains to deal with challenging habitats?

Traditionally, complex behaviour has been linked to brain size and the brain-to-body size ratio. But researchers have unearthed new insights. Analysing the brains of lizard species in Puerto Rico, a new study has spotted a link between diverse habitats and brain complexity

Most people are scared of them.
Why would you want to look at
something that's scaly and has a
creepy crawl?" Levi Storks,
assistant professor at the University of
Detroit, asked with a chuckle. Yet that's
earth, where or him intersed in ligare. exactly what got him interested in lizards when he was a child. He would catch them, pet them, and spend hours observing them.

Now, as an evolutionary biologist, Dr. Storks studies reptiles like lizards in a bid to bridge a research gap: we don't have a complete picture of how brains and the behaviour of these animals are linked.

behaviour of these animals are linked. Traditionally, complex behaviour has been linked to brain size and the brain-to-body size ratio. But researchers have unearthed new insights that complicate this picture. Analysing the brains of closely related lizard species from the lush green bloidwestiy of Puerto Rico, for example, Dr. Storks and his team found signs of a relationship between diverse habitats and brain complexity. In a paper published recently in the journal Biology Letters, the researchers

journal *Biology Letters*, the researchers wrote, "Cognitive demands are likely higher in more complex habitats, as an animal must coordinate movement along a larger number of potential paths."

Similar lizards, different habitats Similar lizards, different habitats Lizards are a broad group of reptiles that includes a large variety of species with diverse characteristics. Anoles are a specific type of lizard known for their distinctive features, including an ability to change skin colour, the presence of a dewlap (a throat fan), and adhesive toe padt to climb vertical surfaces. Anoles are particularly common in the Americas, especially in tropical and subtropical regions.

regions.
Puerto Rico is an island in the Caribbean sea. Its forests are a mosaic of diverse ecosystems, including tropical rainforests like the El Yunque (montane cloud forests) meeting dry forests. The island is home to unique flora and fauna including endangered species, and is very

It was summer both times – in 2019 and 2021 - when Dr. Storks went to Puerto Rico to collect specimens with his team. "There were lizards literally everywhere," he remembers. "That's one

everywhere," he remembers. "That's one of the reasons why people study anoles here," in their rich natural environment. The team collected 64 anoles belonging to six species but to the same ecomorph class. That is, though these anoles belonged to different species, they essayed the same ecological roles and thus shared many physical traits. Genetic data also revealed these species shared a common ancestor 20-30 million years ago — not a long time in evolutionary history.

The relationship between anoles is

The relationship between anoles is important. Among members of other unrelated species, it's hard to know which cause led to which effect when studying brains and behaviours. But the "anoles are very close in terms of a lot of things. This means when comparing their brains there's a lot of stuff that is similar except the habitat part. And so we can be very certain the habitat is doing something," Dr. Storks said.

The team had collected anoles of the



A green anole trying to intimidate its reflection. RON ARDIS (CC BY-SA 2.0)

following species: Anolis evermanni, Anolis stratulus, Anolis cristatellus, Anolis gundlachi, Anolis krugi, and Anolis

pulchellus.

From a 2014 study conducted by other researchers, the team had data about how complex the anolese' habitat was. Those scientists followed more than 80 anoles of six species for at least 20 minutes and recorded (in drawings) how their movements responded to features in their surroundings. They paid attention to how many options an anole had and which ones it preferred. For example, they observed the number of branches an anole could access, the barriers in the

way, and the distance to travel. Based on the anoles' habitats and

Essed on the anoles' habitats and behaviours, the team divided the six species into three groups: 'grass bush', 'trunk ground', and 'trunk crown'. Dr. Storks said a lizard that lives on a tree trunk is kind of navigating a country road. It can just go up and down, side to side. But the lizards that live up in the tree crown must navigate small branches as well, a challenge more like winding through a city. They need to figure out how best to negotiate a network of how best to negotiate a network of options to get to their destination.

In this way, different habitats impose different levels of complexity.

Neurons in complex habitats After the team airlifted the lizards from Puerto Rico to their laboratories in the University of Detroit, team members dissected their brains to analyse differences in their neurological

The way the brain processes formation depends on many factors,



Across the six species, the study found that except in the cerebellum, the number of neurons increased with habitat complexity in the telencephalon and the rest of the brain. Anoles living in more complex habitats had a higher density of neurons

including neuron number, neural including neuron number, neural plasticity, signal processing speed, synapse density, and diversity of cell types. But of late researchers have preferred analysing the neuron density because it seems to be a good indicator of

because it seems to be a good indicator of a brain's processing capacity. The team investigated the neuron number in three regions of the anoles' brains: the telencephalon, the cerebellum, and the rest of the brain. Each of these parts contributes to the brain's complex functions, from basic survival to complex thought processes. In particular, the telencephalon is involved in sensory integration and higher cognition; the cerebellum is responsible for motor coordination and learning; and the rest handles sensory inputs and motor output.

motor output.

Across the six species, the study found Across the six species, the study found that except in the cerebellum, the number of neurons increased with habitat complexity in the telencephalon and the rest of the brain. The anoles living in the more complex habitats, including in the tree canopy, were found to have a higher density of neurons than the anoles living on tree trunks and among grasses and shrubs.

The findings suggest that differences in neuroanatomy among Puerto Rican anoles, which have similar social structures, diets, and sensory systems, could be the result of differences in their habitats.

Similar studies in other vertebrates like Aegean wall lizards, three-spined sticklebacks, and zebrafish have also found individuals living in more complex habitats performed better at spatial learning tasks. Other studies have reported similar findings at the level of neuroanatomy and cognition. uroanatomy and cognition.

Brain's role in evolution

Some 320 million years ago, reptiles, mammals, and birds had a common manmass, and bross had a common ancestor. Over the course of evolution, that common ancestor developed into organisms that looked, behaved, and functioned spectacularly differently from each other.

each other.

"We have all these animals that derive from one kind of brain. It's crazy to think that now we have all these animals that have a very similar brain, but also slightly different," Dr. Storks says. "It's a really powerful organ that is constantly changing,"

Many studies discuss brains, specifically the human brain, but not

specifically the human brain, but not much research has been conducted to find out how brains have evolved over time or how differently brains function in

time or how differently brains function in-various species.
"Those differences are really interesting, especially when you're thinking about evolution," Dr. Storks said. (Monika Mondal is a freelance science and environment journalist. a.monikamondal@gmail.com)



Climate change threatens South Korea's beloved kimchi

South Korea's famous kimchi is falling victim to climate change, with scientists, farmers, and manufacturers saying the quality and quantity of the napa cabbage that is pickled to make the ubiquitous dish is suffering due to rising temperatures.

temperatures.

Napa cabbage thrives in cooler climate and is usually planted in mountainous regions where temperatures during the key growing summer season once rarely rose above 25 Celsius.

Studies show that warmer weather brought about by climate change is now.

brought about by climate change is now threatening these crops, so much so that South Korea might not be able to grow napa cabbage one day due to the intensifying heat.

intensifying heat.
"We hope these predictions don't
come to pass," plant pathologist and
virologist Lee Young syu said.
"Cabbage likes to grow in cool clima
and adapts to a very narrow band of
temperatures," Lee said. "The optimal
temperatures are between 18 and 21
Celsius."

In the fields and in kitchens – both ommercial and domestic – farmers and mchi makers are already feeling the

change. Spicy, fermented kimchi is made from other vegetables such as radish, cucumber, and green onion, but the most popular dish remains cabbage-based.

South Korea might soon see the day when it will be unable to grow napa cabbage due to the growing heat. The vegetable prefers lower temperatures in a narrow range

Describing the effect of higher temperatures on the vegetable, Lee Ha-yeon, who holds the designation of Kimchi Master from the Agriculture Ministry, said the heart of the cabbage "goes bad, and the root becomes mushy." "If this continues, then in the summer time we might have to give up cabbage kimchi," said Lee, whose title reflects her contribution to food culture.

Data from the government statistics agency shows the area of highland cabbage farmed last year was less than half of what it was 20 years ago: 3,995 ha compared to 8,796 ha.

According to the Rural Development Administration, a state farming think

Administration, a state farming think tank, climate change scenarios project the farmed area to shrink dramatically in the

farmed area to shrink dramatically in the next 25 years to just 44 ha, with no cabbage grown in the highlands by 2090. Researchers cite higher temperatures, unpredictable heavy rains, and pests that become more difficult to control in the warmer and longer summers as the cause of the crop shrinkage. A fungal infection that wilts the plant has also been particularly troublesome for farmers because it only becomes apparent very close to harvest. Climate change adds to the challenges facing South Korea's kimchi industry, which is already battling lower-priced imports from China, which are mostly

imports from China, which are mostly

served in restaurants. New customs data showed kimchi imports through the end of July were up 6.9% at \$98.5 million this year, almost all of it from China and the highest ever for the period.
So far, the government has relied on

So far, the government has relied on climate-controlled storage to prevent price spikes and shortages. Scientists are also racing to develop crop varieties that can grow in warmer climates and that are more resilient to large fluctuations in rainfall and infections.

For feedback and suggestions Science', please write to nce@thehindu.co.in with the

subject 'Daily page

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

All answers begin with the letter 'X'

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

What is the term for a transplantation procedure in which cells or organs are transferred between individuals belonging to different species? If the procedure concludes with, say, a human body hosting some cells from a pig, the human is said to be a chimaera.

In November 1895, a German scientist discovered a previously unknown form of radiation and He named it so to denote its unknown and then-mustaria denote its unknown and then-mysterious character. Fill in the

CM CO

QUESTION 3

it you have one of these, you're biologically female if you also have Swyer syndrome. If you have two of these, you're blologically male if you also have de la Chapelle syndrome. You can also have two of these if you have Klinefelter syndrome. To what am I referring?

Plants are called _____ if they have evolved adaptations to survive in conditions with little liquid water. These plants are found in deserts, rainforests (where the weather can also be extremely wet), and near the poles (where water is often frozen). Fill in the blank

QUESTION 5

is entity belongs to a system ented by the French nhill-

typically denoted by a horizontal line typically denoted by a horizontal line connected to another, vertical line at a vertex often labelled 'O'. This system is used to represent objects with two degrees of freedom. Name the entity.

Answers to September 3 quiz:

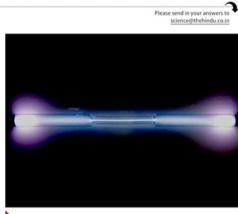
1. Country that switched traffic direction on 'Dagen H' - Ans: Sweden

2. Asian country that had bidirectional traffic until 1946 - Ans: China

3. Former British colony with right-handed traffic today – Ans: Myanmar

Myanmar 4. Spaces where traffic is required to be right-handed – Ans: Water bodies Overseas UK territory where traffic is right-handed – Ans: British Indian Ocean Territory Visual: Okinawa

First contact: Anmol Agrawal | Seema Das | K.N. Viswanathan | Ragind Roy



Visual: This gas usually keeps to itself and doesn't react, yet it was also the first of its kind to form a compound. It's been used to pump lasers, as an anaesthetic, and in arc lamps. Here the gas is shown glowing inside a discharge tube. Name it. ALCHEMIST-HP

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From crisis to cascade of hope

he Cauvery river now presents a picture of calmness, much to the relief of Karnataka and

Tamil Nadu.

In early July, both States were on the brink of a water crisis.

However, since the second half of July, nature brought a dramatic change in the situation with rains, bringing copious inflow to the river. The situation turned positive with regard to the realisation of water by Tamil Nadu – from deficit to "over surplus." In a matter of 15 days, Tamil Nadu received its entire share – eve received its entire share – even marginally higher – for July and August, as mandated in the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)'s final award of 2007, which was modified by the Supreme Court in February 2018. The spell of surplus flows continued in the subsequent weeks

weeks.
As of September 2, the lower riparian State received about 181 tmc ft since June 1, the inaugural date of any water year, whereas the stipulated quantum for the entire year – up to May 2025 – is 177.25 tmc ft. The Tribunal and the Court have fixed Tamil Nadu's share for July at 31.24 tmc ft; for August – 45.95 tmc ft and for September – 36.76 tmc ft. The uthwest monsoon is crucial for both States, as it represents the wettest period for Karnataka and yields the highest quantum of (123.14 tmc ft) of water for Tamil (123.14 tmc ft) of water for ramin Nadu. So, barring the initial five or six weeks, the 2024-25 water year has not been problematic for the has not been problematic f two principal riparian State

Implementation mechanism
The current year is in stark
contrast to the corresponding
period (June-September 2) of last
year when the aggregate
realisation by Tamil Nadu was a
mere 33.2 tmc ft. A close perusal
of the data of 30 years (1994-95 to
2023-24) reveals that on 11
occasions. the realisation during occasions, the realisation during June-September was less than 100 tmc ft, as against the stipulated 123.14 tmc ft. This means that at



T. Ramakrishnan

In an intense water conflict such as the Cauvery, the version of the affected parties, in times of

crisis, cannot be

expected to be

cond-largest airline by the end of 2019, taking over from Jet Airways. IndiGo was also placing similar bets, to make the most of the Jet Airways exit and a growing mar-ter, enhancing its market share even further (Chart 3). However, the pandemic hit and passenger flights came to a grind-

passenger flights came to a grind-ing halt during the first COVID-19 wave. During the successive waves, the strictness of the lock-down was eased in steps, with flyers trickling in small numbers.

During these months, airlines con-

tinued to incur the cost of aircraft

rentals, maintenance costs, air-

port hangar charges, and salaries

paid to employees. Both the air-lines had to endure such expenses,

and IndiGo's bill was much higher given more planes and a big

Table 4 shows select expense

Table 4 shows select expenses of IndiGo and Spicelet in Rs crores. During the pandemic phase – FY21 and FY22 – IndiGo paid over ₹20,950 crore on rentals, airport charges, maintenance costs, and employee benefits. For Spicelet, the figure was around ₹5,880 crores.

With barely any income and with barely any income and huge recurring expenses, the car-riers incurred massive losses, with IndiGo's losses being way higher than SpiceJet's. Chart 5 shows the profit/loss recorded after tax in Rs

crore. IndiGo recorded a com-bined loss of over ₹12,000 crore

crore. Indico recorded a con-bined loss of over ₹12,000 crore during the pandemic years. Spicelet saw its losses widen further during the pandemic years (22,720 crores loss in ¥721 and 22). As IndiGo had a bigger market share before the Covid downturn hit and was in better financial shape, it managed to bounce back, while Spicelet's could not. After the pandemic blues wore off, Spi-celet plumbed newer depths every quarter, Air India got privatised and with Vistara getting merged with Tata's carrier, a vacuum was created in the market, which Indi-Go has comfortably filled. Its mar-ket share crossed 60% this year, while Spicelet's fell below 5%.

least once in three years, there is distress. This is where the final award's implementation mechanism – Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) -and the Supreme Court Section and the Supreme Court assume importance, of course, apart from the spirit of accommodation.

The efficacy of the CWMA and its assisting body Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC), as institutional arrangements, was put to test during 2023-24. Unlike put to test during 2023-24. Unlike its predecessor, the Cauvery River Authority, which was a high-profile setup with the Prim Minister as the chairperson and Chief Ministers of all the basin States as Members, the CWMA is headed by a full-time official with government officers of all the States and various departments of the Union government. Many of their decisions last year were not to the liking of the two States, but given the constraints, the performance of the CWMA and CWRC can be considered satisfactory. satisfactory. Needless to say, there is

enormous scope for improvement on their part. First, there should be greater transparency in their functioning. Both the Authority and the Committee will have to make public, as quickly as possible, all their decisions in writing. In an intense water conflict such as the Cauvery, the wersion of the affected parties, in times of crisis, cannot be expected to be impartial. Even otherwise, dissemination of authentic information is vital in an inter-State water dispute. If the authority is constrained by a shortage of manpower, in carrying out its functions effectively, the Union Ministry of Jal Shaki should intervene and solve the problem. Moreover, the Authority should enlarge its composition from being a body of only officials to one of multi-disciplinary and a mix of officials and non-officials, who could be drawn from farmers, environmentalists, and version of the affected parties, in

environmentalists, and independent water experts. The Union government could follow the example of the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board Act. The law provides for six non-official directors on the Board of the water agency, which includes persons to represent the interests of the public, industrial, and commercial establishments.

As for the composition of the CWMA, the implementation mechanism that the Tribunal had in mind is only recommendatory and there is no bar on the Union and there is no bar on the Union government to fine-tune it. The presence of a non-official environmentalist can push the government to take the problem of environmental degradation of the much-venerated river more seriously in view of the challenges being caused by climate change.

Water shortage
The "feel good factor" prevalent
now can be used to look at the
problem of Bengaluru's drinking
water shortage, which assumed a
serious proportion earlier this
year. The Supreme Court, in its
2018 judgment, made a special 2018 judgment, made a special allocation of 4.75 tmc ft for the city while the Karnataka government has been pressing for implementing the ₹ 9,000-crore Mekedatu Balancing Reservoir-cum-Drinking Water Project. At present, the Mekedatu project is before the Central Water Commission

Given the trust deficit between

the two States (which explains the reason behind Tamil Nadu's reason behind Tamil Nadu's opposition to the project), the idea of the participation of a third party – say, the Union government – can be explored to execute not only the Mekedatu project but also any other project, including hydro-electric across the Cauvery, upstream of the Mettur reservoir. After all, attempts made since the late 1990s in this regard failed. There is no harm in making yet another earnest attempt as the intention is to optimally utilise the precious water resource which, if untapped, will go to waste, as is untapped, will go to waste, as is happening now

ramakrishnan.t@thehindu.co.in

Flip-flops in sand policy

A.P. has repeatedly changed its policies, leading to substantial revenue losses

four years. In contrast, the NDA government, in a white paper, stated that withdrawing the free sand policy and illegal sand mining resulted in a loss of 86,940 crore, with unpaid dues from sand contractors amounting to 81,167 crore, totaling losses of 88,107 crore, totaling losses of 88,107 crore, totaling losses of 18,107 crore, totaling losses of 18,107 crore, totaling losses of 18,107 crore, totaling losses and that the loss was 77,000 crore due to illegal sand mining.

It is pertinent to mention that the auction of sand used to fetch 43,000 crore to \$5,000 crore a year before the swift change in sand policies became a trend. Over the past eight to 10 years, the Andhra Pradesh government suffered a loss of fine less than \$40,000 less th

Pradesh government suffered a loss of not less than ₹40,000

crore. And, it would continue to suffer much more.

If the growth in Gross State

Domestic Product (GSDP) (13.5% from 2014-19 and 10.5%

(33.5% from 2014-19 and 10.5% from 2019-24) were taken into consideration, revenue from an auction of sand should fetch not less than 79,400 crore (at GSDP growth of 13.5%) and 82,200 crore (at GSDP growth of 10.5%) per a year. The government also argues that the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of revenue from mineral wealth was growing at 24% during 2014-19, and fell to seven per cent during 2019-24. Mineral revenue would have gone up to 77,239

would have gone up to ₹7,239 crores by 2024 if the 24% CAGR continued. Going by the same

analogy, revenue from the auc-

STATE OF PLAY

G.V.R. Subba Rao

ndhra Pradesh has witnessed many flip-flops in sand policies over the past decade. The current rnment issued GO 43 in July 2024, which withdrew the ly 2024, which withdrew the existing sand policies – name-ly, the New Sand Mining Policy 2019 and the Upgraded Sand Policy 2021 – and replaced them with an Interim Mechan-ism for Sand Supply until the formulation of the Sand Policy 2024 for the State. With this free sand policy came into ex-istence again.

istence again.

From a novel experiment of entrusting the job of sand supply to Self Help Groups (SHGs) to free sand, auctioning sand reaches, and back to free sand. supply. The successive govern-ments have formulated poli-cies that match their require ments. Both ruling and Opposition parties have gone beyond mudslinging, initiating probes into the sand policies of their predecessors as soon as they assumed power. A politi-cal narrative is built that the previous government indulg

cal narrative is built that the previous government indulged in large-scale corruption and illegal sand mining.

In the process, the sand, a precious natural resource, is plundered and the State's coffers hardly fill with the supply of sand. The YSKCP, TDP, and NDA governments have underalued the possible revenues through the sale of sand.

Neither of these governments has provided actual estimates of annual sand availability, its total value, or potential revenue for the State.

In 2023, then Mines Minister Peddireddy Ramchandra Reddy claimed that his government made around ₹3,000 crore from sand auctions over

no less than \$13,600 crore per annum. So, the revenue through the auction of sand reaches should be around \$41,000 crore to \$47,000 crore if GSDP is considered, and \$68,000 crore if the CAPB of \$200 is considered, and \$68,000 crore if the solution in the second CAGR of 24% is applied, in the next five years. In addition, the government would also get a GST and Seigniorage Fee on the sand sold. But, as said ear-

GST and Segnorage Fee on the sand sold. But, as said earlier, successive governments have undervalued the precious natural resource, sand, for reasons best known to them.

Farmers' leader Anumolu Gandhi, Waterman of India Rajendra Singh, and others filed a Public Interest Litigation in the National Green Tribunal highlighting how sand mining was being carried out illegally near the then CM N. Chandrababu Naidu's residence and also important government offices in Amravati in 2019. The NGT slapped a fine of 8100 crore on the State goovernment and the case is still pending.

When Mr. Natdu came to power in 2014, he had roped in

wer in 2014, he had roped in SHGs in villages that would oversee the excavation and sale of sand mining under a programme Pedarikam Pai Gesale of saint initing under a programme 'Pedarikam Pai Ge-lupu' (victory over poverty). As the initiative failed to meet ex-pectations, some months later, Mr. Naidu changed the policy and introduced a tendering system for the sale of sand. It resulted in litigation in the Hyderabad High Court in 2015. The legal heat made the TDP government do another flip flop and he declared his go-vernment would sell sand free of cost to consumers. This was in March 2016. The YSRCP go-vernment scrapped the free sand policy and introduced a new sand policy in 2019. The NDA government recently NDA government recently scrapped the YSRCP govern-ment's sand policies and rein-troduced the free sand policy.

Did expansion before the pandemic prove costly for SpiceJet?

While IndiGo had the wherewithal to tide over the pandemic, SpiceJet couldn't bounce back

DATA POINT

<u>Jasmin Nihalani</u> Vignesh Radhakrishnan

he never-ending financial troubles of the cash-strapped Spicejet airline were once again on display when passengers flying from Dubai to India were barred from checking in the to the airline's unpud dues due to the airline's unpaid dues. Following this, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation placed SpiceJet under 'enhanced surveil-lance'. Earlier that month, they audited the airline and found 'certain deficiencies'. These new challeng es arose while the airline was already dealing with payment and provident fund dues to employees provident fund dues to employees and legal disputes as lessors were not paid. Pilots and cabin crew were last paid salaries for June and 150 cabin crew were sent on un-paid leave, *The Hindu* had

paid leave, Inc reported.

Data shows that a series of steps taken to expand the airline in the years leading up to the pandemic driven by the sudden collapse of Jet Airways and the desire to capture a larger share of the growing market – may have proven to be

costly.
Unlike the market leader Indi-Go, who had been increasing the size of its fleet and crew steadily over time and expanded further before the pandemic, SpiceJet's leap was sudden.

Between FY18 and FY20, IndiGo increased its fleet size from IS9
to 262 aircraft, with Spicejet improving from 60 to 114 (Chart D.
Both also went on a hiring spree
during the period. Pilots employed by IndiGo and Spicejet increased from about 2,350 to 4,000
and about 675 to 1,170, respectiveby, in the period. Cabin crew of IndiGo and Spicejet increased from
about 4,600 to 6,500 and 1,200 to
2,300, respectively (Chart 2).

The move did pay off briefly,
with Spicejet surpassing Air India
in market share, becoming the se-Between FYI8 and FY20, Indi-

SpiceJet's hard landing

from the Directorate General of Civil Avi. financial reports of SpiceJet and IndiGo



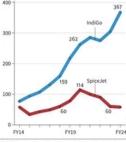
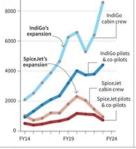


Chart 2: The chart shows the strength of pilots and cabin crew in IndiGo and Spice Jet



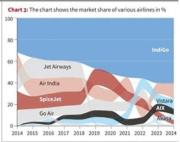
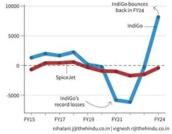


Table 4: The table shows select expenses of IndiGo and SpiceJet in ₹ crores

FY24 FY23 FY22 FY21 FY20

Airport charges	700	810	759	647	1,145
Maintenance costs	874	1,167	1,110	1,122	2,172
Employee benefits	771	844	727	676	1,526
INDIGO					
Fuel			9,695	3,831	12,454
Lease rental	1,075	326	312	280	497
Airport charges	4,624	3,647	2,287	1,613	2,912
Maintenance costs	9,932	8,045	6,090	4,191	5,867
Employee henefits	5.838	4 325	3 152	3.026	4 305

Chart 5: The chart shows the profit/loss recorded after tax by the two carriers in ₹ crores



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Man Frinde.

FIFTY YEARS AGO SEPTEMBER 5, 1974

Bhutan against appointment of new Indian Advisers

Calcutta, Sept. 4: In its efforts progressively to assert its independence, Bhutan is understood to have told India that it will not encourage the appointment of any new administrative Adviser from India. The Bhutanese Government is not asking Delhi to withdraw the Advisers now at work, but it wishes to have no replacement when the various Indian Advisers finish their assigned terms. In some cases, their departure assigned terms. In some cases, their departure is

being speeded up. These Advisers work as part of the Indian Government and the Bhutanese Government Administration. In charge of the Bhutanese Government is the Indian Political Officer at Thimpu, who, like a Resident Minister, advises the King on foreign and basic elements of modern Police laws into Bhutan.

the King on lottegia and toxics ceiments of modern Police laws into Bhutan. At present, there are senior Indian Advisers attached to the Bhutanese Ministries of Finance Development, and Trade, among others. Bhutan is treaty-bound to be guided by India in foreign affairs. There is also a Resident Indian Military Officer at Thimpu, the Bhutanese capital, with the rank of Brigadier.

The Indian Air Force establishment is at Paro. Some Indian Army officers have also been seconded to the Bhutanese forces.

Bhutan opened up its communications with India on the occasion of the coronation of the new King. Since then it has gone back into its isolation after its initial attempts to open its doors during the coronation. It is not clear whether the bar is from the Indian side or the Bhutanese.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO SEPTEMBER 5, 1924

Exodus of coolies.

Dibrugarh, Sept. 4: About 700 tea garden and untrugarh, Sept. 4: About 700 tea garden and other coolies arrived here recently demanding repatriation to Madras. They complained that they had been ducked by recruits and wanted to be sent back home at Government expense. The Magistrate is making enquiries as regards 200 applications. The rest were refused. About 250 returned to work.

At Sibagary there is a final assemble of the control of

plications. The rest were refused. About 250 turned to work. At Sibsagar there is a similar unrest among the rden coolies. About 400 coolies recruited m Madras Presidency proceeded to Jorhat dr equested repatriation.

CM C

Text&Context

THEMOMHINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of people rescued during the Gujarat rains

37,000 The rescues were conducted by various agencies including the National Disaster Response Force and

The PMAY houses to be constructed in rural Chhattisgarh

in lakh. According to CM Vishnu Deo Sai, his government has requested the Centre to approve houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) for rrendered Naxalites and people affected by Maoist violence in the State. Pri

The Palestinians killed in the Gaza Strip since October 7

10,861 The toll includes 42 deaths in the last 24 hours, according to ministry figures, which also lists 94,398 people as

Amount given to the kin of 20 people who died in Andhra floods

in ₹ lakh. So far, 20 people have died in the rains and floods which caused damage in several parts of the State, especially Vijayawada. 3,312 kms of roads across Andhra and agricultural crops in 1.69 lakh hectares were damaged. PTI

The number of trees uprooted by a gale in Telangana

about 500 acres in the forests of Mulugu were uprooted following a huge gale.

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What do we know about ANIIDCO?

Why has the qualifications of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation come into question after it got permission to do a 772,000 crore mega infrastructure project in Great Nicobar? Does the company have a proper internal environmental governance system?

EXPLAINER

Pankaj Sekhsaria Rishika Pardikar

The story so far:

The story so far:

he Andaman and Nicobar
Islands Integrated
Development Corporation
(ANIDCO) is the project
proponent for the NITI Aayog promoted
672,000 crore mega infrastructure project
in Great Nicobar, the southermmost island
in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago.
The project entails the construction of a
trans-shipment port, a greenfield airport,
a tourism and township project and a
solar and gas based power plant in Great
Nicobar. ANIIDCO which has been
granted permission for the mega project
is a little known quasi-government agency
based in Port Blair.

What do we know about ANIIDCO? ANIIDCO was incorporated on June 28, 1988 under the Companies Act. Its objective is "to develop and commercially exploit natural resources for the balanced and environment friendly development of the territory." Its main activities, according to its website, include trading of petroleum products, Indian made foreign liquor and milk, managing tourism resorts and infrastructure development for tourism and fisheries. The company's average annual turnover and profit over the last three financial years has been 8370 crore and 835 crore, respectively. The corporation's mandate, history, its structure and capabilities raiss serious concerns about the process and possible outcomes of making them responsible for such a high profile, high investment and high risk project as the one in Great Nicobar. The 910 sq km island is not just a biodiversity hotspot but also home to indigenous communitie with special rights and is also located in one of the most tectonically active zones. When the Andaman and Nicobar administration appointed ANIIDCO as vears has been ₹370 crore and ₹35 crore.



project proponent in July 2020, ANIIDCO neither had an environment policy nor an environment cell. It did not even have the human resources needed to oversee, let alone implement and monitor the project alone implement and monitor the project it was tasked to implement. It was only in late 2022 more than two years after it was made the project proponent did it start a process for recruiting people with relevant expertise such as urban planners, environmental planners, architects, infrastructure specialists, and legal and financial experts.

In May, 2021, the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) under the Union environment ministry had asked ANIIDCO a number of important questions about its internal environmental governance system. The EAC asked if ANIIDCO had a corporate environment policy approved by its board of directors, an

administrative system to ensure compliance with environmental clearance conditions and if there was a prescribed standard operating procedure to deal with environmental and forest violations. ANIIDCO admitted later in August that it did not have an environment policy. The EAC, nevertheless, went ahead and granted environmental clearance t ANIIDCO more than a year later in ed environmental clearance to

What are other conflicts of interests? In 2022, the Mumbai based Conservation Action Trust had filed a petition before the National Green Tribunal challenging the Stage I forest clearance granted by the Union Environment Ministry. It had pointed out that at the time forest clearance was granted to ANIIDCO, the corporation's managing director was the

me person who was also the

same person who was also the Commissioner cum Secretary (Environment and Forests) of the island. It is clear, the petition noted, that this is "a case of the project proponent certifying itself." Further, it added that the responsibility to assess compliance with the Stage I forest clearance conditions vests with the same authority that has a responsibility to ensure compliance with wests with the same authority that has a responsibility to ensure compliance with the conditions. This same pattern was repeated when the Chief Secretary of the islands, who is also the chairman of the board of directors of ANIIDCO, was made a key member of the high powered committee set up by the NGT to look into complaints agains the project. ANIIDCO was being allowed to evaluate its own actions again. Numerous persons employed at ANIIDCO in various capacities are currently civil servants with the Andaman and Nicobar administration in charge of environmental and tribal welfare issues. We sent questionnaires to both ANIIDCO and the chairman and secretary of the EAC. None responded.

What have past administrators said? Lt Gen A.K. Singh, Lieutenant Governor of the islands from 2013-16, said that ANIIDCO would be better suited than any other department or organisation in the A&N administration to handle this mega project, though a project of this dimension would require expert agencies from outside the islands to execute it.

Sanat Kaul, chief secretary of the islands in the early 90s, had critiqued ANIIDCO's tourism operations in a book he wrote in 2015. On the current project, he said "I don't think ANIIDCO can at all he said "I don't think ANIDCO can at all manage a 772,000 croper project unless its upgraded vastly with much better quality staff. If the idea of the government is to use ANIDCO because it is an existing company fully owned by the government, it will need a full revamp from what it was when I was there."

Pankaj Sekhsaria is an author/editor with his recent work being The Great Nicobar Betrayal. Rishika Pardikar is a freelance environment reporter.

THE GIST

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO) is the project proponent for the NITI Asyog-promoted 872,000 crore mega infrastructure project in Great Nicobar, the southernmost Island in the Andaman and Nicobar Andaman and Nicobar

its main activities, according to its website, include trading of petroleum products, Indian made foreign liquor and milk, managing tourism resorts and infrastructure development for tourism and fisheries.

When the Andaman and Nicobar administration appointed ANIIDCO as project proponent in July 2020, ANIIDCO neither had an environment policy nor an environment cell, it did not even have the human resources needed to oversee, let alone implement and monitor the project it was tasked to implement.

Why has H.P. raised the marriageable age for women?

What are the key provisions of the Bill? Why is the assent of the President required? What are the concerns?

The story so far:

n August 27, the Himachal Pradesh Assembly passed a Bill raising the minimum marriageable age for women from 18 to 21 years. The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Himachal Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2024, was passed on the first day of the two-week monsoon session. It seeks to amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (2006 Act) to advance gender equality. The story so far:

Why was the Bill passed? Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu told *The Hindu* that the passage of the Bill clearly demonstrates the Congress government's commitment to advancing the welfare of women. "We are the first State in the country to enact the legislation to increase the marriage age of girls to 21. The Congress has always been at the forefront to work towards the

betterment of women," Mr. Sukhu said.
Tabling the Bill in the House, Health,
Social Justice, and Empowerment
Minister Dhani Ram Shandli highlighted
that early marriage obstructs girls'
education and limits their potential for
progress in life. He noted that the
proposed amendments to the 2006 Act
aim to reduce instances of early
pregnancies and motherhood, which
adversely affect women's health.

What are the key provisions? Currently, Section 2(a) of the 2006 Act defines a "child" as someone "who, if male, has not completed twenty-one years of age, and if female, has not completed eighteen years of age." The Bill removes this distinction, redefining a 'child" as "a male or female who has not

completed twenty-one years of age." The Bill also extends the time period for filing a petition to annul a marria Under Section 3 of the 2006 Act, an individual who was a minor at the time of marriage can file for annulment within two years of attaining majority – before turning 20 for women and 23 for men. The Bill extends this period to five years, allowing both women and men to file petitions before they turn 23, in accordance with the new minimum marriageable age of 21 years. A new provision has also been introduced to ensure that the Bill's provisions take precedence over all other existing laws.

Is the President's assent necessary? In this case, Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla's assent would typically suffice to enact the Bill into law. However, since the Bill introduces a different minimum marriageable age for women, its provisions will be deemed inconsistent with the 2006 Act - a law enacted by Parliament. This potential conflict brings Article 254 of the Constitution into play. According to clause (1) of this provision, if a State legislature enacts a law on a subject covered by the Concurrent List

[Entry 5 of the Concurrent list deals with the subject of marriage and divorce] that is "repugnant" to the provisions of an existing central law, then that repugnant or inconsistent portion of the state law will be considered "void".

To remedy this, the State legislation

To remedy this, the State legislation will have to be reserved for the President's consideration and receive his or her assent in accordance with clause (2) of Article 254. With the President's assent, the State law takes precedence over the central law, but solely within the jurisdiction of that State.

What do experts have to say?
Author and activist Madhu Mera previously told The Hindu that raising the minimum marriage age for women to 21 years could upend young lives in a web of criminal prosecutions. "In our research at Partners for Law in Development, we looked at 10 years of use of the child marriage law. Overwhelmingly, the law was used by parents against eloping daughters. It has become a tool for parental control and for punishment of boys or men whom girls choose as their husbands. An increase in age to 21 years would mean persecution of girls right up would mean persecution of girls right up till 21 years," she said.

The 2008 Law Commission Report recommended setting a uniform age of marriage for both men and women at 18 years. The National Human Rights Commission in 2018 too proposed sion in 2018 too proposed a similar reform

THE GIST

On August 27, the Himachal Pradesh Assembly passed a Bill raising the minimum marriageable age for women from 18 to 21 years.

Section 2(a) of the 2006 Act defines a "child" as someone "who, if male, has not completed twenty-one years of age, and if female, has not completed eighteen years of completed eighteen years of age." The Bill removes this distinction, redefining a "child" as "a male or female who has not completed twenty-one years of age."

Author and activist Madhu Mera previously told *The Hindu* that raising the minimum marriage age for women to 21 years could upend young lives in a web of criminal

...











In a time of turmoil and crisis, the stoic roadmap to a meaningful life

Several books on Stoicism, old and new, offer timeless wisdom on how to navigate life's challenges, cope with chaos and wrest happiness from adversity. By introducing this ancient philosophy, these books explain why it remains relevant for modern society

he world is in turmoil. We muddled through a pandemic, and continue to witness climate disruptions, rising inequalities, racial injustices, economic slowdowns, wars and uprising. The fear of loss and the greed for more keep lives on edge in a world where one crisis follows another. The need for clarity and resilience to deal with hardships is felt like never before. In this scenario, can art of living strategies offered by Stoics help?

After Alexander the Great's conquests and death upended the Greek world, Hellenistic philosopher Zeno of Citium, propounded the development of logical living with reason as its decisive principle, where there is no space for exhibiting the pain one suffers.

Though Zeno's ordeinal writing and the sufference of the control of the sufference of the control of the sufference of the

Though Zeno's original writings are lost, his sayings are preserved by later writers and Rebublic is cited as the mos famous work that outlined his vision of an ideal Stoic society. For example, Mr.
Spock in the original Star Trek is a perfect
example of a stoic person who tried to
never demonstrate his feelings.

Bandwidth of emotions

Bandwidth of emotions
The philosophy is not just about
'unfeeling'. Between Prime Minister
Modi's 'stoic silence' over ethnic violence
in Manipur and wrestler Vinesh Phogat's
'stoic attitude in proving herself whether
on the mat or standing up against alleged
sexual harassment, there is, for instance,
a bandwidth of emotions that help us to
understand universal truths about people
and what makes them thrive in any

situation.

There's a hard path at any given moment in our lives that could benefit us as we either push through a current difficulty to build our character, or mull in the moment waiting for the experiences we live in to disappear, writes William Mulligan, founder of YouTube and Instagram account, Stoic Teachings, in his first book The Everyday Stoic: Simple Rules For A Good Lle' (2024).

"We all have our own philosophy. Maybe it's about how we treat people and allow others to treat us and how much negativity we let into ourselves," he says, explaining the Stoicism doctrine based on how to accept things that cannot be changed and not to brood over things beyond our control.

Truths we have lost sight of
In a world full of darkness, books on
Stoicism make for a transformative
reading experience, equipping readers
with insights into a more productive
perspective of life. For beginners, reading
the big three Roman philosophers —
Marcus Aurellus, Epictetus and Seneca—
is a good way to cover the basics.
With The Enchiridion, Epictetus helps
us to dive into human desires and calm
rationality in order to cultivate a resilient
mindset, It is an essential guide to

mindset. It is an essential guide to enlightenment and emotional well-being. The free-minded writings of Seneca in his Letters to Lucilius discuss ethical theory Letters to Lucilius discuss ethical theory and practical advice and how both are distinct and yet interdependent. He regards his philosophy as a balm for the wounds of life and suggests uprooting destructive passions.

While Marcus' Meditations is a personal collection of his reflections on applying stoic philosophy to his life and is one of the most widely-read classics on self-improvement, Donald Robertson uses aneedotes from Marcus' life in his book How to Think like a Roman Emperor (2019). Robertson's Stoicism and the Art of Happiness (2013) showcases how stoic philosophy is a form of self-help today. In the context of people trying coping mechanisms to understand their place in the world and emerging strong, Vinesh Phogat is an example of a real Stoic. Academic philosopher John Sellars who is the chair of the Modern Stoicism organisation, has penned a good

organisation, has penned a good introduction, Lessons in Stoicism: What Ancient Philosophers Teach Us About How to Live (2020), that underlines the comeback of Stoicism as a fashionable

History as inspiration

nistory as inspiration Stoic philosophy started in 300 BC with Zeno of Citium and continued for 500 years until the fall of Rome; it evolved during the two crises and has had numerous revivals since, including

numerous revivals since, including Neo-stoicism in the Renaissance era and modern Stoicism in the 21st century. A popular modern book on Stoicism is The Daily Stoic (2016) by Ryan Holiday and Stephen Hanselman, which draws on historical icons and contemporary heroes to demonstrate the power of owing our convictions and acting accordingly in an era of dishonesty. "Your values, your character and your deeds determine your success and legacy," Ryan writes, pointing out that the path to greatness is not

possible without goodness.

To make the 2000 year-old philosophy a framework to modern life, another good read is Victor Frankl's 1946 book, Man's Search for Maning where he chronicles his experiences as a prisoner during World War II. He observes its impact on fellow inmates at a Nazi concentration camp; there were some who were able to connect to a purpose in life in such bleak times through completion of tasks, caring for another person or finding meaning in suffering with dignity.

In A Guide to the Good life: The Ancient Art of Stoic Joy (2009), William Irvine tells readers how to become thoughtful observers of their own life and identify the sources of distress, minimise worry, and let go of the past. Author and professor of Philosophy in City College of New York, Massimo Pigliucci's book How to be A Stoic: using Ancient Philosophy to Live a Modern Life (2017), reminds readers to look to history for inspiration and be surprised by its power.

In How Should We Live? (2015), cultural

surprised by its power. In How Should We Live? (2015), cultural

In How Should We Live? (2015), cultural historian Roman Krznaric explores twelve topics including love, family, and empathy, work, time, and money to reveal how people have missed a chance to learn from the ancient Greeks. It is replete with ideas from the past and sheds light on the decisions we make in our daily lives.

our daily lives.

As Gregory Hays, a classics scholar
says, Stoicism, after all, is about being in
control of one's thoughts and emotions. I
is a recognition that human societies and
relations are varied and complex and the
path toward a better world goes through
each of us.



Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

"Hello. Care to join me for dinner? "I have been grazing through packet after packet of chips all day, so..." "You mean you've been eating chips all day long."

day long. y long."
"Yes, I've been grazing through..."
"How can you graze? Are you a cow?

"Well, no..."
"Animals like cows, sheep and goats

graze. People like you and me eat."
"You're right. You see I have been eating all day. But I've also been grazing."

"What are you talking about."
"You see 'grazing' means 'eating
ntinuously throughout the day'."

"You see 'grazing' means 'eating continuously throughout the day?"
"Eating throughout the day? But how can a person eat throughout the day?"
"Why can't a person eat throughout the day?"
"Why can't a person eat throughout the day? All that he/she has to do is eat small quantities of something right through the day."
"You mean the person eats something after his breakfast, lunch and dinner?"
"No, no. You see when you are grazing, you don't usually have your regular meal. Because if you do, then it is very difficult for you to eat something after that."
"I see. So instead of a heavy breakfast, a 'grazer' will have three or four mini-breakfasts before lunch."
"Exactly. And there will be no lunches or dinners either. Only small quantities of something to prevent the stomach from complaining."
"So like a cow, a 'grazer' chews all day."
"Yes. And that's why it's called

nplaining." 'So like a cow, a 'grazer' chews all day." 'Yes. And that's why it's called 'grazing'."
"Would you like to have a small

quantity of ice cream?"
"Certainly not! I'd like to have lashings

of ice cream."
"Lashings of ice cream

"Leshings of receivem."
"Yes."
"Doesn't lashing' mean beating somebody with a whip?"
"Yes, one of the meanings is that."
"How do I beat you with ice cream?"
"You've got it all wrong. You see, I didn't say 'lashing,' but 'lashings' In informal English, 'lashings' means a large evantity of something."

informal English, "Jashings" means a lary quantity of something,"
"So you want a large quantity?"
"Yes, I want lashings of ice cream."
"But I thought you were grazing,"
"Never mind that. Are you giving me

my ice cream?"

"Yes. But not lashings of it. You see I have only a small quantity."

"Give it."

"Here you are."
"Can you tell me the meaning of a sentence?"

"This is the sentence?"

"What sentence?"

"This is the sentence. 'Mr. Arjun Singh also said that if any references in the statement gave this interpretation directly or indirectly, the same are withdrawn.'
The sentence is in the resolution adopted by the Congress Working Committee.
What does the sentence mean?"
"I suppose he meant it to mean that he wasn't mean enough to mean what the party thought he meant it to mean."
"All's well that means well. It is evident that the resolution was drafted by leaders with bleary eyes and tired minds."
Published in The Hindu on April 6, 1993.

Word of the day

Parry: impede the movement of (an opponent or a ball); avoid or try to avoid fulfilling, answering, or performing (duties, questions, or issues)

Synonyms: block, deflect, skirt, hedge, elude, dodge, duck, evade, circumvent, fudge,

Usage: She cleverly parried the reporter's

Pronunciation: bit.ly/parrypro

International Phonetic

Alphabet:/pæi/

Please send in your answers dailyquiz@thehindu.co. THE DAILY OUIZ September 5 is celebrated as Teachers' Day in India. In honour of educators, here is a

quiz about fictional and literary teachers who have changed lives for the better

K. Abhinaya

Known for her incredible wit and stern demeanour, this teacher played a very important role in the life of the protagonist and his two friends. She was the head of a well-liked house in the school and taught a very difficult subject at a magical school. Identify

QUESTION 2

Hilary Swank plays a teacher who transforms the life of at-risk school children at a school in LA in this movie. The movie is based on a book compiled out of the diary entries of the students. Name the movie.

OUESTION 3

day hack to build habits CM C

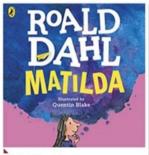
to acronyms to speeches, this teacher quickly becomes the lifeline of students trying to navigate their way through the gruelling IIT coaching regime in this popular series. Name the series and the

QUESTION 4

teachers at an underfunded public school in Philadelphia. The creator of the show also plays the role of an optimistic second-grade teacher Identify the creator of the show.

QUESTION 5

An unlikely ally turned teacher; Beijing snake stance; and fire cupping are all key elements of this movie. It follows the relationship between a troubled 12-year-old kid and his teacher. Identil the movie and name the teacher in the



Name the teacher who identifies Matilda's talent and attempts to help her develop and hone her intelligence

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The upcoming movie Emergency is about this and Kangana Ranaut will play the role of this politician. Ans: The film is based on the Indian Emergency from 1975. Ms. Ranaut will play the role of Indira Gandhi. 2. This 2019 Hindi-language political film is based on the 2014 book by Sanjaya Baru about this politician. Ans: The Accidental Prime Minister; Dr. Manmohan Singh 3. This Marath Janguage biopic based on Nittin Gadkari was released in 2023. This man played the role of Gadkari, Ans: Gadkari, Rahul Chopda 4. Main Atal Hoon is a 2024 biographical film on Atal Bihari Vajpayee who was played by this actor. Ans: Pankaj Tripathi

 Inis 1993 Biographical drama failin, written by noted playwright Vilgy Tendulkar, was based on this politician. Ans: Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
 This 1997 Tamil-language epic political drama was directed by Mani Ratnam. Ans: Iruvor Visual: identify this film from the poster. Ans: Yatro; based on Telugu politician Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy Early Birds: Isha| K.N. Viswanathan| Vaibhanshi Shary Dodo Jayaditya Vaishnavi Sharma

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to letters@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Text & Context'









PARALYMPIAN PRIDE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Our incredible Paralympic contingent has set a record for the highest ever medals for our country in any Paralympics. This shows the dedication, passion and determination of our athletes

Educate retail investors

Enough guidelines to curb market speculation exist; we need awareness drive to not always bet on quick returns

 $\begin{tabular}{ll} NVESTMENT GURUS, ESPECIALLY mutual fund managers, have spent decades explaining the benefits of long-term investing. This is $$ (1.5) $$ spent decades explaining the benefits of long-term investing. This is sound advice as many top mutual fund schemes have delivered stellar returns of over 20% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) over the past two decades or even more. But an ever-growing number of investors seem to have little patience for this long-term story. As a study by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) for FY23 reveals, 54% investors, excluding anchor investors, have sold their shares allotted in the initial public offering (IPO) in the very first week. More importantly, 67.6% retail investors (by value) exited in the first week with profits of over 20%, but 23.3% sold even if they were in losses.

What is interesting is that almost a quarter of the retail investors are

over 20%, but 23.3% sold even if they were in losses.

What is interesting is that almost a quarter of the retail investors are playing the IPO market for quick gains and do not mind incurring losses in the short term. In fact, they could possibly be deploying the funds in the next IPO, hoping to make up for the losses. They don't seem to be deterred by the short-term capital gains tax of 15%, So, instead of waiting for over 20%-odd CAGR for over 20 years, they are happy earning 17% post-tax within days. The IPO boom is also supporting the "quick buck" phenomena. In FY24, 36 out of 76 mainframe IPOs returned over 20% in the first week. They unspleas have public completely in EV25 with 16 out. the first week. The numbers have only become better in FY25, with 16 out

of 25 IPOs returning over 20%, according to data from Prime Database. The flood of liquidity has clearly overshadowed the pitfalls, resulting in complacency. Consider the frenzy in the small and medium enterprises (SME) IPO market. Recently, an auto dealer's ₹12-crore IPO received bids of over ₹5,000 crore. No wonder, Sebi is worried. In the past received bids of over ₹5,000 crore. No wonder, Sebi is worried. In the past couple of weeks, its wholetime member Ashwini Bhatia has spoken about stricter guidelines for SME IPOs by the year-end. The market regulator has also taken the unusual move of issuing an advisory to investors asking them to be careful as promoters seem to be painting an unrealistic picture to garner more bids. Last October, it also asked the two exchanges — BSE and NSE — to put these stocks under additional and graded surveillance measures.

But one duplits whether all the advisory or stricter rules will have a significant of the stricter rules will be advisory or stricter rules will have a significant of the stricter rules will be advisory or stricter ru

veillance measures.

But one doubts whether all the advisory or stricter rules will have a significant impact on investor frenzy for IPOs — both SME and mainframe — when sheer greed is the main driving force. With 80% of mainframe IPOs closing above listing price after a week, the roll of the dice is heavily in favour of the investor at this point. To curb speculation, Sebi has already floated a consultation paper which, if implemented, will make things difficult for retail investors in the derivatives market. The Union Budget has also increased the securities transaction tax on options and futures, which will be implemented from October 1. But one doubts whether additional unidelines to curb speculation in the IPO market would serve any purwill be implemented from October 1. But one doubts whether additional guidelines to curb speculation in the 1PO market would serve any purpose — after all, enough of them exist already. What is required is a concerted effort to educate retail investors that they should not confuse stock markets with gambling dens. Education is a long-term and a more difficult process than issuing more guidelines, but that seems to be the only way forward. We have for long believed in the maxim that market is the best teacher, but it's time to change that belief. Quick returns can never be taken for granted.

COST OF TRANSITION

RENEWABLE ENERGY DOES NOT GENERATE THE TAX AND NON-TAX REVENUES THAT FOSSIL FUELS DO

Counting on carbon pricing

IGNIFICANT FISCAL IMPLICATIONS are bound to arise as countries roll out their energy transition plans. India has committed to achieving its net zero target by 2070, and also set specific goals for 2030. Renewable energy, however, does not generate the same kind of tax and non-tax revenues that fossif fuels do. Petroleum products, for instance, generate revenues in the form of excise for the central government and value added tax (VAT) for the states. Coal, on the other hand, generates goods and services tax (CST). Both generate royalties as well if they are mined/extracted in India. Together these constituted close to one-third of the total indirect tax collections Together these constituted close to one third of the total indirect tax collections in India in 2019-20. Over time, however in India in 2019-20. Overtime, non-east as the share of renewable energy increases, fossil fuels will naturally gen-chare of revenues. This increases, fossil fuels will naturally gen-erate a lower share of revenues. This underscores the need to explore alter-native revenues occures that will not only compensate for the loss of revenue but also support energy transition object tives in a fair and progressive mannier. There are many alternatives, ranging from increasing tax rates to rationalising taxation to imposing new forms of taxes. We looked at many of these possible alter-natives available for India. There are such trather infeasible ones, such as increasing

natives available for India. There are some tather infeasible ones, such as increasing direct tax rates; as historical evidence suggests, increasing the rates does little to increase tax revenues in India. Broadening the income tax rates by inclusion of agricultural incomes is yet another difficult proposition, given the landscape of the political economy. Additionally, the corporate taxes are also competitive with other countries and altering these may affect investments in India.

We thus examined the possibilities



and senior fellow, Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSE

under the indirect taxes category and assess issues related to revenue continuity over a long period of time, state autonomy or state governments control over their own tax rates and revenues, institutional challenges in imposing new taxes, and the distributional impacts of these changes. We analyse and explore the potential of replacing fossil fuel taxes with other tax options such as carbon taxes on fossil fuel emissions, user taxes [electricity taxes and distance tray-

sions, user taxes (electricity taxes and distance trav-elled taxes), and conven-tional alternatives such as aproportionate increase in the GST rates. Taxation alternatives included car-bon taxes on emissions of coal, petroleum and a com-bination of these two; user taxes such as increasing electricity duties, a new form of taxation called dis-tance travelled tax, and a c.

form of taxation called dis-tance travelled tax, and a combination of the two; as well as a proportionate increase in the GST rates. The replacement of fossil fuel rev-enues with other forms will affect house-hold welfare by altering their tax burden and will also have differing macroeco-nomic and environmental effects. We examined these effects on parameters such as real gross domestic product (GDP), prices, and emissions intensity,

First, implementing a carbon tax on coal emissions boosts real GDP and lowers the intensity of emissions the most, as emissions from the consumption of coal lead to maximum pollution in India. However, it is regressive in the sense that the poor households will have to shoulder a disproportionate burden to their incomes. While such a tax could accelerate the energy transition, it work solve the long-term fiscal accelerate the energy transition, it work solve the long-term fiscal accelerate the energy transition, it work solve the long-term fiscal sex of the solve the long-term fiscal sex of the solve the long-term fiscal sex of the long-t

It is critical for India carbon taxation regime (or a well-structured carbon emissions trading regime)

est segments.
Second, user taxes can
be a potential solution for be a potential solution for retaining the autonomy of the states as the electricity duties are constitutionally within their ambit while the mileage taxes can be administered by the Centre under Article 248. However, these taxes are inefficient as they have a significant negative impact on real GDP. This is because mileage taxes affect the prices the most. Transport and electricity least the core of economic activity, and imposing user taxes will have a domino

effect on prices.

Third, a proportionate increase in GST significantly reduces emissions and has moderate effects on both equity and real GDP. This is because replacing fossil taxes with changes in GST rates affects to the prices the least when compared with the other alternatives. However, GST does not provide individual state governments much autonomy over their own axes, and therefore they are unlikely to agree to replace fossil fuel taxes with a general increase in GST.

It is critical for India to move to a capenal increase in GST.

It is critical for India to move to a capenal increase in GST.

It is critical for India to move to a capenal increase in GST.

It is critical for India to move to a capenal increase in GST.

Better the compared of the compared in the co

challenge of finding other revenues to address the budgetary gaps that will be visible within a few years as India's dependence on fossil fuels reduces. For that problem, we found that there are no clear-cut answers, and each potential solution has a different challenge. For this to be addressed, India needs to initiate a convensation among various internal stakeholders on what is the most suitable mechanism for the country. We believe that eventually a combination of taxes and other generation tools will be used to cover the gap. This will emerge out of a political-economic discourse that studies such as tion tools will be used to cover the gap. This will emerge out of a political-eco-nomic discourse that studies such as ours seek to inform. For the medium term, however, carbon taxes can achieve both goals; therefore, while political-economic processes find the long-term solution, a shorter more immediate solution remains carbon pricing.

FTC's challenge to a Walmart rival needs a better attack

THE US FEDERAL Trade Commission has thrown everything at its attempt to thwart Kroger Co.'s \$25 billion takeover of rival supermarket Albertsons Cos. It has taken a scattershot approach when a more targeted attack would serve it better, given the dublousness of some of its arguments.

The transaction was hatched in 2022 against a backdrop of sharply rising food prices, aiming to create a jumbo grocery player with the buying power to challenge the mighty Walmart Inc. Last week, the FTC went to court to dealy its closing and allow time for a full-blown challenge. This is ostensibly about timing, but it means testing the merits of the FTC's agguments.

A simple merger of Kroger and Albertsons would start out as anti-competitive on its face because of sizeable overlaps in the combined 5,000-store portfolio, notably across the West Coast. An Albertsons executive responded to rumours of the combination by saying "you are basically creating a monopoly in grocery', according to a state lawsuit trying to block the deal. Expect more embarrassing correspondence to surface in the weeks ahead — It always does.

Kroger's ealing points for the deal are a sideshow. It pedges \$1 billion of price reductions and \$1 billion in higher wages. Delivery on such promises is going to be hard to monitor. As for getting bigger to fight Walmart, the existence of behemoth doesn't justifycreating another behemoth. On that basis, all mergers would be allowed until every industry became a duopoly.

Kroger says no stores will close as a result of the takeover. Further, it argues that the vast disposal programme sustains rivalry between the existing overlapping stores, constraining the enlarged Kroger from raising prices or reducing quality.

The FTC argues the divestiture fails to ensure that there's a girm general state of the state of the

India's growth in a sweet spot

Given that consumption will be increasing and that will lead to better capacity utilisation,

the pace of capital formation should also improve



MADAN SABNAVIS

Chief economist, Bank of Baroda

THE Q1 GDP data ironically bodes well THE QI GDP data ironically bodies well for the economy, even though the growth rate at 6.8% is lower than last year. The main reason for optimism is, it does appear that most of the boxes which represent the prerequisites for high stable growth of above 7% for the year have been ticked.

The seeming contradiction can be explained by the internals of the number GDP is defined as the sum of grosses.

bers. GDP is defined as the sum of gr alue added (GVA) and net taxes. GVA value added (GVA) and net taxes. GVA is the actual growth in production in different sectors that are represented by eight segments. The movement from GVA to GDP is based on the net addition of taxes — the difference between commodity taxes (mainly goods and services tax) and subsidies. The growth estimates for Q1 were always going to have a downward bias due to the base effect of higher growth last year. The 8.4% growth last year are closed to the same offect. When one looks at the growth in GVA, there is a

last year. The 8.4% growth last year provided this base effect. When one looks at the growth in GVA, there is a lot of comfort as it was 6.8%. This means that GDP growth was lowered to 6.7% due to low growth in the "net taxes" component. This was on expected lines and most sectors witnessed growth roughly as forecast. There were two positive surprises. The first was manufacturing, which did better than expected notwithstanding that corporate profitability has been low-key this quarter. Gross profits, it should be mentioned, is an important component of value added, in the component of value added in the component of value added.

profits, it should be included, important component of value added, with salaries and wages being the other component. The 7% growth is a

good sign because as demand moves in the upper trajectory, this level of performance can be sustained. The second is the "public administration, defence, and other services" component, which grew by 9.5%.

The negative surprise was agriculture and allied activities, which grew by just 2%. A higher number could have been expected because the rabi crop was very good last year. It appears the party was spoilt by heatwaves which affected the "allied activities" that include horticulture, besides fod-that include horticulture, besides fod-that include horticulture, besides fod-that include horticulture, besides fod-

which affected the "allled activities" that include horticulture, besides fodder, animal husbandry, etc. With the monsoon being normal, there should be a reversal in some of these trends.

There have been several encouraging signs in this data set. To begin with, growth in consumption was impressive at 12.4%, the highest since Q2 of FY32 when pent-up demand when pent-up demand pushed up growth to a high of 17.5%. This is

high of 17,5%. This is important because consumption has been one of the missing links to the growth story. Here, rural demand has lagged, and the argument put across often is that high inflation and lower income have synnied demand. This has changed of late, with inflation also seemingly coming under control at less than 5%. Urban demand so far has largely been confined to the premium segment, but this could be changing

going by the data.

going by the data.

The second engine that has started to fire is investment. There have been divided views on whether the private sector has started spending on investment. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data does show some increase in capacity utilisation by March, but this could be a seasonal factor as the rate tends to peak before dipping in June. Growth at 8.8% in gross capital formation and 9.1% in gross fixed capital formation is outite gross fixed capital formation is quite impressive. As the government spend-ing on capex was muted due to the elec-

tions this quarter, it can be concluded that most be concluded that most of this growth was in the private sector. Therefore, the GDP growth number of 6.7% is more than satisfying.

What can be the reason for optimism

reason for optimism with this growth rate? The government has projected 6.5-7% projected 6.5-7% growth for the year, while the RBI is looking

at 7.294. The latter looks more likely as a conditions are favourable. First, the consumption story should work out even better in the coming months. The rains have been more than favourable and sowing data shows that the kharif crop, with the exception of cotton, would be generally better than last year. This means food prices should get tempered. While it may take time to get reflected in the inflation numbers, it

would still mean higher rural income. Second, given that consumption will be increasing and that will lead to better capacity utilisation, the pace of capital formation should also improve. This in turn should lead to some improvements in investment in the consumer goods segment. So far, most of the investment has been in infrastructure-oriented companies. It may be expected to become more broad-based during the rest of the year. Add to this the government capex programme, which will accelerate as already seen in July, and this will ensure overall capital formation gets a boost.

Lastly, on the production side, with would still mean higher rural income.

There are strong indications that growth in the

maintain a number of above 7% this year

economy will be strengthened further; India can

this will ensure overall capital formation gets a boost.

Lastly, on the production side, with GVA on track, the net taxes will hold a clue to faster growth. In the first quarter, tax collections were buoyant. However, subsidy outflows were frontloaded to an extent. This will get corrected along the way, and hence the net tax collection growth, which was muted in Q1, will return to normal.

Therefore, there are strong indications that growth in the economy will be strengthened further. There are also emerging possibilities of the RBI lowering the reporate, which could be in the fourth quarter provided inflation looks subdued. This can be a positive for industry, at a time when investment looks to improve. It can be said that the Indian economy is truly in a sweet spot for growth and can maintain a number of above 7% this year and move further upwards thereafter.

Views are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Levelling the playing field

Apropos of "Competing for FDI" (FE, September A), indeed there is regional disparity in the flow of foreign direct investment (FDI) in India. A major slice of it goes to the richer states, even though there is an equal platform for all states. Cheap labour, uninterrupted power supply, skilled manpower, runding the tax system, and easy nudging the tax system, and easy acquisition of land are the parameters

fulfilled by richer states to attract more FDI. Poorer states, especially in the Northeast, have little infrastructure to attract FDI and lack skilled labour. Lakhs of north Indians migrate to the southern states for their livelihood. It is the onus of the Centre to augment the infrastructure of the poorer states with orchestrated schemes for increasing the quality of manpower. There is no dearth of it. Other parameters also must be fulfilled to attract FDI.

—NR Nagarajan, Sivakasi

The state of the economy

economy

Car sales are often regarded as an accurate estimation of how well the nation's economy is doing. The fall in car sales in India for the past two months makes it difficult to believe in the 7.2% 6DP growth, which has now dropped to a more realistic 6.5%. Many economists and analysts question these numbers. The Pension Fund Regulatory and

Development Authority chairman has said an investment rate of 36% was needed for a 8% rise in the GOP. The fall in investment rate in the last quarter does not augur very well for the growth numbers in India. The festive season is likely to give a boost to consumption and it is hoped this would help trigger further economic activity. —Anthony Henriques, Maharashtra

Regd, No: DL - 21048/03-05. R.N.L. No.26750/74. Printed and Published by R.C. Malhotrs on behalf of The Indian Express (P) Ltd and printed at The Indian Express (P) Ltd Press, A-8, Sector-7, Noids - 201301 and published at The Indian Express (P) Ltd, Mezzanine Floor, Express Building, 9 & 10, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-130002. Phone: 0120-6651500. (Cover price: Patra: Mon-Fri 121, Safa & sun 121; Raipur Mon-Fri 121, Safa & sun 121; Raipur Mon-Fri 121, Safa & sun 121. Chairman of the Board: Viveck Goenka, Eddor: Shyamal Hajumday, Eddor (Delhi) Shobhana Subramarian' ("Responsible for selection of News under the PBB Act) @Copyright: The Indian Express (P) Ltd. Indi financialeyn enaprin

Stifling innovation

GST notices on academic institutions must be revoked

ress reports indicate that premier institutions such as IIT Delhi; Anna University; Punjab University; Sastra University and few others have received show cause notices from the Directorate General of

have received show cause notices from the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI). It is reported that the Education Ministry is not too happy with the notices issued seeking GST on Research Grants.

According to DGGI, universities and institutions should pay GST on the research grants that they received from government; quasi-sovernment goals government bedies; funds; industry; donors and philanthropists. Despite the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs' instructions that DGGI should not issue notices which involve interpretation of law without the clearance from the Board, the salvo of notices has caused significant stress amongst the academia.

Levy of GST is on supply of goods or services for consideration. Further, the activity must be in the course or furtherance of business. When a research grant is given by government, corporate philanthropy or philanthropists or international agencies, or Alumini of any institution/university, it is for the purpose of carrying out research that ultimately benefit the society. The university or the institution that receives the grants does not supply any goods or Levy of GST is on supply of institution that receives the grants does not supply any goods or service to the domor. An institution or University carries out research and is not carrying on busineses. When 'consideration' is missing and when 'supply of goods or services' is also missing, there can be no GST.

NO 'CONSIDERATION'

NO 'CONSIDERATION'
In so far as universities are
concerned, when they receive a
research grant there is no
corresponding requirement to
supply goods or services to the
person giving the grant does
not procure any goods or services
from the University. Thus, the
grant received does not constitute
'consideration'.
Grants given for open ended

consideration:
Grants given for open ended research does not tantamount to consideration as it is a receipt in the nature of grant simpliciter without a quid pro co of supply of goods or services. Research grants are used for funding research projects, buying equipment, payment of stipend, etc.
The donor does not have any



TAXING TIMES. Nixing research

TAXING TIMES. Noing research pisconnection ownership rights over the research findings. Institutions account these grants as funds in their balance sheet and it is not taken as income. There are conditions with reference to utilization and reporting. There could be some rare case where the research could result in an outcome such as new technology or patent. Even assuming that as per the terms of the grants future IPR would be owned jointly, at best it is a joint ownership of IPR and there is no existence of IPR at the time of grant. If the IPR is exploited and

ownership of IPR and there is no existence of IPR at the time of grant. If the IPR is exploited and there is some degree of licencing which results in royalty then that royalty would be liable to GST.

In a GST case, the Bombay High Court in the case of Bai Manubai Trust Vs. Suchitar has held that enforceable reciprocal obligations are essential to a supply and that the supply doctrine does not contemplate or encompass a wrongful unilateral act or any resulting payment of damages.

The grant by its very nature is meant for covering the expenditure incurred in carrying out research and the report or the benefit of the research is for public at large and not for consumption by the person making the payment. Even if the research exclusively belongs to the Irabete of the Person change in the Irabete in the benefit of the research exclusively belongs to change research exclusively belongs to the University, there is no change with reference to the legal

with reference to the legal concept of grant not being consideration. When the payment does not have the character of consideration and there are no reciprocal obligations, it cannot be said that there is a supply for the purpose of levy of GST. Academic institutions play a significant role in fostering research and innovation. They depend upon various donors who provide research grants and imposing GST on such grants would throttle innovation and research. It is hoped that the exercise is nipped at the bud through appropriate Circulars or Directions.

The writer is an advocate and tax consultant



ecently the World Trade Organization (WTO) released two important documents — (i) World Trade Statistics 2023; and (ii) World Trade Statistics 2023; and will be both contain detailed and apparently boring data tables and refrain from presenting any analysis, sifting through these documents are a number of interesting trends in the current global trade scenario emerge.

RECENT TRENDS
Traditionally, the first document, World
Trade Statistics 2023 highlights trends
in global merchandise trade and trade in
services on an annual basis. According to
this, merchandise trade and trade in
commercial services are showing a commercial services are showing a different trend for the year 2023! Specifically, the following trends are

Specifically, the following trends are worth noting:

"In volume terms, global merchandise trade declined by 1.2 per cent in 2023. The decline is sharper in terms of value, which contracted by 5 per cent in 2023. Apart from lower volumes, declining commodity prices, and exchange rate fluctuations could have led to this decline.

"On the other hand, in 2023, trade in commercial services serve by 0 per cent."

have led to this decline.

*On the other hand, in 2023, trade in commercial services grew by 9 per cent in value terms, led mostly by travel, computer services, research and development and business services. Higher global risk emanating from geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions and climate change related uncertainties led to high growth of the insurance services sector, which grew at 18 per cent in 2023.

*Overall, the combined value of international trade in goods and services has declined by 2 per cent in 2023.

The possible reasons behind this unusual slowdown of trade could be attributed to increasing geopolitical tensions and their impact on the shipping routes, growing protectionism across the world, a rise of unilateral policy measures taken by various countries and an incipient trend of fragmentation of international trade among various trade blocs.

It is also possible that high inflation coupled with some contractionary economic policy measures in some developed countries contributed to the

economic policy measures in some developed countries contributed to the decline in merchandise trade.

WHERE DOES INDIA STAND?

WHERE DOES INDIA STAND? Interestingly, in both merchandise trade and trade in services, India has improved its position in 2023. In merchandise exports, India was ranked 18th in 2022 with a market share of 1.8 per cent. In 2023, India's exports have declined to



Some disquieting trends in global trade

TRADE MATTERS. The WTO data reveal that the world is moving away from free trade and towards trade independence and self-sufficiency

become the 17th largest exporter in the world. In commercial services exports, India's rank moved from 8th in 2022 to 7th in 2023, with a marginal increase in its market share.

Thin in 2023, with a marginal increase in its market share. In 2023, India is ranked 2nd in ICT services exports in 2023 with exports growing at 13 per cent. Apart from the ICT services exports, India also features among the top 10 exporters of the following services subsectors: Other commercial services (4th), Personal, cultural and recreational services (5th), Construction services (7th), Financial services (9th) and Insurance and pension services (10th). The second report, World Tariff Profile 2024 provides comprehensive information about tariff and non-tariff measures (YTM) used by the WTO Member countries in 2023.

There are four main types of NTMS as

Member countries in 2023.

There are four main types of NTMS as per WTO: (i) trade remedial measures, such as, anti-dumping duties and countervailing duties; (ii) safeguard measures used by countries to

India can legitimately have an interventionist trade policy regime that uses tariffs and non-tariff measures to optimise its trade flows

temporarily restrict imports when there is an import surge; (iii) product standards, such as, the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards, used to protect human, animal, or plant life and health from specific risks, and (iv) technical barriers to trade (TBT). The report published data for the first two type of NTMs but not on SPS and TBT. This report shows that India has been one of the most prolific users (NTMs) in international trade. Specifically, for the calendar year, 2023, 186 anti-dumping investigations were conducted by the WTO member countries, and on 86 occasions anti-dumping measures were implemented.

The ton three countries, which porarily restrict imports when there

occasions anti-dumping measures wimplemented.
The top three countries which implemented maximum anti-dumpin measures against other exporting countries in 20.23 were: the US (14 measures), India (14 measures) and European Union (5 measures), India was also at the receiving end of anti-dumping measures imposed in 2023.

anti-dumping measures imposed in 2023.
Countervailing measures are imposed against subsidised exports which do not fulfil certain WTO legal requirements. In 2023, a total of 11 countervailing measures were imposed by WTO member countries.
Among these, India imposed three measures, and five were imposed by the US. India was also at the receiving end of these countervailing duties as three out of the total 11 were imposed against Indian exports. India has also been a

user of the WTO safeguard provisions in 2023. Out of the total six times such safeguard measures were used, India used it two times.

used it two times.

WHY NTMs?

There are a few possible reasons for India's usage of NTMs. First, India can legitimately have an active and interventionist trade policy regime that uses tariffs and NTMs to optimise its trade flows according to domestic requirements.

Second, India has a broad and diversified industrial base, so the demand for trade policy measures can be on the higher side.

Third, China's economic slowdown and demand compression have led to an aggressive export push by Chinese firms. To protect domestic producers from these artificially cheap Chinese exports, many countries, including India, use different trade policy measures, including NTMs. Overall, these data reprhaps in sync with the hypothesis that including NTMs. Overall, these data are perhaps in spw. with the hypothesis that globally, countries are focusing more on economic independence and self-sufficiency. This current policy ideology seems markedly different from the principles of comparative advantage, free trade, and global cooperation on which the globalization stood. Has at time come for the engraving of the perhaps of five trade in a time come for the engraving of

Has a time come for the engraving of the epitaph of free trade? Let us watch.

Pal is a Professor of Economics at the IIM Calcutta, and Ray is Director, NIBMPune. Views expressed are

thehindubusinessline.

TWENTY YEARS AGO TODAY.

September 5, 2004

We will soon gain mastery over inflation: PM

We will soon gain mastery over initiation: PM
A day after the release of official data showing initiation at a three-and-a-half-year
high of 8.17 per cent for the week-end August 21, the Prime Minister, Dr
Admonnban Singla, denitted that the price situation was a "matter of concern".
Addressing a press conference, Dr Singh attributed the rising inflation levels to a
combination of steep jump in global oil prices, concerns arising from late arrival
of monsoon, and "avoidable disruption" such as the truckers strike.

Rising input costs drive FMCG, food firms up the wall

Arnidst talk of severe pressure on margins, the FMCG and food companies have a new worry. This time it is the combined onslaught of steep rise in input costs of key raw materials, coupled with the 2 per cent cess levied in this year's Budget and the recent truckers' strike. And to top it all, there is the continuing worry over increasing global oil prices.

RBI proposes 'cluster approach' on SSI credit With a view to enhance credit to the SSI sector, the Reserve Bank of India has asked banks to adopt a "cluster-based" approach to cater to the diverse needs of small and medium industries.

Railways' shift away from futuristic projects is a concern

ntil recently, Indian Railways (IR) was adept at hyping its progress, especially by comparing the current government's decade with the previous one. Now IR mainly makes news for knee-jerk reactions to accidents, cancellations, and defensive measures.

manny makes news to knee-jerk reactions to accidents, cancellations, and defensive measures.

The policy shift from manufacturing only air-conditioned coaches to mostly non-air-conditioned coaches to mostly non-air-conditioned cones was abrupt, leaving the AC manufacturers high and fuy. The final blow to the plan for 150 passenger train pairs by private train operations came with the decision to re-evaluate and delay the public-private partnership. Additionally, the empowerment of divisions to undertake Gati Shakti projects was reassigned to the Construction wing, even as Railways' freight modal share has actually declined instead of the avowed increase. Meanwhile, IR proudly claims to be the world's only

fully-electrified "green" railway, while ignoring 5,000 surplus diesel locos and the irony that its increase in freight loading relies on record coal transportation, the most polluting fuel. IR's response to recent acidents has been inadequate. After media uproar, it hastily advertised vacancies for safety staff and impulsively decided to equip 10,000 locos with Kawach, although full benefits would flow only when the ground equipment is installed.

The Railways also announced peripheral measures like installing cameras with AI technology instead or using this technology for real-time alerts, formulation of unified rules and training that would specify precaution icase of failure of automatic signals for drivers, station masters, guards, pointsmen, etc.

for drivers, station masters, guards, pointsmen, etc. Another pressing matter is the growing perception that IR is retreating from the goals and reforms it set years ago. A glaring example of this is the aluminium train sets. Aluminium



trains have been in the news ever since Integral Coach Factory (ICF) issued a tender for 20 train sets in 2017—
named Train 20—with a view to deliver them in 2020. In 2018, however, the project was shelved. The issue resurfaced when IR issued a tender for 100 aluminium train sets, a bold move. Why aluminium? To improve energy efficiency of a train and even cost savings, it is imperative to reduce its weight by switching to a lighter material like aluminium.

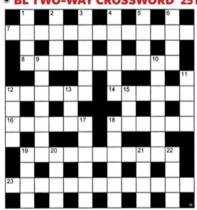
The tender showed the government's resolve for a quantum leap in railway technology. But this

euphoria was short-lived and IR recently announced that it had abandoned this tender because of high cost and lack of know-how and competition in India, after failed negotiations with the lowest bidder,

negotiations with the lowest bidder, Alstom.

The expected and offer prices differed by mere 3 per cent in the ₹30,000-crore project. After facing a backlash for pushing the *ellist* Vande Bharat trains while neglecting the needs of ordinary travellers, the Ministry seems to have lost the appettie for pursuing meaningful projects. The current environment, with its unprecedented railway investments, is highly conducive to large-scale technology acquisition and assimilation in facilities by the private sector. But if IR decides to walk away from futuristic projects, it would be a colossal step backward.

BL TWO-WAY CROSSWORD 2519



EASY

ACROSS storage unit (6,7) 08. Give proof 12. Domesticated llama (6) 14. Turn like a wheel (6) 16. Trumpet daffodil (6) 18. Small, light boats (6) 19. Chiefly (11) 23. Small-wheeled sovereignty (7) powered bikes (5-8) 10. Liable to cry (7) 23. Small-wheeled

DOWN care of (4) 02 Unshaken

resolute (4) 03. Table of business for meeting (6) 04. Thing of consequence (6) 05. Travel docu passport authorisation (4) 06. A pool, lake (4) 09. Title of

11. Muddle onfusion (4) 12. Bow (mus, It) (4) 13. Tin (3) 15. Tree (3)

17. Approach and address (6) 18. Soda-wate dispenser (6) 19. Swimr

20. Metal club (4) 21. Old stringed instrument (4) 22. Enclosed

NOT SO EASY

ACROSS

07. It holds office papers going o one to government ministers (6,7) 08. Show how modern state can be developed (11)

12. Silky cloth cap maybe in the style of its surroundings (6) 14. Turn, or return, to the Gallery (6) 16. No 12 Down could form a ring

round the sun (6) 18. Light boats one might kiss off, nothing being lost (6) 19. In the main, 'pp' is rendered in lyrical fashion (11)

23. Powered two-wheelers provide

DOWN

02. A stable business (4) 03. What's to be discu mation a District Attorney

holds (6) be of importance (6)

05. Passport endorsement is necessary to enter Virginia (4) 06. It is no more than a lake (4)

09. Penguin that measured 48 by 72 inches (7) 10. Rule fat out for the lachrymose (7) 11. Where servicemen eat a

 Quercus is all right if it has a heart (3)
 Approach and threaten one company in change of cast (6) 18. No ship can supply it with aerated-water in (6)

12. Violinist takes his bow

in a popular concert (4)

19. Put all resources together

for a lido (4) 20. Give up Japanese seaweed as a possible source of it (4)

13. Is able to give one a drinking-mug (3)

21. It took some pluck to use it as a waterproof seal (4) 22. Beam on mast measures thirty-six

SOLUTION: BL TWO-WAY CROSSWORD 2518

ACROSS 1. Dissimulate 7. Revolve 9. Vial 11. Nadir 12. Ponder 14. Prospective 18. Martin 20. Malar 22. Kink 23. Outlast 24. Remunerated DOWN 2. Invader 3. Meet 4. Tried 5. Prank 6. Clary 8. Lordship 10. Contempt 13. Pew 15. Village 16. Smoke 17. Broth 19. Rinse 21. Hope

thehindubusinessline.

Slow start

Incentives for vehicle scrappage need to be better

he vehicle scrappage policy, or the Voluntary Vehicle Modernisation Program (VVMP), has been a slow starter. After having been first proposed by the Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari in August 2015, the VVMP was launched last week. Automakers have agreed to provide discounts on purchase of a new vehicle against a scrapped one, with the concessions ranging from 1.25-3 per cent of the ex-showroom price for commercial vehicles (CVs) and 1.5 per cent of the ex-showroom price or ₹20,000, whichever is less, for passenger vehicles.



While the implementation is a good beginning, there is scope for improvement. In the nine years since it was mooted, the policy has seen three iterations. The original proposal put out in May 2016 said that vehicles (predominantly trucks) bought prior to March 31, 2005 (i.e., those older than 10 years then), or those below BS IV emission standards, would be eligible BS IV emission standards, would be eligible for scrappage incentives. This was diluted in 2018 by increasing the age of the vehicle to 20 years. The implementation date — set to 2020 then — didn't see light of day until the subject came up again in Budget 2021, where instead of age, vehicle fitness was replaced as the key criteria for mandatory

scrapping. Cut to 2024, formalisation of the scrapping infrastructure is gaining ground. Data from Parivahan Sewa of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways shows that 117 registered scrapping facilities which follow technologically advanced and environmentally safe processes as mandated by the government are now available, with 63 of them being operational across 17 States and UTs. About 45,000 applications for scrapping private vehicles have been received against which 35,000 have been scrapped as on date. With automated fitness tests becoming mandatory from October 1, 2024, onwards for CVs and PVs crossing a certain age, the launch of the VVMP hasn't come a day too soon. Vehicles which fail the test become eligible for scrapping. However, more clarity is needed on the status of the

existing fitness testing infrastructure.
For a policy that is predominantly voluntary, the carrots could've been better. There was mention of excise duty (later GST) concessions on the new vehicle bought in exchange, in the earlier versions of the policy. The latest one is silent on this aspect. Automakers too may have done too little. The 2021 scheme spoke of a 5 per cent discount by OEMs which has now been cut sharply, with caveats that it would be applicable only on select models, and for one or two years. The scheme can look at higher concessions for EVs. But lack of higher concessions for EVs. But lack of proper infrastructure for scrappage of EV batteries could do more harm than good to the environment. Getting old vehicles off the road now is a good start. But for the long-term, the government should adopt a more integrated approach towards meeting the broader goal of reducing vehicular emissions, rather than a piecemeal one.

POCKET



Tracking the pace of credit growth

YO-YOING. Growth was excessive during 2002-03 to 2013-14, cooled thereafter, only to pick up in the 2 years ending 2023-24



RANGARAJAN SAMBAMURTHY

ank credit, along with other important variables likes fiscal policy, industrial policy, investment and technology adoption, has implications for the real economy. Credit growth, though not sufficient, is a necessary condition for economic growth. But the pace and nature of credit growth when excessive and exuberant invariably ends up in credit losses and may even threaten financial stability. If the pace is suboptimal, it may end up in forgone real economy growth. Finding the right pace and content of credit growth is essential for sustained and consistent real economy growth. In fact, the relationship between credit and growth is the same as between money and growth. First, there is an accommodative role. As the economy grows, it needs more money or credit, People who only emphasise the accommodative role talk about the analogy that as a man grows, he needs pants of bigeer size. But by wearing

accommodative role talk about the analogy that as a man grows, he needs pants of bigger size. But by wearing pants of bigger size. But by wearing pants of bigger size, but the wearing pants of bigger size, but many reject the pure accommodative hypothesis. On the other hand, they argue that it can play also a stimulant role. But credit or money beyond a level can harm the economy. Against this background, bank credit growth over the last two decades is analysed.

Exuberance phase of credit growth:

Exuberance phase of credit growth: 2002-03 - 2007-08 (Table 1): The

2002-03 - 2007-08 (Table 1): The magnitude of exuberance can be gauged from the fact that the ratio of credit growth to nominal GDP growth reached as high as 2.2. A ratio of more than one may spell trouble with a lag.

Bank credit grew by t16 lash crore, from t6 lash core in FY 2003 to t22 lakh core in FY 2008. This was an increase of 266 per cent during this 5-year period as compared to an increase of 2.5 lash crore, representing an increase of 81 per cent during the earlier 5-year period ending 2002. This was an all-time high for several decades. for several decades.

ending 2002. This was an all-time high for several decades. Credit growth was more than double and even triple of real economy growth and far exceeded even nominal growth Major sectoral increases — infrastructure? Two sectors need special mention. Infrastructure finance, inherently risky, shot up from 20,000 crore to over ₹2 lakh core (900 per cent increase) and personal loans led by housing finance shot up from ₹63,000 crore to over ₹2 lakh crore (700 per cent) while the aggregate credit increased only by 265 per cent during

Year	Credit	Gross capital formation	GDP real	GDP nominal	Gross NPA	Inflation CPI
2002-03	26.9	26.8	4.0	7.7	8.8	4.0
2003-04	18.4	29.0	8.2	12.0	7.2	3.5
2004-05	31.6	35.2	7.5	14.1	5.1	3.8
2005-06	31.8	36.4	9.5	14.0	3.3	4.4
2006-07	28.5	36.0	9.7	17.1	2.5	6.7
2007-08	23.0	39.1	9.3	15.1	2.2	7.9
						TABLE 2
2008-09	17.8	38.9	6.7	12.6	2.2	8.0
2009-10	17.1	39.8	8.4	15.5	2.4	12.4
2010-11	21.3	39	8.9	19.9	2.2	10.4
2011-12	16.8	38.7	6.7	14.4	2.8	8.4
2012-13	14	33.8	4.5	13.8	3.2	10.2
2013-14	14.2	33.8	6.3	13.0	3.8	9.5
						TABLE 3
2014-15	9.3	33.5	7.8	11.0	4.3	5.8
2015-16	9.1	32.1	8.1	10.5	7.5	4.9
2016-17	5.2	32	7.1	11.8	9.3	4.5
2017-18	10.2	33.9	6.5	11.0	11.2	3.6
2018-19	13.4	33.6	6	10.6	9.1	3.4
2019-20	6.1	36.4	3.9	6.4	8.2	4.8
2020-21	5.5	30.4	-4.2	-0.14	7.3	6.2
2021-22	9.7	27.9	8	18.4	5.8	5.5
						TABLE 4
2022-23	15.3	31.4	6.6	16.1	3.9	6.7
2023-24	15.0	34.0*	7.6	10.2	2.9	5.4

his 5-year period ending FY 2008. Initially, monetary policy was accommodative. Inflation which was low initially, started inching up from 2006-07 onwards. Subsequently, during 2006, RBI had tightened monetary policy by enhancing risk weights and provision requirements, in order to rein in credit growth from 30s to 20s. But it took a couple of years for these measures to deliver some results. The period also witnessed high gross capital formation, surpassing 39 per cent. Real GDP growth was very high, recording around 9.5 per cent for three years in a row starting 2005-06. Gross NPAs, which were high at 8.8 per cent in 2002-03, were on the decline reaching a low of 2.2 per cent.

low of 2.2 per cent.

Excessive credit growth: 2008-09-2013-14 (Table 2): Though credit growth was less than the earlier period in relative terms, its ratio to nominal GDP continued to be above one indicating credit excesses. In absolute terms credit grew by ₹34 lakh crore to ₹60 lakh crore during this period against ₹16 lakh crore during the previous

Finding the right pace and content of credit growth is essential for sustained and consistent real economy growth

period. But the growth rate was only 130 per cent against 265 per cent during the previous period.

Sectoral credit flows: Credit expansion was evenly distributed across all three sectors — agriculture, industry and personal loans. All these three sectors witnessed around 100 per cent increase in line with overall credit expansion. Industry credit doubled from ₹10 lakh crore to ₹20 lakh crore, personal loans from ₹5.5 lakh crore to ₹10 lakh crore.

Infrastructure finance — push by public sector banks: However, Infrastructure credit grew much faster by a huge 240 per cent from ₹2.5 lakh crore in 2008-09 to ₹8.5 lakh crore to \$20 lakh crore \$20

crore in 2008-09 to 88.5 lakh crore in 2013-14. Infrastructure finance grew by awhopping 38 per cent in just one year—that is, during 2010-11. Power sector accounted for a high of 50 per cent. Inflation shot up to as high as 12.4 per cent by 2009-10. Even though gross NPAs look comfortable at 3.8 per cent. restructured advances were as high as 7 per cent, taking the impaired advances to as high as 10.8 per cent. A new phase of slowdown of credit growth began in 2011-12.

2011-12. Credit growth lower than nominal GDP growth: 2014-15 - 2021-22 (Table 3): In a reversal of the earlier trend, the ratio of credit growth to nominal GDP was less than one, indicating a cooling of

credit growth. This was the slowest growth rate in decades. The deceleration of credit growth which started during 2011 continued during the most of this period. During the 5-year period ending 2015-20 (excluding Covid affected years), credit grew by 38 lakh crore to 103 lakh crore, representing a growth rate of only 60 per cent when compared to previous two five-year periods' growth rates of 265 per cent and 111 per cent, respectively. This period was marked by intense supervisory action by way of AQR (Asset Quality Review), Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) on over 12 banks and recognition of several big ticket NPAs and their resolution. All these measures impeded credit growth, mostly of public sector banks.

Sectoral credit flows — 2015-22: While the overall credit grew by only 84 per cent over the 7-year period, the personal loans segment grew by a whopping 200 per cent from 12 lakh crore. This sector surpassed the industrial sector, which grew by a mere 23 per cent from 26 lakh crore to 32 lakh crore. Thanks to regulatory forbearance and the government's ECLG scheme, MSME sector credit more than doubled from \$4.7 lakh crore to 12 lakh crore. Infrastructure finance continued to grow, but at a slower pace, registering a growth of 33 per cent from 120 lakh crore to 121 lakh crore. Infrastructure finance continued to grow, but at a slower pace, registering a growth of 33 per cent from 26 10 lakh crore to 12 lakh crore. When the proper son loans segment green by 2017-18, as regulatory forbearances were withdrawn. Exuberance has shifted from corporate lending to the personal loan segment.

Resumption of credit growth: 2022-23 and 2023-2024 (Table 4): After almost 11 years of deceleration, credit growth had picked up during these two years with an annual growth rate of

Accomptions of earling fowers almost 11 years of deceleration, credit growth and picked up during these two years with an annual growth rate of around 15 per cent (Tüble 4). Outstanding credit grew from €143 lak rore in 2022-23 to ₹164 lakh crore during 2023-24. But again, credit to nominal GDP growth at around 1.5 indicates probable credit excess. Sectoral flow: The personal loans segment continued its high growth rate, crediting an increase of nearly \$1 per cent from ₹35 lakh crore in FY 2022 to ₹35 lakh crore in FY 2024. Infra sector grew by a mere 8 per cent from ₹12 lakh

₹53 lakh crore in FY 2024. Infra sector grew by a mere 8 per cent from ₹12 lakh crore to ₹13 lakh crore, and industrial sector grew only 11 per cent from ₹32 lakh crore to ₹36 lakh crore. Outstanding personal loans, at ₹53 lakh crore, far exceed industrial sector loans of ₹36 lakh crore. The growth of personal loans may be unsustainable.

To be concluded

Rangarajan is former Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister and former Governor, Reserve Bank of India; and Sambamurthy is formerly Director and CEO, IDR8T

Rising incomes driving inflows into financial assets?

This is unlikely the case. Rather, it's excess money in the system, thanks to the RBI, that's finding its way into financial markets

A few days ago a deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India made an interesting observation that household incomes in India were rising. He said while explaining why net financial savings were increasing. It was a throwaway remark, made casually, to explain why more money was flowing into the stocks and bonds markets. I do wonder, however, if it would stand unto serious exerting. Not

markers. I do wonder, however, if it would stand up to serious serutiny. Not the rising flow into financial assets. That's not in doubt. But rising incomes? Really? A country's incomes rise if employment and/or productive work increases; or if wages rise; or if both happen. All the data, however flawed and incomplete their conceptual basis and collection may be, suggest that employment is not increasing, at least not at a rate that would be consistent with a huge increase in incomes from with a huge increase in incomes from salaries. I don't know how it works in the government sector but in the private sector salaries are either stagnant or rising at a snail's pace. Work, or self-employment, is doubtless increasing but we don't know how much of it is sufficiently productive to leave net savings. I doubt it's very much because net savings are defined as what's left after you have paid all your bills and debt.

Au contraire, if these incomes are rising as fast as the deputy governor thinks, there may be a case for making the recipients pay more tax. It can't be both—rising incomes and low tax rates for such a large cohort.

A DIFFERENT TAKE

A DIPPERENT TAKE
I have a different explanation for the increase in inflow into financial assets. It's simply that there is now more money in the system — you can check the numbers — some of it is finding its way into the financial markets. In June 2004 total money supply was 720.7 lakh crore. In June 2014 it was 798 lakh crore, In June 2014 it was 798 lakh crore, In June 2014, 2575 lakh crore, Irest my case. Thus, it's not rising incomes but the Bilt hat is the enabler. Ok so what, you might ask. A growing economy needs more money.

True, but if you read the magisterial work by Carmen Reinhart and Kenneth



Rogoff who analyse 800 years of financial crises, this has been known to happen for at least 800 years. More money in the system has inevitably led to more money into the financial markets, which boom. Then they crash. The deputy governor also said "...physical savings have also risen in the post-randemic years to over 12 per cent

"...physical savings have also risen in the post-pandemic years to over 12 per cent of GDP and could rise further..." He further said, "the private corporate sector has drastically reduced its net borrowings from the rest of the economy (from close to 9 per cent of GDP in 2007-08 to under 1 per cent

more recently) reflecting a combination of rising internal accruals and subdued

of rising internal accruals and subdued capacity creation."
So which is the dominant factor?
Rising "internal accruals" meaning higher profits or "subdued capacity creation?! If they are making more money (probably by reducing their wage bills) why aren't they creating more capacity? Because, my dear Watson, incomes can't rise if fresh investment doesn't happen. Indeed, if incomes don't rise, demand doesn't either, and there's no point in adding more capacity. In fact, rise, demand doesn't either, and there's no point in adding more capacity. In fact, in such a prolonged situation of depressed demand real incomes can actually decline because nominal incomes rise very slowly.

This is what's happening in India now. If not, the BJP would not have suffered such as etback in the last general election.

The entire financial assets market. The entire financial assets market, many analysts worry, is functioning on hope over experience. I agree. History shows that experience always triumphs The RBI should be mindful of this, and not start believing that incomes are rising quickly enough to leave a lot of surplus for sticking into financial asset.

■ LETTERS TO EDITOR Send your letters by email to bleditor@thehindu.co.in or by post to "Letters to the Editor", The Hindu Business Line, Kasturi Buildings, 859-860, Anna Salai, Chennai 600002.

Addressing hunger

Addressing hunger
This refers to Hunger free world by
2030. A mirage ("Esptember 4).
Having enough food to keep our
bellies full and bodies running is a
fundamental right, not a privilege.
Although hunger is an incredibly
personal issue, its impact inhibits
productivity, slows economic
growth, and places unnecessary
burdens on health and education
systems. Also, as seen in famine
stussions, many latatities associate
with hunger aren'd use to hunger
itseff, but also due to mainutrition.
While hunger is not caused by food While hunger is not caused by food shortage alone, the combination of

hunger by 2030, urgent coordinated action and policy solutions are imperative to address entrenched inequalities, transform food systems,

Credit-deposit gap

to win back depositors' (September 4). Banks' deposit growth in FY24 was well below the rise in credit, forcing them to meet the funding gap through higher-cost certificates

of deposit (CDs). The interest rate of deposit (CDs). The interest rate offered by public sector banks isn't attractive, hence their deposit growth rate is falling. Smaller private banks, on the other hand, offer flexibility and higher FD rates. India's big banks may continue to face deposit crunch if the government and the RBI insists on lower lending rates. Banks should be allowed the freedom to determine the deposit eedom to determine the deposit id credit rates to play effectively in e market

Anti-rape Bill

This is with reference to 'West Bengal Assembly passes 'historic'

anti-rape Bill seeking capital punishment (September 4). This is a step in the right direction, as the crimes against women have continued unabated even after the stringent provision of life imprisonment stipulated by the Nirbhaya Act 2013. However, what needs to be noted is that it is not just the existence of the most stringent laws that would bring about the real change, but it is a change in the mindset of the men and patriarchal attitude of the society, which treats woman as property of man, that would bring the desired woman as property of man, that would bring the desired the stransformation.

Kosaraju Chandramouli

Boosting insurance

The report "Grievances in the life insurance sector are about the product itself: IRDAI member" product itself: IRDAI member' (September 4), has not a come a day too soon. The fact that the IRDAI member is aware and abreast of the flawed products coupled with 'misselling, at an alarming level, it should lead to concerted efforts aimed at streamlining product portfolios and process of sales, for the industry to deliver on its mandate. Health and life insurance mandate. can gain a lot by increasing

ISSN 0071 - 7518

n and Printed by Praveen Someshwar at HT Media Ltd. Plot No.8, Udyog Vihar, Greater Noida Distt, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.201306, on behalf o

The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

India's export hurdles

Need to wrest the initiative from rivals

HE World Bank's (WB) latest India Develop-ment Update has some good news to offer: The Indian economy continues to grow at a healthy pace despite challenging global conditions.
The WB has upwardly revised the growth forecast for the country's economy to 7 per cent from the earlier projection of 66 per cent in the current financial year. The not-so-good news is that India is losing out to competi-tors like Vietnam and Bangladesh among low-cost manu-facturing export hubs. As per the WB, India needs to diver-sify its export basket and leverage global value chains to

say is export casset and reversing good water chains to reach its \$1-tillion merchandise exports goal by 2030.

The report's unwritten message for India is that there is no room for complacency on the trade front. It is obvious that the 'Make in India' push is not really trans-lating into a 'Make for the world' success story. And what won't be music to the Modi government's ears is what won't be music to the Modi government's ears is the fact that the nation's share in the global exports of apparel, leather, textiles and footwear has declined from 4.5 per cent in 2013 to 3.5 per cent in 2022. The corresponding share of Bangladesh touched 5.1 per cent in 2022, while that of Vietnam reached 5.9 per cent. No less worrisome is India's increasing trade deficit (the difference between imports and exports) with China. Amid the military stalemate in eastern Ladakh, Beijing is upstaging Dehi with its no-holds barred economic music-flexing. From umbrellas to musical items and toys, there is no stopping the influx of Chinese goods into India.

Political and economic instability in Bangladesh has given India an opportunity to regainlost ground. The key is to reduce production costs and improve productiving to reduce production costs and improve productiving to set and improve productiving to the side of the set of the control of the control

is to reduce production costs and improve productivity without compromising on quality. Considering India's reductance to be part of mega trade blocs, a greater emphasis on bilateral Free Trade Agreements with Western and Gulf nations is the best bet to counter the Viet ese-Chinese challenge

A desperate step

Bengal Bill mandates death penalty for rapists

a dramatic response to the public outcry follow ing the recent rape and murder of a young doctor in Kolkata, the West Bengal Assembly has passed the Aparajita Anti-Rape Bill, which mandates the death penalty for rapists if the victim dies or is left in a vegetative state. The swift passage of this Bill comes amid protests from the public, demanding justice and accountability from the Mamata Banerjee-led government. The Bill seeks to reassure citizens of the state's

ment. The Bill seeks to reassure citizens of the state's commitment to protecting women.

However, it has sparked a debate about whether such measures are merely a politically motivated reaction to silence the growing unrest. Party leaders continue to face a public backlash. Comments comcontinue to face a public backlash. Comments com-paring protesting doctors to 'butchers' have only intensified public ire, further alienating the govern-ment from those it seeks to placate. Also, the fact that the new Bill is in conflict with the Centre's Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which does not prescribe capital punishment for rape, creates a legal conun-drum. Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have strug-eled to secure the presidential assert on similar. drum. Another Process and sharnasster have saring gled to secure the presidential assent on similar Bills. Plus, even as the death penalty has not proved effective as a deterrent, the irreversible nature of such a punishment raises human rights concerns.

The passing of the Aparajita Bill is a desperate move by the TMC government, aiming to restore public that the process of the

lic faith and regain control over the narrative. Whether this legislation will bring the desired change or simply add to the long list of unimplemented laws remains to be seen. As the Bill awaits approval by the Governor and President, the broader question of its efficacy and ethical implications looms large. The state would do well to focus on improving the inves-tigative and judicial processes, ensuring a swift and fair trial and addressing the systemic issues that lead to such heinous crimes

ON THIS DAY...100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1924

Unity of parties

Unity of parties

I is a matter for sincere congratulations that two of the most forceful personalities (Mahatma Gandhi and Annie Besant) in India are now agreed as to what we for our part have always regarded as the fundamental condition of effective political advance in India, namely, the unity of all political parties, not in the sense of the elimination of all differences among them, but of their readiness to subordinate such differences to the paramount need for united action with a view to the attainment of the common goal. Of one of the two, it cannot, indeed, be said that he has ever been under a delusion in this matter. The success of non-cooperation with the bureaucracy, he has said again and again, depends upon the fullest cooperation among the cess of non-cooperation with the bureaucracy, he has said again and again, depends upon the fullest cooperation among the people themselves. Unhappily, in actual practice, he as well as his immediate lieutenants, not to speak of the rank and file of the great party of which he has now for four years been the recognised head, have laid the bulk of their emphasis upon cooperation among several political parties. So far as the last is concerned, they, like other political parties, have occasionally talked of the need for unity, but it has always or generally been unity on their own terms, that is to say, on a basis on which no unity is possible among men of conviction and of self-respect. In fairness to Gandhi himself, it must be added that unlike most others of all parties, he has also publicly enjoined it upon his party to put its opponents at ease, an injuction, it must be his party to put its opponents at ease, an injuction, it must be sorrowfully admitted, which some of his followers have hon-oured more in the breach than in the observance.

Old wine in a new biotech bottle

Biotechnology for Economy, Environment & Employment Policy silent on timelines, investments



DINESH C SHARMA

LIMATE energy transition, waste management, sustainability, agri-cultural productivity, the need for new health tools and much more. India can not only address these pressing challenges through the application of histochynlogy but can do suchile. biotechnology but can do so while generating jobs and contributing generating jobs and contributing to the national economy. This is what the Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment (BioE3) Policy released by the government on August 31 would have us believe. The only caveat is that the policy is silent on the timefamme, the quantum of investment and human resources required, the possible number or types of jobs that unber or types of jobs that unber or types of jobs that goals, and the pathway to achieve the goal.

achieve the goal.

The 'vision' of the policy is to
"set Bharat at the forefront of the "set Bhant at the forefront of the future that is more sustainable and responsive to global chal-lenges by accelerating and har-nessing biomanufacturing solu-tions that encompass diverse bioeconomic activities while safe-guarding environmental and cli-mate impacts." The 'goal of the policy is 'lo fast-track innovation-to-technology' by weaving togeth-erfragmented activities under the umbrella of biomanufacturing and to incentivise 'concrete and to incentivise "concrete options to build a sustainable future". The overall 'objective' is to present a framework to en

to pussent a finmework to ensure the adoption of cutting-edge technologies and accelerate the development and production of biobased high-value products. While presenting the policy. Department of Biotechnology (DBT) Secretary Rajesh Golchale declared that the goal was the 'industrialisation of biology' and



making India a global leader in has a good leader in this field. If one cuts the fluff, all that the policy document indi-cates is the government's intent to promote biotechnology-based to promote biotechnology-based industry and the use of new tools like digitalisation, artificial intel-ligence and machine learning. If that is so, there is nothing new here because the last policy dehere because the last policy doc-ument the DBT released in 2021

 National Biotechnology Development Strategy (2021-25) — said precisely the same thing but it as backed with timelines, fina

was backed with timelines, finan-cial targets and clear pathways.

The goal set in 2021 by the DBT
was to develop a biotechnologi-led 'Ronwledge and innovation-driven bioeconomy' and make India a 'global biomanufacturing hub' by 2025. This was to be achieved by building a skilled workforce and enabling infra-structure for industry like bio-foundries, and incentives to the industry for developing and pro-industry for developing and proindustry for developing and pro-ducing affordable products. The thrust areas identified in 2021 thrust areas identified in 2021 were climate change, food security, green energy, waste management, etc. The list has been repeated in the 2024 document, but the DBT has cleverly made no mention of previous policies and strategies to avoid questions being asked about missed goals. The only follow-up action since 2021 is a new scheme to promote Before embarking upon building a large-scale biotech industry, it would be prudent to develop a robust. autonomous and statutory regulatory system.

bio-foundries announced in the

bio-foundries announced in the 2024-25 Budget. In the past four decades, biotechnology has demonstratied eit spotential in applications ranging from new vaccines and novel crop varieties to environmental cleanup using microbes. Indian policymakers recognised its potential early on, establishing a dedicated government department for its promotion in ing a dedicated government department for its promotion in 1986. The DBT, in its formative years, focused on building research and education capabilities, which has made India a significant player in this field.

However, the biotech-based industry was slow to pick up due to reasons such as a lack of venture capital and an enabling environment. Whatever industry developed was not a result of the DBT's programmes. The poster

boy of the Indian biotech indusboy of the Indian biotech indus-try, Biocon, predates the forma-tion of the DBT, and other pio-neers like Shantha Biotech and Bharat Biotech took root with the help of risk financing by another government body, the Technolo-ey Development Board. gy Development Board.

In the 2000s, the governments of Karnataka and then undivid-

ed Andhra Pradesh rolled out their policies that gave incen-tives to the biotech industry. The success of the Genome Valley success of the Genome Valley and the IKP Knowledge Park in and the IKP Knowledge Park in Hydenabad are shining examples of a state-sponsored technology duster developing with the active participation of the private sector. It was only in 2012 that the DBT established a commercial arm for industry promotion — the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council. The government should boost the industrial base in biotechnology by leveraging existing

ogy by leveraging existing strengths and learning from the experience. However, the new policy does not mention successful models like the Genome Val-ley or IKP Knowledge Park Instead, it has rehashed the same ful models like the Genome Val-ley or IKP Knowledge Park. Instead, it has rehashed the same concept and given it a new name (Mulankur Bio-Enabler Hub). These hubs, the policy says, will augment discovery and transla-tional research' and 'support facilities for pilot scale and precommercial scale research'. This is what the functional technology clusters are doing and have suc-cessfully incubated firms that have grown to become billion-dollar companies.

While urweiling a grand utopian vision of solving all problems, the policy underplays the key role of regulation (it calls regulation a roadblock), the need to invest in developing technical manpower and boosting state funding for fundamental research. Regulation is critical as biomanufacturing is all about genetically modified organisms. At present, regulation is fragmented and opaque. The Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India Bill has been in cold storage since 2013. Before embarking upon building a large-scale biotechindustry, it would be prudent to develop a robust, autonomous and statutory regulatory system. While unveiling a grand utopian

develop a robust, autonomous and statutory regulatory system.

The DBT Secretary talks about a 'new industrial revolution' fuelled by biotechnolog, like the much celebrated IT Revolution. He should remember that the communication revolution was triggered not by a policy but by the government's resolve to develop a digital telephone exchange from scratch with a exchange from scratch with a committed investment and a tight deadline. In the same way, it tight deadline. In the same way, it was the state-promoted Software Technology Parks scheme that led to an exponential growth of the software industry and the TT Revolution. Decisive government actions are more important than policy pronouncements. Public policies are supposed to be guiding documents for responsible governance. They can be forward-looking and aspirational but should have clearly laid out objectives, well-defined timerames and an understanding of challenges.

tives well-defined timeframes and an understanding of challenges. The DET, which adhered to this time tested template in the past, decided to deviate from it while preparing the new policy. Being a scientific department, the least it could have done was to make the policy logical, evidence-based and antional. For a policy with 'economy' and 'employment' in its title and as prime focus, it is vague, ambiguous and full of rhetoric.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Biotechnology is the key to solving many of the world's most pressing problems. - Bill Gates

Soldier, teacher rolled into one

I cannot tell for sure when Sam uncle became a part of my family, because he had been there for as long as I can remember, an epitome of integrity, sincerity, discipline and patriotism — values that all parents would like their children to imbibe. He had the most unobtrusive way of entering a storytelling session with us children's curious query: 'And Sam uncle?' One evening, my younger brother came home in tears with a bruised knee. As my mother comforted him, father's commanding voice called out from the next room, 'Send him here.' The child imped off. 'What happened' 'dad asked. He added, 'You fell. got hurt and came home crying, didn't you?' After a pause, patting his back, father exclaimed, 'Arre, beta. Soldiers face bullets! And do you think they come home crying?' The little one looked mystified and asked, 'And Sam uncle?' Did he face bullets too?' 'Dad replied, 'Yes, he was badly wounded on the Arakan front. But did he flinch? No way!'
'And you?'

'And you?'
'Yes, I was also at the Arakan front,' he said. 'Now run out to

'Mes, I was also at the Arakan front,' he said. 'Now run out to play. Games will make you healthy, strong and tall.'
'Like Sam uncle,' my brother said and ran out. This was our first lesson about the importance of outdoor activities. Sam uncle's magic had worked wonders. From then on, our Arakan adventure stories started, 'Sam uncle became an invincible hero in our eyes, a symbol of courage, leadership and man management—the lowing appellation 'Sam Bahadur' speaking volumes about the affection of his soldiers.

Father was a master storyteller, with a treasure trove of war experiences, adventures and tales of Indian war heroes. His stories were vivid and engaging, he coloured our imagination and conveyed valuable lessons without being preachy. His stories and Sam uncle's influence have had a profound impact on our lives, as the two soldiers were our exemplary teachers, each in his own way.

impact on our lives, as the two soldiers were our exemplary teachers, each in his own way. Decades rolled by, The 'Sam uncle' of our imagination assumed a personality in 2023, with the movie Sam Bahadur that we watched with moist eyes, filled with pride and nostalgia. We felt proud of the Army; remembering the good old days and cherishing the memories of those story-telling sessions, we silemity thanked Sam uncle and father for those meaningful childhood days.

And then came the moment of vindication when my niece sent a video of her daughter dressed as Sam Bahadur—with the cap and moustache and the baton, giving a solo performance in the school programme. Sam uncle's legacy continues to inspire the third generation—a testament to the power of storytelling and the footprints great men leave on the sands of time.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Govt shouldn't misuse its power Apropos of the editorial Brakes on bulldozer; the Supreme Court's proposal tolay down guide-lines to be implemented across the county-to-ensure that the houses of those accused of a crime are not nazed illegally is welcome. It is imperative to make sure that all demolitions stay within the

legal ambit. The powers that be must not misuse their authority in a rush to punish those pertheir authority in a rush to punish those per-ceived guilty of certain offences. They are sup-posed to uphold the law, not break it. State gov-ernments don't need to take such heavy-handed measures to ensure strict en

Rein in mob justice

Refer to the editorial 'digilante justice', the pastfew years have seen a sharprise in the inci-dents of cow vigilantism. These self-pro-claimed custodians of the animal considered sacred in Hinduism don't hesitate to take matters into their hands at the drop of a hat. They don't think twice before thrashing or ever don't think twice before thrashing or even ynching a person on the mere suspicion of cow smuggling. If the government fails to rein in this menace on priority, it can set a dangerous precedent. Today, if such goons can treak the law on the pretext of protecting cows, tomor-row, members of other communities may car-ry out lynchings on some other filmsy ground. YUVRAJ, ZIRAKPUR

Crack down on vigilante groups

With reference to the editorial Vigilante justice; incidents of cow vigilantism are reported from different parts of the country from time to time. But the menace has grown particularly serious in northern states. The failure of the state governments concerned to crack down on the perpetrators is telling. Such inaction has the perpetrators is teiling, such inaction has only emboldened these anti-social elements further. These self-styled protectors of the cow go around terrorising common people safe in the knowledge that they will be treated with kid gloves. It is time for the authorities to crack the whip to restore a sense of law and order.

ANTHONY HENRIQUES, MUMBAI

Need a change in mindset

Refer to the report 'Bengal passes Bill for death to rape convicts'; the horrific Kolkata rape-mur-der has struck fear in the minds of women across

the country especially those who do night shifts. The surge incrimes against women neflects poorly on our society. The government can bring in a hundred different laws torein in such crimes. But the most question is: when will the kind of men committing sexual violence understand the importance of consent and respecting others' dignity? It is, a shapes that confellation murches dignity? It is a shame that candlelight marches, protests and reforms have failed to rouse people. Change begins at home. Families must instil good values in their children at an early age if they ant to make a difference

AKSHITA WADHWA, JAMMU CITY

"

No country for women

No country for women Apropos of 'Bengal passes Bill for death to ape convicts'; the passage of the Bill, which comes in the wake of massive protests sparked by the Kolkata hornor, is a step in the right tirection. But will it change the status quo? Did the nation not draw any lesson from the gruesome 2012 Nirbhaya case? The need of the hour is to enforce the existing laws strictly er than bring in fresh legislation that bare rather than bring in fresh legislation that barely offers anything new. Successive governments have failed to address the issue of
women's safety. And hence, there has been no
let-up in incidents of sexual violence against
the fairer sex. If anything, such cases have
only grown more common. Collective efforts
will go a long way towards making India more
safe for girls and women.

KIRTI WADHAWAN, KANPUR

Don't deny justice

Don't deny justice
President Droupadi Murmu's call to end the
'culture of adjournments' in our judiciary is significant, particularly in the context of the delay in
justice delivery in the 1964 anti-Sikh nots case.
Around four decades since the carnage, countless victims and their families still await justice.
The move to finane charges against Jagdish
Tytler offers a glimmer of hope. But the longdelayed order should not be seen as a victory,
Justice stilleludes the victims. The Congressparty's reluctance to act against not-tainted leaders
is deeply disturbing. Justice must not be held
hostage to political calculations. The judiciary
has a unique opportunity to reaffirm that no
amount of power or privilege can shield wrongamount of power or privilege can shield wrong doers. It is high time that justice was serv

GURDEV SINGH, BY MAIL

Letters to the Editor, typed in double space, should not exceed the 200-word limit These should be cogently written and can be sent by e-mail to: Letters@tribunemail.com

Chinese handshake costing Pak dear in Balochistan



LT GEN SANJIV LANGER (RETD)

ECENT attacks on multiple targets in Pak-istan's Balochisistan's Balochistan escalation in hostilities. The attacks were a consequence of festering problems and the damage to Balochistan's socio-cultural and economic fibric. A major reason for the attacks was the CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Cortiol of desire to run an ambitious communications corridor from Xnjiang to Gwacher through Balochistan, a move not supported by residents of the province. dents of the province.

A close ally of China for

decades, Pakistan has sought to use the Chinese largesse to address many of its problems. While their India-centred agenda has several convergences Pakistan hoped that China would align with it against India. A review of the period since 1947 reveals that while China's diplomatic and mili tary support to Pakistan may have been overfly nuanced on occasions, its covert facilitation ge military supplies a to Pakistan's oper ntral to Pakistan's opera-nal capability and vital for kistan's missile, nuclear

Unfortunately, strategic relations between unequals demand concessions from the less strong partner. From the act of ceding the Shaks gam valley of Kashmir to Chi na in 1963, based on a spe the hosting of the CPEC and

cious boundary settlement, to the hosting of the CPEC and virtually surrendering control of northern Gilgit, the list of Pakistan's strategic give-aways to China is long.

Enabling the Chinese to reach the high waters of the Ambian Sea through the Khunjerab Pass on the Kanaloram mountains up to the pandar mountains up to the pandar mountains up to the pandar promises to transform Pakistan with a goal of 2.3 million jobs, 2-25 per cent additional growth and an enormous upgrade of rood, mil industrial and electrical facilities. For China, its 12,000 Amol transportation journey from the Gulfgets reduced to 2.508 km, with a saving of about \$2 billion a year fearest and the convenient of prosverient of prosverient estiing of about \$2 billion a year (according to present esti-mates). It also negates China's Malacca dilemma and furthers its ambition to have a base in the Arabian Sea. The heart of the CPEC projects lies in Balochistan, a province that has never been integrated and For Balochis, their identity, autono my, human rights abuse by the Pakistani state and the e tion of economic gains without returns remain major trou-

Historically, Pakistan has cho-sen alliances mostly based on



security and development related priorities. The country's engagement with the US has given it a slew of advantages. Pakistan's centrality to the conflicts in Afghanistan, coupled with its own convoluted prioriwith its own convoluted priori-ies, however, left it more dividdeprived. Its flawed vision of using covertentities to get lever age in Afghanistan and seek strategic depth has unravelled Consequently, insecurity pre vails in the region, including Afghanistan. In its pursuit of powerful allies like the US and China, Pakistan has neglected to integrate the western o integrate the western provinces and their people. A complex and twisted issue

that has fomented resentmen that has formented resentment among Afghans, Pathans and Balochis is the Punjabi central-ism and exceptionalism. Fur-ther, Pakistan has always pre-ferred to use military force to deal with resistance move ments instead of focusing on reconciliation. This has caused the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Baloch move ments to converge in resisting the Pakistani approach. In February 2022, then Pak-istani Interior Minister Sheikh

Rasheed Ahmad officially acknowledged this reality. Lat er, in November 2022, ill-fated talks with the TTP collapsed. Five main Baloch nationalist groups have seldom been approached for reconciliation. The brutal killing of Akbar Bugti, a Baloch leader, in 2006 by the Pakistani army marked a definitive break for the Balochis. For Pakistan, pursu-ing powerful and demanding ing powerful and demanua-foreign powers while lettin deminternal fractures widen

At 11,317, the year 2009 saw he highest number of fatali-

flict in Pakistan. The number slumped to 365 in 2019 due to military measures and its focus on Afghanistan. However, since the beginning of 2020, there has been a clear upswing in violence and death toll, with the number upswing in violence and death toll, with the number (1,502) peaking to a six-year high in 2023. In the current year, the toll stands at 1,240. In the 2023, Khyber Palkhtunkhwa and Balochistan accounted for 90 per cent of all the fatalistands and per cent of all attacks in Pakistan Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan saw a surge of 54 per cent and 63 per cent, respectively, over 2021. In the current year, so far, 92 per cent of all fatalises in Pakistan have taken place in these two regions. Operationally, it is evident that the Baloch groups have benefited from the shared knowledge, tactics and combat orientation of the TTP. Both Baloch nationalists and the TTP have been aggressively foreigned or 156 current of the cu

the TTP have been aggres sively focusing on difficult targets like the army, police coast guard, high-ranking officials as well as Chinese nking nationals and assets. They have also claimed respons bility for the downing of a GOC XII Corps helicopt August 2022, a crash that killed all those on board. The RIHED ALL THOSE ON BOARD. The areas around Quetta have been wisely left to the TTP. Both have benefited from the International Security Assistance Force/NATO Assistance Force/NATO equipment, left behind by the NATO forces when they

in 2021. The advantage of secure bases in Afghanistan is immense and makes difficult the pursuit of strategic depth by the Pakistani establishment.

The recent attacks on the death anniversary of Akbar Bugti carried a distinct mes-sage — from brutal assaults on

sage—from brutal assaults on security and police personnel to an infrastructure strike in Bolan and ethnic targeting of civilians. They undersoonel the ability to attack Punjabis at will and strike at the vital Bolan commercial connectivity. The Paldistan security establishment inthe region is headed by a three-star officer. The force component is assessed by its nine infantry buttalions, six police wings and several civil strike infantry buttalions, six police wings and several civil surred force units. The Paldistan Maritime Security Agency openties in ports and coastal areas. It reportedly also has areas. It reportedly also has seacraft from Pakistan and Chi na There are always large num bers of Chinese nationals and workers in the project areas

These attacks present a compelling challenge to the establishment While intelligence and opera tional imperatives are signif-icant, they will be impacted icant, they will be impacted by the popular local support, secure bases and the will-o'-the-wisp tactics of the Baloch quintet. By pushing the chinese agenda in an insecure environment, Pakistan seeks to use fire to quieten a firestorm — whatever the outcome, the country is fated to be burnt by it.

Assembly polls ignite J&K's hopes for restoration of statehood

By pushing the

Chinese agenda

in an insecure

environment,

Pakistan seeks to

use fire to quieten

a firestorm.



DANISH YOUSUF RESEARCH ASSISTANT, CENTRE FOR LAND WARFARE STUDIES

HE Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). starting on Sep

Asstring on September 18, are historic, being the first after the state became a Union Territory (UT). The last Assembly elections were held in 2014 under entirely different political circumstances. As a UT, J&K has undergone significant changes since August 5, 2019. The Reorganisation Act, 2019, implemented following these changes, has resulted in new constituencies, based on the recommendations of the Delimitation Commission. The UT is abuzz with political activity. Participants include traditional regional parties, some separatist commission, and essent indi-

arties, some separatist rganisations, and even indiuals charged under the Unlawful Activities Preven-tion Act (UAPA).

Jamaat-e-Islami Kashmir, banned under Sec tion 3(1) of UAPA, has fielded candidates in Kulgam, Pul-wama and other areas of South Kashmir. Sugra Barkati, daughter of jailed separatist leader Sarjan Barkati who was the face of the 2016 protests in South Kashmir, had last week filed nomination on his behalf, which was rejected. Barkati may now contest from the Ganderbal Assembly seat in Central Kashmir. The broth-ser of Afra Guna a consist in er of Afzal Guru, a convict in the Parliament attack case,

may also contest. Engineer Rashid brought noticeable changes to the poli-tics of the Valley. There was noticeable changes to the points of the Valley. There was already a strong sentiment in his favour, but it remains uncertain whether a similar sentiment will be seenagain. If Rashidis released from jail, he might create an impact that could benefit his Awami littehad Party candidates. However, without him, the main contest seems to be between the Congress-National Conference(NC)alliance and the BJP, with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) following behind. In this year's parliamentary election, the Congress-NC alliance secured over 41 per cent of the votes, while the BJP received 24 per cent and the PDP 8 per cent and the PDP 8 per cent whether the same pattern will be observed in the

Whether the same pattern will be observed in the Assembly elections remains uncertain. In the parliamentary elections, people in Jam-mu had voted for the BJP in support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, dissatisfaction among party workers when they protested against the first list of candidates. The



BATTLE OF THE BALLOT: The elections should see a considerable increase in the voter turnout as factors viously discouraged participation, such as boycotts and ti

After years of

Central rule, there

is a strong desire

among people to

elect a government

that can represent

their voices.

BJP had to withdraw the list

BJP had to withdraw the list and release a new one. As political parties prepare for the elections, their manifestos continue to echo familiar promises. The NC has once again included autonomy as one of its ley promises. However, despite an absolute majority in the past, the party could not fulfill this promise, even after passing a resolution even after passing a resolution in the Assembly in 2000. Similarly, the PDP has als

romised to pursue the estoration of J&K to its 'original status' and to establish full connectivity across the Line of Control for trade and social exchange. Both the NC and PDP have called for resuming talks with Pakistan.

nd the PDP are almost simi-ir. However, Mehbooba Mufti lar Hov

has added the "resolution of the Kashmir issue" to the PDP's manifesto promises. What this means and how she intends to achieve it remains unclear though Engineer Rashid's party has promised to prioritise "land security," and address the "issue of pris-oners in various jails across the country."

the country."

In the Kashmir valley too, the BJP faces major challenges. While its ally Sajjad Lone of the People's Conferenceperformed well in the parliamentary elections, others did not achieve success. Traditional regional parties like the NC and Congress are expected to have an advantage, and the PDP may also see gains. There satisfaction with the PDP due

the BJP in 2014, and then its sequent coalition with the ne party. The NC appears to be the party that has made the most gains in the last four to five years.

There had been a consistent

demand for the restoration of statehood before the elections. There is a widespread percep-tion that unless the Central Government restores state-hood, the next government may find it hard to address the aspirations of the people. Nev-ertheless, the formation of a aspirations of the people. Nev-ertheless, the formation of a local government will be a cru-cial first step toward raising voices and passing resolutions in the Assembly that could eventually lead to meaningful change. This election is seen as a clash between pre-2019 and post-2019 politics. Despite this, many across J&K, regardless of their identity, want statehood to be restored. Therefore, there is interest in parties, alliances or ideologies that promise a quick restora-tion of statehood.

The elections are expected to see a considerable increase in the voter tumout. Bactors that previously discouraged parti-ipation, such as boyectts and threats from terror goups, are

threats from terror groups, are now largely absent. People are not likely to vote based on what is offered in party manifestos but rather to restore democracy in the region. After years of direct rule from New Delhi, there is a strong desire among the people to elect a government that can repreSome narratives at the national level had suggested that Governor's rule was ben-eficial and welcomed by the people. While it is true that there was widespread resent ment against earlier state gov emments, as well as corrup tion and backdoor appointments in the govern ment machinery, it is not a corollary that the people desire continuous Governor's rule, regardless of how effective it may have been in the past. Given the current political scenario, there is a high possibili-ty of a coalition government

ty of a cossistion government being formed.
The fact that candidates opposed to the Centre were elected in the parliamentary elections demonstrates the fairness of the elections demonstrates the fairness of the election process. Given the positions of major parties, there is a possibility of the 2019 narrative making a comeback. However, the people are likely to focus more on issues of basic amenities and governance rather than 'strategic' concerns.

Confidence in the political process, as well as in eventual governance, will also depend on how much power the Chief Minister utilimately has Local Minister utilimately has Local

on how much power the Chief Minister ultimately has. Local governance also needs a degree of autonomy to effec-tively address the region's unique challenges and func tion as an effective grievance redressal model. The holding of elections is a significant step forward and offers a substantial opportunity to not the situation in the UT

OUICK CROSSWORD

- 1 Composure under pressure (9) 8 Distinctive period of time (5) 9 Succeed (4,3)
- 0 Trade by exchi 1 To present (6) 2 Goodbye (2,6) 5 Terrible (8)

Across: 1 Default, 4 Batch, 7 Tire, 8 Crackpot, 10 Hoity-toity, 12 Beagle, 13 Abrupt, 15 Omniscient, 18 Fire away, 19 Miss, 20 Texas,

4 Rabble (8)
5 Discussion (6)
6 A helping of food (7)
7 Of inferior quality (5-4)
11 Brand (9)
13 Means of checking attendance (4,4)
14 Thoughtful (7)
16 Throughout the course of (6)
17 Morose (6)
19 Person or thing doome

19 Person or thing doomed (5)

Down: 1 Ditch, 2 Farcical, 3 Torpor, 4 Back-to-back, 5 Type, 6 Hot spot, 9 By all means, 11 Sure-fire, 12 Benefit, 14 Disarm, 16 Tasty

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FORECAST



OUR TAKE !

Can't bulldoze due process

The Supreme Court is right. "Bulldozer justice" steamrolls principles of natural justice

he Supreme Court's sharp disapproval of the use of earthmovers to demolish the homes of those accused, especially in cases where there is accused, specially interests where there is a moment too soon. The troubling practice — where authorities clearly step outside the bounds of due process and don a retributive avatar to destroy homes and properties of people not declared guilty by any institution — might be a populist move, but it frustrates the principle of natural justice.

A top court bench of justices Bhushan R Gavai and KV Viswanathan raised a string of valid questions, including how a house could be demolished simply because someone is accused of a crime, noting that even a conviction does not justify such an action without following proper legal procedures. They highlighted the need for standardised guidelines across all states to prevent arbitrary demolitions, pointing out that even in cases of unauthorised constructions, the process must be conducted in accordance with the law.

be conducted in accordance with the law.
Unfortunately, despite the clear violation of rights,
the practice of demolition — oxymoronically termed
"bulldozer justice" — has only become popular across
the board. In a bid to look tough on crime, state and
local governments have used the heavy-handed tactic to
dispense quick "justice" by demolishing properties even
as judicial proceedings are pending before courts.
This has created a prograph on the suphorities. This has created a perception that the authorities employ such extra-judicial strategies selectively appearance that is damaging both for the criminal justice system as well as administration.

The apex court is right in asking questions of a

practice that has no concrete footing in the law. Its proposed guidelines could serve as a crucial check against the trend and prompt authorities to act more responsibly, and not resort to rabble-rousing tactics. These guidelines could establish a uniform legal framework across states, ensuring that any such action is grounded in due process and not driven by extrajudicial motives. They will also serve as a reminder to the executive that the question of tardy justice needs honest and painful antidotes, not populist band-aids

But once these guidelines come, their implementation will be key. After all, states are incentivised to dispense such "justice" and the structural problems with the judicial system mean that timely relief can be difficult. The top court will need to institute a vigilant and transparent mechanism by which any violation of the guidelines can be reported and acted against. Only this can rein in this extra-judicial practice.

Deny cow vigilantism mainstream support

sense of impunity is now entrenched among the so-called cow vigilantes, evident from the A fact that a gang chased a car it suspected of ferrying "cow smugglers" for 50 kilometres on Haryana's roads before shooting a teen occupant of naryana's foats before shooting a tern occupant of the vehicle. The boy's Hindu identity, revealed later, has become a focal point of anger over the incident, but that only obscures the larger problem—the mainlining of communal tensions and fanning of violence, all in the animal's name. Lynching and violence, an in the anima's name. Lyncing and assaults attributed to suspected consumption or storage of beef or smuggling of cattle for slaughter are only a symptom of this. Each incident encourages copycat organised vigilante gangs and opportunistic "gau rakshaks" (cow protectors), more so when the State seems unwilling or unable to curb this, despite repeated instructions from the Supreme Court. Just days before the teen's killing, a migrant scrap dealer was lynched in Haryana's Charkhi Dadri on suspicion of having eaten beef. And, on Monday, an elderly man was assaulted by a crowd on a train in Maharashtra for carrying cattle meat.

The recent resurrection has unmistakably political footprints, from individual politicians celebrating convicts in beef-lynching cases to many political careers getting launched in the hinterland on the careers getting launched in the hinterland or promises of more such extra-judicial action. The need is for the political mainstream to visibly dissociate with such vigilantism and allow the law to prevail, instead of looking for quick political gains. They need only turn to the example of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has repeatedly asserted that there can be no tolerance for violence

Energy transition isn't a one-size-fits-all affair

differentiated energy transition roadmaps every nation, no matter where it is on its development journey. can move towards a sustainable future

sustainable future

s the world grapples with the climate challenge, the urgency for a numerical approach to energy transporter of the property of the propert

come countries, and small island developing states (SIDS). Progress can be

measured by comparing the cost of round the clock renewable energy (RTC RE) to fossil fuels, providing a clear benchmark for sustainable develop-

round use clock renewable-energy (RTC, RE) to fossil fuels, providing a clear benchmark for sustainable development.

High-income countries, despite their advanced economies, are responsible for over 60% of global emissions. Their energy transition remains incomplete, particularly in retrofitting existing systems with cleaner alternatives. These nations must take urgent action to meet their ambitious goals of reducing emissions by 50% by 2000 and achieving net-zero by 2000. Spearheading global decarbonisation will require significant investments in transition finance, energy storage bechnologies and fortifying global value chains through results-based carbon financing.

Emerging economies are experiencing rapid growth in energy consumption, presenting opportunities for local manufacturing, job-creation, and scaling renewable energy. In findia for example, the cost of RTC/RE is projected to drop below 42 (~\$0.02) per liVM, driven by laffing technology costs and supportive government policies. However, these countries face significant climate risks, with 97% of RTC/RE is projected to drop below 42 (~\$0.02) per liVM, driven by laffing technology costs and supportive government policies foliables occurring here. A threefold increase in renewable capacity will be imperative. The challenge lies in attracting private financing, asthese-regions grapple with higher risk perceptions.

Low-income countries (LICs) face steeper challenges. Despite immense olar potential, less than 50% of their

Mangotra

The financial need is immense – around \$400 billion to finance their around \$400 billion to finance their solar energy journey—yet they receive only a fraction of this amount. High debt costs ranging from 30-30% and the absence of adomestic enervable energy supply chain, stille progress. Extensive financial and policy support, including enhanced access to climate finance and innovative mechanisms like beinded finance, is crucial for these countries to advance.

innovative mechanisms like blended finance, is-rucial for these countries to advance, is-rucial for these countries to advance, is-rucial for these countries to satisfact and interest and imported fossil fuels, they face exorbitant clerkic; they face exorbitant costs in these global average per GW. Geographical constraints and grid inaccessibility further complications, such as floating solar, solar-powered transportation, solutions, advanced solutions, such as floating solar, solar-powered transportation solutions, advanced of the solution, such as floating solar, solar-powered transportation solutions, advanced an exorbitant control of the solution of the complex control of the control o



ven the divergent realities of countries, energy transitions are unfolding vastly different ways across the globe 8.0008ERG

in vastly different ways across the glo state of the energy transition in different parts of the world.

A profound and systemic transforma-tion of the global energy system is no longer optional: it is a necessity. The cost comparison between RTC RE and fossil facts across different archetypes is a crit-ical factor in crafting effective, arche-type-specific energy transition plans. In some cases, renewable energy costs have already become competitive with or even lower than that of fossil facts. In others, success hinges on developing conducive business models and imple-menting enabling policies.

others, success hinges on developing conducive business models and implementing enabling policies.

This transformation must extend beyond the decarbonisation of energy supply and consumption; it must also liq whe foundation for a resilient and inclusive global economy. This requires a strategic shift towards systems that support a renewable-dominated energy landscape, Governments must actively dismantle physical, policy, and institutional barriers, enhance access to climate finance, and prior rise the development of local renewable cosystems. In the Global South, the focus should be on slelling and cupacity building to ensure full participation in the global approach that recognises the unique energy transition. An archetypal approach that recognises the unique callenges and opportunities of different regions can unlock the potential for scaling solar power and generating jobs, particularly in emerging markets. Governments play a pévotal rolein overcom-

ing inefficiencies and ensuring that the benefits of the energy transition are shared across all sectors of society one countries and ISLS must be believed to the shared across all sectors of society one countries and ISLS must be believed to the countries and ISLS must be believed to the shared across and ISLS must be believed to the countries and the countries and islanding between advanced and developing economics necessitates increased global cooperation and innovative approaches to unlock investments. Balleving support to the specific needs of each errichtype will be crucial in ensuring that every mation can progress toward a sustainable future. The International Solar Alliance's recent analysis undersocres the significance of an archetypal approach to energy transition, recognising the distinctneeds of different regions. This not only facilitates the spread of renewable energy but also drives profound social impacts, such as job creation, gender equality, and youth engagement.

The time to acts in own. By embracing differentiated energy transition readmaps and committing to systemic transformation, we can ensure that every mation, regardisc offsts tage of development, moves toward a sustainable future. The global community must come together: While our challenges may differ, our goal is shared.

Also Mathur is director general and Karun

Ajay Mathur is director general and Karan Mangotru is partnership and strutego specialist, the International Solar Allianoc. The views expressed are personal

India-Singapore's enduring ties, packed with potential

If there ever was a study in contrast between two nations, India and Singapore would probably be great contenders. On size, population, GDP per capita, land-mass, both countries are poles apart. And yet, the history of India-Singapore relations has been one of sustained mutual respect and try-ing to carve a unique space for themselves in a multipolar world.

This is the underlying sorict baseding Prime

a multipolar world.

This is the underlying spirit buoying Prime Minister (PM) Narconfra Modi's fifth visit to the Isdand country since assuming office. For many Indians. Singapore has been a economic ideal. Today, an estimated 7.5% of Singaporean citizens are of Indian origin, with a significant additional Indian expat population working in the infotech, finance and professional services space. In fact, India is Singapore's foremost talent partner, with a legacy of close collaboration.

The foundation of this relationship has strong historical and economic origins. In the last two deconomic origins, India's exports to Singapore stand at \$12 billion with mineral fuels, chemicals and machinery products accounting for a sizeable chunk. Within the same period, Singapore stand at \$12 billion with a focus on consumer electronics, metals, mining and minerals and semiconductor goods. Let's look at two areas where Singapore can benefit India — investment and innovation. Singapore has been the largest source of foreign direct investment (PD) into India, Bhartl Alretel is one of India's pionetring to this solid partnership. Under the largest source of foreign direct investment (PD) into India, Bhartl Alretel is one of India's pionetring to this solid partnership. Under the largest source of foreign bank footprint in the country. SAR'S Lid, one of the world was starting out. Strangapore has been under the largest international food solitons facility in Bengiam tribs year.

Both Tennasek and GIC have been very active in investing in India and plan to ramp up further across sectors such as financial services, health care, infrastructure, etchnology and usualizability. As India al and plan to ramp up further across

health care, green energy and tourism. As he city-state makes the push towards Health-

THERE ARE AT LEAST THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE AREAS WHERE INDIA HAS MUCH TO OFFER SINGAPORE — HEALTH CARE, GREEN ENERGY AND TOURISM

ier SG, a national initiative focused on preventive health, it can leverage India for well-qualified, well-motivated health care professionals, in particular nurses. The domestic impetus to cater to the health care needs of billions has accelerated innovation in the sector, with India well-poised to take a technology-backed leapfing. This could benefit Singapore in the form of low-cost, high-quality diagnostics as well as medical tourism opportunities. India has sizeable potential as a green energy source for Singapore in the forms. Apart from selling other energy source for singapore in the forms. Apart from selling other energy sources which India can export. through hydrogen or ammonia. Tourism is another significant link which holds promise. So fair in 2024, over 24 million Indians visited Singapore. However, there is massive potential in the other direction as well since Singapore and well-greated in the other direction as well since Singapore and well-greated in the other direction as well since Singapore mover. The second in the other direction as well since Singapore mover, the control of the second in the other direction as well since Singapore mover. The second in the other direction as well since Singapore mover that the second in the other direction as well since Singapore and well-greated in the other direction as well since Singapore and India and Singapore and India and Singapore and India and Singapore and India and Singapore and India have linked their respective digital dwajp syment systems, India's Unified Payments interface and Singapore and India and Singapore, obviously teveraging India's deep technical talent but also targeted collaboration between the place and tourism, where India can be a strategic ally. For example, Singapore and India's deep technical talent but also targeted collaboration between the place unitaries to the next kepter of the Singapore songapore, a law government entity beling Singapore, alway government entity beling Singapore, alway government entity beling Singapo

Neeraj Aggarwal is chair, Asia Pacific. The Boston Consulting Group (BCG). He is Indian and leads BCG's Asia Pacific Business. Aparna Bharadwaj leads BCG's Global Advantage practice. She is a Shugaperan of Indian-erigin. The views expressed are personal



Evolving, yet constant: Teachers' role in society

eing a teacher today is most definitely not for the faint of heart. Teachers have to be ready to lose themselves in the process of seeling and finding our children. As another Teachers' Day approaches, filled with roses and chocolates, the mind sees a darker side of childhood. What happened to the innocence of childhood filled with simplicity, freedom, close-knit communities, and lesser restrictions—where children had the time and space to grow, learn, and connect deeply with their surroundings? Was it merely an idealistic notion that existed in the minds of earlier generations?

surroundingsry was in merey an aceasure notion that existed in the minds of earlier generations?

Today, schools, in order to adjust to new societal demands and expectations, are being transformed in identity and role. They have become challenging spaces where students come together from varying social, cultural, and economic backgrounds.

The life of a child has within it the sights, sounds, colours, pipes and drunss of humanity that it encounters in its growing years. It is these reflections and impressions that credictions and impressions that one of a teacher today is to equip not only individual students with the competencies they need but also, through these students, entire groups, communities, and societies. Well-being is the goal in a classroom, and co-agency is the guiding light. Teachers need to help children become purposeful, reflective, and responsible. Educators have to contend with the tymnny of merit, where education determines winners and lovers in a starkly divisive meritorracy. Those

poseful, reflective, and responsible. Educators have to contend with the vyamny of merit, where education determines winners and losers in a starkly divisive meritoracy. Those who succeed are fortunate to be born with the skills that society values; others who do not form the electoral base of populist leaders. The teucher and the student have always had a very symbiotic relationship, intended and interdependent. All spiritual traditions underline the interconnectedness of this bond. At a deeper level, it consists of consideration, expression, and understanding of the other. Some elements of learning in a child are directly connected to the teacher, not in an abstract or esotoric manner but in a concrete, and understandable way. Teaching is a blend of the head, hand, and heart. It has memory, meaning, and metaphor within it. Every child's cognitive structure is equipped to ask questions, introspect and think about issues that are primarily about themselves. Teachers have the amazing gift of understanding children, directing them on

how to use knowledge, build society, and shape their live less-hers that ideas travel, are questioned, and reformed. A sensitive educator helps integrate the mind, body, and spirit of children so that they learn in mytiad ways to convey their thoughts and to live in a world that is unknown, unfinished, and unresolved. Children learn that they learn in mytiad ways to convey their thoughts and to live in a world that is unknown, unfinished, and unresolved. Children learn that there is more than one response to life situations and that they have the capacity to choose the response they wish to live. Teachers create a visual vocabulary that is innate in every society.

Teaching is an emotional experience because it goes beyond playing the role of a mere instructor and into the realm of being a counselor, mentor, and sometimes the only stable figure in a child's life. The emotional weight of these roles can be overwhelming, leading to burnout and exhaustion. Het teachers press on, driven by a committenent to make a difference. Teachers enter the irruginarity world of a child that is engaging and playful, imparting learning that is appreciative of different perspectives. They also have to build resilience within children against unexpected shocks. But, above all else, they have to move beyond complacency and easy solutions because education is getting line an anney learning that is a portional and endaring. At we move forward in this world of assistive technologies, algorithms, augmented readily, and many other frontier technologies, let us remember that at the heart of education are individuals who have given a great deal of themselves, often without recognition or reward.

At the heart of teaching lies an unspeken low, allow of learning and a hope that education can change lives. It is this low that has been celebrated over the years in every child who has found a teacher who helped her evolve. Here's to every teacher who made a difference in the life of a child.

Amena Mulia Wattal is chairperson and executive director, Education, Innovations and Training, DLF Foundation Schools and Scholarship Programmes. The views expressed are personal

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EXPLAINED INFRA

SATELLITE-BASED HIGHWAY TOLL COLLECTION: HOW WILL IT WORK?

DHEERAJ MISHRA

NEW DELHI SEPTEMBER 4

Highways (MoRTH) has developed a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based software for real-time monitoring of wait times at highway toll plazas, which it says will allow commuters to check congestion at the level of specific lanes to ensure smoother traffic flows. The new software, which has been developed by Indian Highways Management Company LEd (HMCL), a company promoted by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), will be tried out first at 100 toll plazas, which have been identified on the basis of congestion feedback received on 1033, the toll-free National Highway Helpline number.

How monitoring will work

The software will provide the name and location of the toll plaza, along with the live status of queue lengths in metres, wait times, and vehicle speeds. The software will also generate com-parative traffic condition analyses on an

parative traffic condition analysis hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly basis

Satellite-based tolling

The ministry is also working on a Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS)-based tolling system, which is ex-

pected to replace the current FASTag toll collection system and provide a long-term

collection system and provide a long-term solution for congestion at toll booths. It will also provide distance-based tolling, so that users can pay only for the stretch they have travelled on a National Highway. According to HMCL, the GNSS-based electronic toll collection will be implemented alongside the existing FASTag ecosystem, and both models will initially one rate simultaneously.

operate simultaneously.

As a GNSS whicle passes through the gate, the toll charger will receive pings (distance and time stamps) through on-board units in the wehice. The payment mechanism will be similar to the existing FASTag ecosystem, but will involve automatic debits, and will do away with the need for boom barriers at toll plazas.

Convenience for users

Convenience for users

The satellite toll collection system is expected to make passage through toll plazas faster and smoother. Currently, the process of reading the FASTag bar code and raising the boom can take up to a minute. The delay causes long queues, and sometimes triggers arguments and fights. FASTag, which was launched in 2015 and has been mandatory at National Highway toll plazas since February 2021, uses Radio Frequency Glentlication (RFID) technology. As of March 2024, more than 98% of user fee payments at 10d plazas are

98% of user fee payments at toll plazas are done through FASTag, MoRTH data say.

EVERYDAY HISTORY

WHY INDIA CELEBRATES TEACHERS DAY ON SEPTEMBER 5

INDIA CELEBRATES Teachers' Day annu-ally on September 5, the birth anniver-sary of former President Sarvepalli sary of former President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975), Here is why

Philosopher of Hinduism

One of India's most recognised and in-fluential thinkers of the 20th century. Radhakrishnar's life and work was ded-icated to defining, defending, and dissem-inating the Hindu religion. He is seen in philosophy circles as a bridge-builder be-tween India and the West, and credited for his role in shaping the West's underfor his role in shaping the West's under standing of Hinduism.

standing of Hinduism.
Radhakrishnan was among the fore-most proponents of the non-dualist Advaita Vedanta tradition in the 20th cen-tury, and re-interpreted Adi Shankara's philosophy for modern times. In doing so, the defended Hinduism against what he said was "uninformed Western criticism".

By the 1920s, Radhakrishnan had es-tablished himself as one of India's most respected academics. He held the presti-gious King George V Chair at the Cakcutta University from 1921 to 1932, was the second vice-chancellor of Andhra University from 1931 to 1936, and the fourth vice-chancellor of Banaras Hindu University from 1939 to 1948, He also held the Spalding Chair of Eastern



Religion and Ethics at University of Oxford from 1936 to 1952. Radhakrishnan was knighted in 1931. Radhakrishnan was lava ab rilliant teacher, who developed deep personal bonds with students. He thought highly of the profession of teaching, and is recorded as having said several times that "teachers should be the best minds in the country". He became the first Vice President (1952-62), and the second President of India (1962-67). In 1962, after he became president, some old students expressed their wish to celebrate his birthday. Radhakrishnan refused a personal celebration, and instead requested his students to honour teachers across the country on his birth anniversary.

Thus began the tradition of celebrating Teachers' Day on September 5. ENS





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EXPLAINED LAW

State changes in rape law

The West Bengal Assembly has passed the 'Aparajita' Bill, introducing the death penalty for rape. How does this Bill compare with similar Bills passed by the Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra Assemblies?

AJOY SINHA KARPURAM NEW DELHI SEPTEMBER 4

AS STREET protests against the rape and murder of a young doctor in Kolkata's R.G.Kar Medical College and Hospital continued to roil West Bengal, the state Assembly on Tuesday unanimously passed a Bill providing for mandatory death penalty in cases of rape where the victim dies or is left in a permanent vegetative state.

The Aparajita Woman and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Aparajita Bill) also introduces death as the maximum punishment in all cases of rape, and changes the way in which cases of rape, and changes the investigated and tried — by a rape are to be investigated and tried — by a

rape, and changes the way in which cases of rape are to be investigated and tried — by a Special Task Force and Special Courts in every district respectively. To effect these changes, the Bill amends provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS), the Bharatiya Nyaya Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), and the Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO) in the state.

Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), and the Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO) in the state.

Before West Bengal, the Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra Assemblies had passed laws prescribing the death penalty for rape by amending the criminal laws in force at the time. Neither Bill has received the manda-tory assent of the President yet.

Earlier, the Madhya Pradesh and Armachal Pradesh Assemblies had, in 2017

and 2018 respectively, introduced the death penalty for the rape or gangrape of "a woman up to twelve years of age" (Sections 376AA and 376DA of the Indian Penal Code, 1860).

West Bengal: Aparaiita Bill

The West Bengal Bill begins by specify-ing that "Imprisonment for life" in Section 4(b) of the BNS "includes simple imprison-ment for life or rigorous imprisonment for life". Rigorous imprisonment involves hard

SECTION 64 OF BISS. THIS SECTION ("Punishment for rape") provides for both the floor punishment for the crime and for punishment in cases where aggravating circumstances are present, such as rape by a public servant, a member of the armed forces, during communal violence, etc. In both situations, the maximum punishment in "immiscampum for life".

The Aparajita Bill amends Section 64 to add the words "or with death" at the end of

WHY PRESIDENT'S ASSENT IS CRUCIAL enacted by Parliament.

CONCURRENT LIST in Seventh Schedule of the Constitution lists subjects on which both the Centre and states can pass laws.

THE THREE BILLS, Aparajita, Disha, and Shakti, amend criminal laws in a way that makes them inconsistent or "repugnant" to the original law

cipal act" (BNS) punishes rape "which causes the death of the woman or causes the woman to be in a persistent vegetative state" with a minimum 20 years in prison with the possi-bility of life imprisonment, "or with death". The Aparajita Bill deletes the mentions of all punishments barring death, making the

an punisnments parring death, making the death penalty mandatory in such cases. SECTION 70: This BNS section deals with the offence of "Gang rape". There is a provi-sion for the death penalty in cases where the victim is "under eighteen years of age" (Section 70(2)), but in the case of older women, the maximum punishment is rigormaximum punishment is rigo nment for life (Section 70(1)).

The West Bengal Bill amends Section 70(1) to introduce the death penalty also for

70(1) to introduce the death penalty also for the gang rape of a woman above age 18.

SECTIONS 71, 72, 73: For repeat offenders (Section 71), the Aparajita Bill replaces the punishment of simple "imprisonment for life" with "rigorous imprisonment for life" with "rigorous imprisonment for life" and the section of the sec

the POCSO Act to introduce the death penalty for penetrative sexual assault (Section 4), where the highest punishment currently is life imprisonment.

TASK FORCES, SPECIAL COURTS: The

Aparajita Bill provides for special institu-tions with the express purpose of investi-gating, hearing, and deciding rape cases on

STATE AMENDMENTS to central laws SIATE AMENDMENTS to central law: (such as BNS, BNSS and POCSO) dealing with subjects in the Concurrent List that are repugnant to the original law require the President's assent to come into force (Article 254 of the Constitution)

WITHOUT ASSENT, laws passed by states "to the extent of the repugnancy" will be void.

strict timelines.

The amendment Bill introduces Section 29C to the BNSs, under which the state government shall create a special Aparajita Task Force in every district to investigate cases of rape. All persons, including government officers, will be obligated to assist the task force "without any delay", falling which they can be imprisoned for six months.

The Bill also reduces the time provided under BNSS Section 193 to complete the investigation into the relevant BNS and POCSO offences from two months to 21 days (which can be extended by another 15 days freecessary).

The Bill introduces Sections 29A and 29B to the BNSS to establish Special Courts in

to the BNSS to establish Special Courts in every district "for the purpose of expeditious completion of inquiry or trial" in rape cases, and to appoint a Special Public Prosecutor

and to appoint a Special Fusici Prosecutor.

The Bill also amends BNSS Section 346, reducing the time given to complete the trial after the chargesheet is filed from two months to 30 days.

The Bill will now be presented to the Governor of West Bengal who will send it to President Droupadi Murmu, who will the decide whether to give her assent and allow the Bill to come into force.

Andhra Pradesh: Disha Bills

ere shot dead by police in an encounter on December 6 that year. Then Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy promised to bring legislation to ensure stronger punishments and speedy dis posal of cases of crimes against women.

In December 2019, the Assembly unani-mously passed the Andhra Pradesh Disha Act -Criminal Law (Andhra Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2019, and the Andhra Pradesh Disha (Special Courts for Specified Offences against Women and Childern) Bill, 2019. The Bills amended the IPC, 1860 and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CIPC) for the state of Andhra Pradesh. DEATH FOR RAPE: The Disha Bill intro-duced the death penalty as punishment for

duced the death penalty as punishment for the crimes of rape, including against a minor below 16 years of age (IPC Section 376); gang rape (Section 376D); and for repeat offenders (Section 376E) rape (Section 376E).

(Section 376E). Like Aparajita, Disha Itoo, created "Special Cours". Like Aparajita, Disha Itoo, created "Special Cours" and "Exclusive Special Cours" in every district to investigate and hear cases of crimes against women, and prescribed stortened timelines for investigating and hearing such cases. It also proposed a "Momen and Children Offenders Registry" in which full details of those "involved in" offences against women would be maintained, and be made available to also engineered agencies.

to law enforcement agencies.

Both Disha Bills are pending at the Centre, awaiting President Murmu's decision on giv-

ing assent.

Maharashtra: Shakti Bill

In 2020, the Maharashtra legislature passed the Shakti Criminal Laws (Maharashtra Amendment) Bill, 2020. The Shakti Bill too introduced the death penalty in rape cases and provided shortened timelines

rape cases and provided shortened timelines for concluding the investigation and trial.

OBLICATION ON WEB PLATFORMS:
The Shadis Bill punished with up to one month in prison "any social media platform or Internet or mobile telephony disprovider including any intermediary or custodian who fails to share any data including document or electronic record with the Investigation Officer as requested" in cases of crimes against women.

investigation United as requested: in cases of crimes against women.

DEATH PENALTY: The Bill introduced the death penalty in "heinous" acid attack cases where "adequate conclusive evidence is there and the circumstances warrant exemplary punishment".

POCSO ACT: Like Aparajita, Shakti too, amended the POCSO Act to introduce the

death penalty as a punishment for penetra-tive sexual assault (Section 4).

Presidential assent for the Shakti Bill too.

is pending, Leaders and workers of the NCP (Sharad Pawar) protested in Mumbai on Tuesday demanding assent to the Bill.

Genome mapping of Chandipura virus: findings

BRENDAN DABHI AHMEDABAD, SEPTEMBER 4

THE GUJARAT Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC) in Gandhinagar has published THE GUJARAT Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC) in Gandhinagar has published the only fully mapped genome of the Chandipura vesiculovirus (CHPV) — the viral infection that caused at least a third of the encephalitis or brain swelling cases in Gujarat during the outbreak in July-August.

What is CHPV?

Apart from encephalitis, CHPV is known to cause fever, headache, convulsions, coma, and even death, usually within days of the

anu even death, usually within days of the symptoms showing up.
CHPV most severely affects children below the age of 15. It can be transmitted by sandlies, ticks, and the Aedes egypt mosquito which is also the vector for dengue and chikungunya. Sandlies were responsible for this year's outbreak.

With no specific treatment, CHPV has mor-tality rates of as high as 75%, as seen during India's worst ever outbreak in 2003 which killed 322 children in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. This year's outbreak has a case fatality ratio of about 45% (as per data from August 16).

What is genome mapping?

Why is it important?

Genome mapping refers to the process of determining the location of genes on an organism's chromosomes. In the case

ism's chromosomes. In the case of a deadily virus like CTPV, mapping can provide clues about its origin, and significant mutations, among other things. Importantly, the genetic sequence of a virus — especially of one in circulation — is important to help researchers develop testing kits, vaccines, and therapeutics.

What did researchers at the GBRC find?

Vhas more nenduring 103 which adsh and case fatality (August 16). When compared to the 2003-04 sample, adsh and case fatality (August 16). The five types of proteins that make the structure of the Virus, responsible for binding to human cell receptors and elication that the structure of the Virus, responsible for binding to human cell receptors and elication in the gyoprotein Grom 2012. For comparison, new variants and sub-variants and sub-vari

new variants and sub-va of Covid-19 detected every few me would have 20 or 30 mutations compa their predecessor.

According to the researchers, this sug-According to the researchers, this sug-gests "that the virus has not been under se-lection pressure to escape immunity", pos-sibly because a significant proportion of the population did not develop antibodies against CHPV, unlike the fast-spreading Covid-19 which has infected a majority of the

global population. CHPV also does not yet have a vaccine and antibodies developed due to it, unlike Covid-19.

The Cycle Threshold (or Ct value) for the samples tested was high. In an RT-PCR test, the Ct value is the number of times the genetic material of the sample has to be amplified in order to detect the pathogen. A high Ct value implies that the viral load — the Cit value implies that the viral load — the amount of virus in the sample — is quite low.
"The Ct value of most of the patients was high. This means that the viral load was very less. But even this was enough to cause severe symptoms," the researchers said.

"Upon tracing the genome sequence on the 27-strain family tree of the virus, they the

the 27-strain family tree of the virus, they the strain to be related to ones isolated during previous outbreaks in India, and very differ-ent from strains isolated in Europe or Africa. "This means that the virus that infected pa-tients in this outbreak was the one circulat-ing in India and was not imported from other countries," a health department official said.

RIL to approve bonus issue today: five things that investors should know

GEORGE MATHEW

SHAREHOLDERS OF Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), India's largest listed company in terms of market capitalisation (Rs 20.53 lakh

or market capitalisation (to 20.33 lath instruction) correctly, will soon get bonus shares for the fifth time in the last 41 years. The bonus issue, which comes after a flat financial performance in the April-June 2024 quarter and a sluggish show by RII. in a buoyantmarket, is expected to boost liquidity in the stock making it more affordable to investors.

stock, making it more affordable to investors Here's what to know about RIL's bonus is-sue, to be approved by its board on Thursday Liquidity will increase

On August 29, RIL informed the stockex-changes that the company's board will meet on September 5 to announce a bonus issue for existing shareholders in the ratio of one-for-one — that is, one free share for each share held by them.

"This (bonus issue) should result in animeries in equity capital by 86,770 crore and reduction in the reserve by a similar amount," an analyst with IkGU Securities said. Another analyst with a leading brokerage said: "When a bonus is given, it shows that the promoter has a positive view on the company, It will indirectly improve liquidity—and buying is expected, especially from the retail side. In the case of bonuses, retail investors have a tendency to buy stocks as prices come down."

NED

RIL's share prices

RIL's share prices will decline
The price of RIL shares, which has remained flat since the beginning of this year. Will decline after the allotment of the bonus shares as the number of shares increases. Given that the bonus issue is in the ratio of one-for-one, the share price might come down by 50% of the pre-bonus price. However, the share price can gradually increase after the bonus issue, depending on the company's performance.



Mukesh Ambani, Chairman of

"Technically, bonus has no value. Besides improving the liquidity in the stock and the stock market, the bonus will have no impact. For example, if the face value of a stock is Rs 100, and one more share is given in addition, the price will adjust to Rs 50 per stock," said the analyst quoted above. Since the value of the holding remains the same after the bonus issue, investors

It has nothing to do with the company's financials

After the bonus issue, the stock price will ok low, and will, therefore, be more at ortive

look low, and will, unescross, see tractive.

"The bonus issue has nothing to do with the improvement of the company's financials. It is just an accounting treatment, wherein the number of shares will increase and the price will become half," another analyst with a leading investment firm said.

"Since the number of shares are increasing, it will make investors feel good. Bonus is away of giving more confidence to share-holders, just because of the bonus, the price to earnings (PE) ratio will not be halved, it will remain the same, "the analyst said.

Valuation is high; stock has

epaper.indianexpress.com

The RIL bonus issue did not make any wes in the market, RIL shares, which were

quoted at R 3,006.50 on August 28 had risen by just 0.77% to 8,302.88 on September 4. One reason for this could be that mar-tests had already discounted the bonus sop before it was announcement at the RII.an-nual general meeting (AGM) every year. While the market didn't expect the bonus issue this year, they were expecting an indi-cation about the listing of jo and retail busi-ness, which did not happen. RII shares have undernerformed in the

cation about the listing of Jio and retail business, which did not happen.

RIL shares have underperformed in market since January 2024. While the Sensex has gained over 15% in the last eight months, RIL, which closed at Rs 3,020.65 on January 3, 2024, has not gained.

"The general view of the stock is positive but the price and valuation is a bit on the higher side," the analyst with the investment firm quoted above said.

RIL has a tradition of giving bonuse every few years. Since they have a lot of businesses, there is a chance that they will have to go for capital expenditure in the businesses. "This bonus can be considered as a precursor to that plan," the analyst said.

RIL posted a 5.45% decline in its net profit at 815.138 crore during the quarter ended June 2024 as against 81 16.011 crore during the same period a year ago following the weak performance of the order-to-cash (OZC) business, and higher depreciation. On a sequential basis, net profit declined by 201.28 from 81 18.951 crore in the March 2024 quarter.

Promoters will get half of the

bonus

RIL's 34/3 lakh-strong shareholders will
get free shares if the board approves the issue
on September 5. The promoters, Muleesh
Ambani and family, who hold 50/33% stake
in the company, will also be eligible for the
bonus issue. As public shareholders own
327/30 crore shares, they will get an equal
number of shares in the proposed issue.
RIL had last announced a bonus issue in
2017 in the ratio of 1:1.An investor who put

oo shares at the Rs-10 IPO price nce IPO in 1977 would be hold Rs 1.000 (100 sha ing 560 shares (including the propo bonus issues) worth Rs 16.90 lakh now

A living Constitution museum

It offers the opportunity for us to retrace our history, reimagine our journeys, and dream of a better future



C RAJ KUMAR

ON NOVEMBER 26, 1949, the Constituent Assembly of India adopted the Constitution of India. It came into effect on January 26, 1950, which we celebrate as Republic Day. This year, we are celebratating the 75th anniversary of adopting the Constitution. In 2015, the Government of India declared November 26 — hitherto known as National Law Day — as Constitution Day. Assembly met for the first time in New Delhi on December 9, 1946, and its last session was held on January 24, 1950. Its members had embarded on the Herculean task of drafting the Constitution at a time of major social, economic and political uphexadi in the country. The provisions of the Constitution reflect a far-sighted vision on the part of the members as they were conscious of the extraordinary task ahead of them. They fully appreciated that the Constitution was not just a legal document outlining various legal rights and freedoms — they also wanted it to usher in a social revolution.

Granville Austin, the author of The Indian Constitution: Cornestone of a Nation, observed, "The theme of social revolution runs through-out the proceedings and documents of the Assembly, It provided the basis for the decisions to adopt parliamentary government and direct elections the Fundamental Rights and

sions to adopt parliamentary government and direct elections, the Fundamental Rights and

direct elections: the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy, and even many aspects of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial provisions of the Constitution." The 75-year journey of the Constitution of India, including its continuous interpretation by the courts and the various amendments by Parliament, makes it among the world's most dynamic and evolving constitutions. It is indeed the right time to establish the Constitution Museum as an ever-lasting legacy that celebrates the vision and farsight-edness of its founders. Such a museum ought to have five principles of the constitution suspense of the founders.

segacy unat celeorates the vision and rarsigni-edness of its founders.

Such a museum ought to have five pri-mary objectives. One, building the legacy of the Constitution as an institution, it should not only capture its history but also the evolution of the rights and freedoms enabled by the in-stitutions established by the Constitution. By showcasing these milestones, the museum can inspire future generations to understand and appreciate their rights and responsibili-ties as citizens. It would also serve as a re-minder of the ongoing journey of Indian democracy toward justice and equality for all. Two, the museum would democratise the understanding of the Constitution and the ac-

Invo, the museum woundermortanes the understanding of the Constitution and the access to it. The Constitution's history, evolution, important provisions, and interpretation by the courts and the amendments need to be part of a larger understanding of the people of India. This democratisation of access to the knowledge in and about the document and appreciation of the principles and values that shaped it are critical for promoting responsible and enlightened citizenship. Thomas Jefferson, the principal author of the American Declaration of Independence and the third president of the US, famously observed in 1817. "An enlightened citizensy is indispensable for the proper functioning of a republic. Self-government is not possible unless the citizens are educated sufficiently to enable them to exercise oversight. It is therefore imperative that the nation see to it that a suitable education of the control of the understanding of the Constitution and the ac



ucation be provided for all its citizens."

Three, it should promote civic education in order to empower the citizenry. The history of the Constitution and its making is important as it can serve as an inspiration for institution-building and another certain of a Constitution Museum is about creating opportunities for generations of people to participate in the understanding of a constitutional history and the evolution of rights and freedoms. Civic education must be imparted to all individuals across all walks of file so that they may work towards becoming effective participants in Indian democracy. Knowledge and understanding of the Constitution is the first step towards empowering the citizenry. When the rights and freedoms of ordinary individuals are threatened, the Constitution protects those rights and freedoms of ordinary individuals are threatened, the Constitution protects those rights and freedoms and the normative framework that outlines the values of constitutionalism, but it also provides the methods, mechanisms, procedures and processes for enforcing rights and seeking remedies for access to justice.

Four, the museum should celebrate and

processes for enforcing rights and seeking remedies for access to Justice.

Four, the museum should celebrate and pay tribute to the framers of the Constitution and the nation's unsung heroes, it would provide information about the extraordinary history, accomplishments and vision of the members of the Assembly, It is rather unfortunate that so little is known about the manipority of the members of the Constituent Assembly, including the 15 exceptional women — Ammu Swaminathan, Annie Mascarene, Begum Aizar Rasul, Dakshayani Velayudhan, Durgabai Deshmukh, Hansa Jivraj Mehta, Kamla Chaudhry, Leela Roy, Malati Chaudhary, Poornima Banerjee, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Renuka Ray, Sarojini

Naidu, Sucheta Kriplani and Vijaya Lalschmi Pandit. Likewise, the contributions of Sir Benegal Narsing Rau, the Constitutional Advisor to the Assembly, in the making of the Constitution are unparallelled and deserve recognition and celebration. In his conduc-ing speech in the Constituent has wealth you November 25, 1948, BR Ambedkar observed. November 25, 1949, BRAmbediar observed,
The credit that is given to me does not really belong to me. It belongs partly to Sir B Nau, the Constitutional Advisor to the Constitution Alaximation of the Constitution for the consideration of the Constitution for the consideration of the Drafting Committee."
Five, a museum would help contribute to wider conversations about the Constitution and Indian democracy, It would lead to the development of a vibrant public discourse that is not only intellectually engaging but also contributes to the strengthening of democratic politics in India. As Orhan Pamuk has observed, 'Real museums are places where time is transformed into space." The Constitution Museum must connect the pasce." The Constitution Museum must connect the pasce." The Constitution Museum must connect the pasce."

is transformed into space." The Constitution Museum must connect the past and the present with the future. Providing an opportunity for young people to engage and interact with the Constitution and its values would be the best way to protect our rights and freedoms and safeguard the future of the nation. The 75th anniversary of adopting the Constitution of India offers the opportunity for us to retrace our history, reimagine our journeys, and retell our stories to dream of a better future through the establishment of a Constitution Museum.

The writer is the founding Vice Chancellor of O P Jindal Global University (JGU) and the Deam of Jindal Global Law School, JGU is establishing India's first Constitution Museum on its campus in Sonipat, Haryana

Thank you, teachers

This Teachers' Day, we must remember the profound contributions of our gurus towards nation-building, well-being of students



DHARMENDRA PRADHAN

THE CURL/SHISHYA relationship has been one of the defining features of Bharat's quest for knowledge and excellence for ages. Such is the sublime greatness of this tradition that even our gods—Lord Ram and Lord Krishna —sought knowledge and training under the guidance of their gurus. Maharishi Vasishtha and Maharishi Sandipani, respec-

you and Maharishi Sandipani, respec-tively, in Treta Yuga and Dwapara Yuga. Teachers are thus sacrosanct. Teachers, from ancient times, esta-lished a deep and abding tradition of hand-holding, mentoring, and inspiring students in their pursuit of knowledge. Throughout India's rich history, teachers have occupied a central and revered position. The great educators fou prast understood the trans-formative potential of education. Swami Vivekananda once said, "Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in nam." This belief emphasies the idea that teachers do not merely impart knowledge; they awaken the latent greatness within each student, steering them towards selfeach student, steering them towards selfation and enlightenment,

The impact of a teacher is im

realisation and enlightenment.

The impact of a teacher is immeasurable. In fact, she may not be aware of the subtle and proflound influence she exercises on her students' fives. As one scholar aptly puts it, "A teacher affects eternity; she can never tell where her influence stops." Teachers shape not only the minds but also the hearts and souls of our students, instilling values, ethics, and a sense of purpose that endures long after their formal learning years.

Today, as we celebrate Teachers' Day on the birth anniversary of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, we are reminded of the profound contributions of our teachers towards nation-building. Radhakrishnan, a philosopher, scholar, and statesman, deeply believed that "teachers should be the best minds in the country." No one can possibly disagree with him. His dedication to education and his belief in the power of teachers to shape society are ideals that continue to inspire us today.

We stand at the precipice of a transformative era in education, driven by the National Education Policy (ROP) 2002. This policy recognises teachers as "transformers", emphasising their crucial role in shapers, and the supplies the state of the supplies of the reachers as "transformers," emphasising their crucial role in shapers.

mative er air deutication, driven by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2202. This policy recognises teachers as "transform-ers", emphassing their crucial role in shap-ing children's futures as well as the nation. It introduces profound changes in teach-ing, learning, and educational administra-tion. The emphasis of the NEP on flexible learning, interdisciplinary knowledge, mul-tilingualism, technology, and inclusivity heralds a new chapter in the learning ecosystem. Today teachers are called upon to facus on the holistic development of stu-dents ensuring their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive well-being. For teachers, this is an onerous responsibility. In the rapidly evolving landscape of the 21st century, the role of teachers has indeed become very crucial. We need ed-ucators who can steer us away from so-

cial prejudices and stereotypes and lead us onto a path driven by new technology, progressive ideas and constitutional values. The National Education Policy recognises this need, placing a strong emphasis on teachers' training and development. Capacity building for teachers at all levels is a key focus area of the government. An integrated teacher-training programme NISHTHA at all levels for the teachers in school education and the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme at higher education level have been initiated to improve the capacity of our teachers. As we strive to build an aspirational India, we must also focus on nurturing aspirational teachers who are equipped with the skills and knowledge to prepare students for the challenges of the future and build global citizens. global citizens

global citizens.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister Narendra Modi,
Prough his 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' programme, exemplifies the essence of a true
educator. Life a teacher, he engages with
the students, offering valuable insights on
managing stress and navigating life's complexities. "Pariksha Pe Charcha" is a moveplexities. "Pariksha Pe Charcha" is a movement where every child's unique individuality is celebrated, nurtured, and allowed
to flourish.

to flourish.

While competition in educational pussuits is necessary, an overemphasis on it is counter-productive. Teachers can well guise their students to follow the tenets of healthy competition and avoid any kind of temptations and allurements. It is the responsibility of teachers to instill in students not just cademic excellence but also strength of character, ethics, perseverance, passion, and notivation. These qualities are the anchors that help students navigate not just exams, but the broader challenges of life.

In today's world, where commercialisation often threatens the purity of deuction, we must be cognisant of the inherent strength of the guru-shishyu parampara. This ancient tradition of mutual trust and respect between teacher and student has evolved over time, but it is essence remains the same even today. New educational practices can and should blend with these timeless values to create a harmonious and effective learning environment.

As the saying goes, "No printed word nor spoken plea can teach young minds what they should be. Not all the books on all the shelves, but what the teachers are themselves." Teachers, through their own lives and examples, teach us the most valuable lessons that go beyond the class-While competition in educational pur

lives and examples, teach us the most valuable lessons that go beyond the class-

valuable lessons that go beyond the class-room and shape who we are as individu-als. The task of realising the vision of a Viksit Bharat greatly hinges on the shoul-ders of our teachers.

On this Teachers' Day, I extend my heartfelt thanks and profound gratitude to all the teachers who have touched my life. Knowingly or unknowingly, Your influence is immeasurable, and your impact eternal. May we continue to honour and support the teachers who are the true guardians of our future. Happy Teachers' Day!

The writer is Minister of Education Government of India Views expressed are persona



It's on women. Again

Introduction of pink seats by an airline normalises men's misbehaviour

ON A BRITISH Airways flight from London to Delhi in 2021, I had the misfortune of being seated next to two White British men from rural England travelling to India to work on an oil rig project in Vizag, In the beginning, the questions were reasonable: "Where are the questions were reasonable: "Where are you from? What do you do? Where do you study?". After the flight took off, and food and drinks were served — I had my customary apple juice, the men, wine and whiskey — the questions and the situation got worse. —the questions and the situation got worse. As the men got progressively more drunk, courtesy questions were replaced by "Do you have a boyfriend?", "Are your parents forcing you to get married?" and "Don't they do that in India?" I kept getting elbowed "by mistake". At some point, the alcohol wore them down and they fell asleep. An airhost-ess hurried towards me and apologised pro-fusely for the men's rowdy behaviour, cit-ing complaints by other passengers around. mplaints by other passengers around moved to an alternate seat and comforted with free chocolate and snacks.

This is only one instance of the kinds of harassment women face on a regular ba-sis, whether during travel, at the workplace, on the street, or even in one's own home. This is why when IndiGo rolled out its new feature that allows women to see where other women are seated (indicated

in pink) during web check-in, I lauded the airline for its initiative.

But after reflecting more deeply, I realised it was not so black-and-white. This move, as espoused by the airline itself, is in line with the company's #GirlPower campaign. IndiGo has one of the highest percentages of female pilots across the world centages of female pilots across the world and boasts of an over 44 per cent workforce that is female. From the outside, the airline is an ally, a champion of women's empowerment. But at the end of the day, it is a profit-making enterprise. And, its profit-making enterprise. And, its profit-maximising motive is most evident in this move, which has been launched under the guise of "celebrating" women. It exemplifies the notion of what professor Catherine Rottenberg termed "neoliberal feminism".

In a 2014 article, Rottenberg analysed former Meta COO Sheryl Sandberg's book Lean In and made a case for a new kind of feminism that individualises empowerment: "Neoliberal feminism is predominent: "Neoliberal feminism is predominent:"

ment: "Neoliberal feminism is predomi ment: "Neoilberal teminism is predomi-nantly concerned with instaining afeminist subject who epitomises 'self-responsibil-ity,' and who no longer demands anything from the state or the government, or even from men as a group." It is the idea that the problem of gender inequality is not struc-tural but individual, and that every woman

The Constitution's history.

provisions, and interpretation by the courts

and the amendments need to be part of a larger understanding of the people of India. This democratisation of access to the knowledge in and about the document and appreciation of the

principles and values that shaped it are critical for

promoting responsible and enlightened citizenship.

evolution, important

now can have it all—if only they want it. The onus is thus on women, as the "weaker" sex, to emancipate themselves. Giving women, in this case, the choice of sitting next to other women, illustrates this fact. Most IndiGo seast are already paid ones, unless you choose to get assigned a seat at random. As yet, there is no additional charge for women to avail the feature of being able to see where other women are seated. But the option of choice in itself may push more women to pay to pick their seated. But the option of choice in itself may push more women to pay to pick their seated. But the option of choice in itself may push more women to pay to pick their seated. But the option of choice in itself may push more women to pay to pick their seated. But he of the option of the den of responsibility on women—yet again individualising what is, in essence, a systemic issue. Unless the misbehaviour and entitle-

ment of men on flights, and public spaces in general, is addressed, token "feminist" measures such as this one will only continue to place the blame on women. The inherent masculinisation of public spaces often makes them inhibiting for women. From public transport to roads, parks and even leisure spaces like restaurants and dhabas, most public spaces are geared for men, and hence, exclusionary. Something as simple as moving to the side in an elevator to make space for other people does not maturally occur to men. The infrastructure is intentionally invasive and imposing where women are meant to feel uncomfortable.

The idea of neoliberal feminism does not take into account these societal barriers that women face in accessing public spaces. IndiGo's policy has further advanced the narrative of "men will be men" and hence, women must adjust. In this case, women must adjust by choosing to be cloistered with other women to feel safe case, women must adjust by choosing to be cloistered with other women to feel safe in a closed environment. So that next time, in case of any untoward incident, the re-sponse is, "Oh! But she should have cho-sen to sit next to a woman."

adya.goyal@expressindia.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

LAW & ORDER ISSUE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, Justice delayed (IE, September 4). It seems the idea of 'buildozer justice' started in I/P and somewhat contributed to bringing CM Yogi back into power. It seems to be now emulated by other states as well. However, this retributive way of justice and its blatant use also cocked a snook at the legal system. That the judiciary had now stepped in, is welcome, but if the ruling parties feel that it lends them a tough image and fetches them electoral dividends, they would still be averse undoing away with it, irrespective of the apex court's observations. Ironically, it is also a telling commentary on our arrby THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'lustice dealso a telling commentary on our tardy process of law.

Vijai Pant, Hempur

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, Justice de-layed' (IE, September 4). The buildozer has been all over the place, riding roughshod over laws, rules and proce-dures — especially in BJP-ruled states. Such rare 'efficiency' of the authorities is avergeful poly to punish those from cer-tain communities. The Supreme Court has purposed in Just drawn gridelines to has proposed to lay down guidelines to ensure that such demolitions stay withir the legal ambit. The removal of encroachments ought to be a year-round activity. A pick-and-choose policy will only em-bolden violators from the majority. Khokan Das, Kolkata

on rape: Death, woman office-led probe (E. September 4) This is too little, too late from the Bengal CM. The bill comes af-ter numerous incidents of sexual vibe-lence and protest. The bill is a reactive po-litical move. Further, it has not received the president's assent yet. It may meet the same fate as the Maharashtra Shakti Bill or the Andhra Disha Bill. What we need are basic societal changes to shift our attitudes towards sexual violence. Swarnava Mitra, folkoro

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Bengal Bill on rape: Death, woman officer-led probe'

IN OUR INTEREST IN OUR INTEREST

THIS REPERS TO the article. Friends with benefits' (IE, September 4), India's fruitful relationship with the littoral states the South China Sea is crucial from a strategic point of view. These countrols control the passage of the Strait of Malacca, through which Chinese naval paraphernalia passes to the Indian Ocean. The visit of the Malaysian FM and the Vietnamses PM recently, followed by PM Narendra Modi's visit to Brunei and Singapore highlights the timportance of Singapore highlights the importance of these countries as allies, Besides, India's office countries a aines, assures, mou a efforts to keep these states from the am-bit of China's Belt and Road initiative are crucial to contain its expansion, which would ultimately pose a threat to India, Devendra Awasthi, Luchow

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The Indian **EXPRESS**

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

AN UPWARD TICK

World Bank raises India's growth forecast, but points to challenges on the export front. They need to be addressed

HE WORLD BANK has raised its forecast for the Indian economy in its latest up date, pegging growth at 7 per cent this year, up from its earlier expectation of 6,6 per cent. While the revised estimate comes only days after government data showed that the economy grew at 6.7 per cent in the first quarter, lower than the RBI's estimate of 7.1 per cent, the Bank's estimate is in line with assessments by other agencies In the July Judate of the World Economic Outlook the International Monetary Fund had also revised upwards its assessment to 7 per cent, The Asian Development Bank has projected growth at 7 per cent, while the RBI has pegged growth to be marginally higher at 7.2 per cent. Projections by most other analysts are broadly in this range.

The Bank now expects private consumption to pick up as rural incomes bounce back — consumption grew at 7.4 per cent in the first quarter after growing at 4 per cent last year. A good monsoon after last year's El Nino induced deficient rainfall season and the heast-wave should help spur farm output, and as a consequence lift rural incomes and demand. However, it expects a slight deceleration in investment growth, reflecting slower growth of government capital expenditure. But there is reason to be optimistic about the country's medium-term prospects. The Bank expects growth to average 6.7 per cent over

2025-27, while the IMF expects growth to be around 6.5 per cent over the next few years.

The report's analysis of India's exports makes for a sobering reading, It highlights that the country has not been able to take advantage of the export space being vacated by China in low-skill manufacturing, with others like Bangladesh and Vietnam being the "primary beneficiaries of China's shrinking market share". Both countries have a larger share in exports of apparel, leather, textiles, and footwear. Others that have benefited snare in exports or apparent, retainer, excited, and covered. Others that make Determined from China's loss in global exports are Poland, Germanny and France. Part of the problem can be traced to high tariff and non-tariff barriers — as per the World Trade Organisation, India's average tariff (most favoured nation) has risen over the past decade, and is higher than most of its competitors. Then there is the issue of employment. As exports of both manufacturing and services become more skill intensive, the report estimates that both direct and indirect employment related to exports has fallen. In the recent Union budget the finance minister had brought down tariffs on several items. However, more needs to be done. The steps towards protectionism need to be reversed, tariff and non-tariff barriers need to be reduced. Alongside, the government should work towards entering into more free trade agreements, and seek deeper integration with global value chains

IN HER NAME

West Bengal's anti-rape law is a knee-jerk reaction to public outrage. Dismantling cultures of misogyny needs harder work

EARLY A MONTH after the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata's

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RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, the Aparajital Woman and Child (West

Bengal Criminal Laws and Amendment) Bill 2024 was passed unanimously
by the West Bengal Assembly. The proposed legislation includes death

penalty for the convicted prepretator in instances when the assault kills or leaves the victim in a vegetative state, and death or life imprisonment without parole for other categories of rape convicts. It mandates that probes be completed within 21 days from the date

of the TBR and trails within 33 days and that women officers lead these investigations. of the FIR and trials within 30 days and that women officers lead these investigations CM Mamata Banerjee has claimed that the Bill tries to "plug the loopholes that exist in the central legislation". But it also throws open larger questions on accountability, and a po-litical expediency that does not recognise or embrace the hard work of challenging pa-triarchy across social and political institutions. While the involvement of female officers in the investigation and the emphasis or

protecting the privacy and dignity of the survivor during the trial process are laudable, stricter laws have rarely made up for cultures of misogony. Between 2018 and 2022, con-viction rates for rape remained around 28 per cent, according to NCRB data. For most survivors, even getting to the trial means overcoming a system that is rarely sensitive or symvivors, even getting to the that means overcoming a system that is rarely sensitive or sympathetic. There are other institutional challenges to due process, including but not limited to investigative and judicial quality and capacity. Studies show that the death penalty offers little deterrence to beinous crimes. Following the 2012 Delhi gang rape, the Justice SVerma-led Committee had suggested many changes, including the sensitisation of the police force, widening the ambit of what constitutes rape, and a reimagination of the idea of masculinity consolidated by families, societies and the state. It had argued that "it would be a regressive step to introduce death penalty for rape even where such punishment is restricted to the rarest of rare cases." Ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, political parties across the spectrum had spo-

ken of the centrality of "nari shakti" to their vision of India. Yet, there remains an inher-ent lack of understanding of what women want and need: Not political playbooks that counter outrage with populist solutions but safe spaces at home and outside; not whataboutery about issues of women's safety but public infrastructures that do not invisibilise or hem them in; not a lack of accountability but equal opportunities. Stricter punishment and harder laws are quick-fix solutions. Peeling off layers of patriarchy in everyday governance is the much harder but far more crucial task.

Who's a clever dog?

Their intelligence, including ability to store object names in long-term memory, has to do with their relationship to humans

HO HAS A tail that never stops wagging, ears that perk up at the mention of a walk or chicken, and a brain that can remember the names of tops, years after those tops get lost and/or chewed up and thrown out? As those who have spent any time with one would attest, the good boys and girls of the world — doggos and puppers, as they are known on the internet - are also very clever boys and girls. A study at the Eotvos Lorand University in Hungary

has found that dogs can store up to a dozen object names in their long-term memory, correctly identifying tops that they have not seen in two years. For scientist, this is an important finding which could lead to a greater understand-ing of the parts of the brain connected to the mechanics and evolution of language, given the connection between long-term memory and linguistic skills. The fact that dogs are capable of such feats of memory — on top of their incredible emotional intelligence and ability to "read" humans — also opens up greater possibilities for their deployment as service and emotional support animals, as well as in search and rescue operations.

Dogs, of course, are not unique in their startling displays of intelligence - other species like squirrels, octopi, rats and crows, too have demonstrated problem-solving skills and the ability to retrieve information from their long-term memory. What makes canine in-telligence special, however, is that it seems to have developed as a response to the close, millennia-long relationship between dogs and humans. In other words, it is because of domestication that puppies, even when they're mere weeks old, are better at understanding humans and using that knowledge to infer information about the environment, like where the treats are hidden. So humans can, perhaps, claim some credit for the intelligence of their furry companions. But dogs' seemingly unending store of love and loyalty? That's entirely down to their own selves.

The world's unborn soul



Old faiths have dissolved, what has taken their place is more precarious - S Radhakrishnan speaks to our time

PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

ON OCTOBER 20 1936, Sarvepalli Radha-krishnan delivered the inaugural lecture as the newly elected Spalding Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics at the University of Oxford, The lecture entitled "The World's Unborn

Religion and Ethics at the University of Coxford. The lecture entitled "The World's Unborn Soul" seems as much a tractfor our times as it did for his. The world Radharish nan describes is a world of feverish energy, chaotic activity, and immense creativity. But it is also confronting an abyss: Morally confused, wracked with uncertainty, and no sense of where all the political chips were going to fall. The biggest disquiet stems from the fact that, as an empirical matter, the world is a single community of fale. He writes "For the first time in the history of our planets is inhabitants have become one whole, each and every part of which is affected by the fortunes of every other. Science and technology, without aiming at this result, have achieved the unity. Economic and political phenomena are increasingly imposing on us the obligation to treat the world as a unit. Currencies are linked, commerce is international, political fortunes are interdependent, "Yet the forms of political organisation we inhabit, the consciousness we embody in our daily lives, the identities we give allegiance to, are still structured in ways that make us oblivious to this obvious fact.

As he writes, "the sense that mankind

give allegiance to, are still structured in ways that make us oblivious to this lowious fact. As he writes, "the sense that mankind must become a community is still a casual whim, a vague aspiration, not generally accepted as a conscious ideal or an urgent practical necessity moving us to feel the dignity of a common citizenship and the call of a common duty. Attempts to bring about human unity through mechanical means, through political adjustments, have proved abortive." The misalignment between what determines our fate and how we think of our identities was a recipe for disaster.

The second theme running through the

ipe for disaster. The second theme running through the The second theme running through the lecture was the exhaustion of existing ideolo-gies and outlooks on life. The lecture is Hegelain in its sensibility: Human beings will strive for meaning. Each civilisation represents an achievement of sorts in this journey. In the context of the West, Greeks were the font of a creative worldly empiricism; Romans a font for secular law. Christianity brought an incan-degent sense of transcendence and inserdescent sense of transcendence and inner

We look to the state for justice. But, ultimately, the state is a power that devour everything. As he writes, 'The state which is the most powerful organisation is least hampered by inner scruples or outer checks. Man in the community is at least half civilised, but the state is still primitive, essentially a huge beast of prey. We have no strong public opinion, or effective international law to restrain the predatory state.' The most dangerous pathology is nationalism. Identification with nations is old, but in the modern world it colonises all spaces, becomes the ultimate source

of meaning.

depth, but also bigotry and religious fanati-cism; the Renaissance restored a sense of free creativity. The spirit of free inquiry unleashed by the Enlightenment paves the way for democracy; the modern aspiration for the dig-nity of the individual also transforms into

democracy; the modern aspiration for the dignity of the individual also transforms into movements for economic justice. This history is eloquently tool, even though it is a selective history, necessitated by the confines of a lecture. These sensibilities also run parallel to various projects of domination. All of these movements have made the modern world, and all of these gains have to be maintained. But while old faiths have dissolved, what is put in their place is far more precarious, and in some cases more dangerous. Our sense of self is more fragile, We increasingly turn to therapy for self-maintenance. As he writes, "The long-starved powers of the soul reassert their claims and shift the foundations of our mind. The weak, the wounded, and the overstrained souls turn to psychonathysis which deals with the problems of the soul, under the guise of rationality and with the prestige of science." But the political manifestations of the crisis are more dangerous. The first, more of a mixed bag, is the growing power of the state.

We look to the state for justice. But ultimately, the state is a power that devour

mixed bag, is the growing power of the state. We look to the state for justice. But, ultimately, the state is a power that devours everything. As he writes. "The state which is the most powerful organisation is least harn-pered by inner scruples or outer checks. Man in the community is at least half civilised, but the state is still primitive, essentially a huge beast of prey. We have no strong public opinion, or effective international law to restrain he predatory state." The most dangerous pathology is nationalism, Identification with nations is old, but in the modern world it colonises all spaces, becomes the ultimate source of meaning. He writes, "Nations have become mysterious symbols to whose protection we rally as swages to fetishes." So, the paradox of the modern age: The rational emancipated individual lurable to understand the deep irrational sources of his own disquict, the age of individual liberation underwriting the power of a predatory state, the age that dispensed with religion fills it with an even more narcissistic, domineering and racialised religion: Nationalism.

So where do we turn? There are two hints of a direction. The first is openness. He writes. of a direction. The first is openness. He writes "The great periods of human history are marked by a widespread access of spiritual vi-tality derived from the fusion of national cultality derived from the fusion of national cul-tures with foreign influences. If we take Judaism, we find that Abraham came from Mesopotamia and Joseph and Moses from Egypt. Later, Judaism shows the influence of Hellenism. Asia Minor and Egypt exercised considerable influence over the Greek devel-opment. The creative genius of the medieval world came from Palestine: "And in a swipe against Euro-centrism he writes," Now that we have the whole world for our cultural base, the process of recovery and training in clas-sics cannot cease with listening to the voices of Isaiah and Paul, Socrates and Ciccor. That would be an academic error, a failure of perof Isaiah and Paul, Socrates and Cicero. That would be an academic error, a failure of perspective. There are others also who have participated in the supreme adventure of the ages, the prophets of Egypt, the sages of China, and the seers of India, who are guide-posts disclosing to us the course of the trail." The whole world is our cultural base. A remarkable phrase to write.

The second hint is this, The core problem in that you can be comediated by the control of the control of

is that we confuse the Self with the Ego, and it is the Ego that derails all ideals. The only meaning of "spirituality" is the extinguishing of the Ego. But he route to this is an engagement with the Self. not another ideology. As he writes, "The soul that has found itself is no longer conscious of itself in its isolation. Those who are anxious to live in peace with their own species and all life will not find it possible to gloat over the massacres of large numbers of men simply because they do not belong to their race or country. Our normal attitudes to other races and nations are no more than artificial masks, habits of thought and feeling, sedulously cultivated by long and feeling, sedulously cultivated by long

more than artificial masks, habits of thought and feeling, sedulously cultivated by long practice in dissimulation." As we honour Radhalrishnan on Teachers' Day, we might as well read him, not in the spirit of a nationalistic paean to this or that tra-dition, but to an open world trying to discover its yet unborn soul.

The writer is a contributing editor. The Indian Express

Don't Disconnect

Overemphasis on rest can slow down the work of the nation

VASUNDHARA SHANKER

WITH THE ONSET of the pandemic, the global workforce was thrust into a new work environment; Working from the comfort of their homes. This shift made the transition back to full-time office work a significant challenge for many. The Indian Express recently wrote an edi-torial in favour of the Right to Disconnect law

torial in favour of the Right to Disconnect law passed in Australia (Right to disconnect; August 30). While the concept of and all supporting arguments has gained significant traction worldwide, culminating in legislative measures in several countries globally, it's a phenomenon which could potentially curb growth, especially in a competitive economy such as India's. The "Right to Disconnect" advocates for an employees' right to "disconnect from work-related communications outside of official working hours", which can dull the edge that drives breakthrough achievements in economies where innovation and rapid progress are critical.

in economies where innovation and rapid progress are critical.

Hustle culture, with its ethos of constant striving, hard work, and the relentless pursuit of success, has been both celebrated and crit-icised in equal measure, perhaps because of its mistaken meaning. Hustle culture is a nat-ural extension of human ambition, a reflec-tion of our intrinsic drive for growth and achievement. Critics have oftentimes labelled hustle culture as a cesseent that rould be no. hustle culture as a concept that could be po tentially detrimental to one's mental health putting forth the argument as stated by the author that "Abit of rest and diversion not only makes workers more productive and creative

DEAR EDITOR. I DISAGREE

A fortnightly column in which we invite readers to tell us why, when they differ with the editorial positions or news coverage of 'The Indian Express'

The idea of disconnecting from work is perhaps counterintuitive in a country where work is not just a means to an end but a source of identity, pride, and purpose. In the long run, this approach could lead to a ecline in national prosperity, as reduced work hours might diminish the capacity for sustained economic development.

but also more motivated."

While this statement is appealing at first glance, it oversimplifies the complex dynamics of work, productivity, growth and motivation. Experiments like those in Iceland are often touted as proof that reduced work hours leads to happier, more productive workers; a closer examination would definitely reveal significant flaws in this argument especially when there is a broader application of such findings to diverse economic contexts, such as the young Indian workforce and economic structure.

Countries like Iceland are unique, with a high concentration of public-sector jobs that are less dependent on strict productivity metrics, and cannot be compared to India, with hig growing youth population and private sector industries which thrive and sustain on high performance. To focus overwhelmingly on leisure can sometimes overlook the fact that work can be a profound source of satisfaction and well-being and be deeply rewarding.

It is equally rucial to acknowledge that humans are not merely seeking leisure and releazation; they are driven by purpose, direction, and accomplishment, which gives them long-lasting happiness Excess focus on leisure slows down medium-performing workers while high-performing professionals will almost always be on the top of the ladder.

The reality is that many of the world's most significant advancements and innovations have come from environments where intense focus and long hours were the norm. In India,

have come from environments where intense focus and long hours were the norm, In India,

the right to profession envisaged as a funda-mental right enshrined in the Constitution, underscores the importance of work in anin-dividual's life, akin to their right to equality and life. This fundamental right not only al-lows individuals to choose their vocation, but also reflects the broader societal value placed on hard work, ambition, and the pursuit of ex-cellence in this context the concept of a "right" on hard work, ambition, and the pursuit of ex-cellence. In this context, the concept of a "right to disconnect" might seem at odds with the cultural ethos that celebrates continuous striv-ing and professional growth. A reduction in work hours could lead to a slower pace of de-velopment and a diminished capacity to re-spond to market chemands — amamment risk the Indian economy cannot afford to take. The idea of disconnecting from work is perhaps counterintuitive in a country where

The idea of disconnecting from work is perhaps counter intuitive in a country where work is not just a means to an end but a source of identity, pride, and purpose, in the long run, this approach could lead to a decline in national prosperity, as reduced work hours might diminish the capacity for sustained economic development, widening the chasm of divide between developed and fast developing nations. Instead of advocating for "the rest of the world to catch up", a more nuanced approach is needed — one that recognises the importance of hard work, ambition, and sustained productivity, while also ensuring a healthy and motivated workforce.

motivated workforce.

The writer is managing partner of Verum Legal, founder of Code Gavel and JannAwaaz

SEPTEMBER 5, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO No Room To Move



A SUPREME COURT judge has been forced to

A SUPREME COURT judge has been forced to stay in a Delhi guest house for the past few months following the disinclination of a for-ment inster's family to vacate the bungalow allotted to the judge as official residence. After his transfer from the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, Justice Khalid has made the two ground floorrooms of Kerala House his home.

A P ASSEMBLY

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THE ANDHRA PRADESH Legislative Assembly is being convened on September 11 to test the claim advanced by Chief Minister N Bhaskara Rao of the majority support in the 294-mem-ber House, "It is people's victory in saving democracy," the deposed Andhra Pradesh chief minister, NT Rama Rao, said about the convening of the Assembly.

HIGH PRIESTS' DEMANDS

THE WITHDRAWAL OF the Army from the Golden Temple and a halt to "kar seva" by Santa Singh are among the three conditions set out by the five head priests to cancel the proposed march to the Temple on October 1. The priests also demanded restoration of the authority of the SCPC as the third condition. "If these terms were accepted, peace could

return to Punjab", they asserted. They said that their decision to take out the march was not political.

RENT CONTROL

THE ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATION reforms commission (EARC) headed by I. K Jha says that the tenant is "overprotected" by the rent control legislation as it stands in the country. In its 11th report on nent control, the EARC says that a law to protect the weak can become an instrument of exploitation in the hands of the strong, Rent control in actual operation tends often to protect the "haves" against the "have nots".