



OUR TAKE

### **Doctors** must return to work

Their protest is just and legitimate, but the people of West Bengal must not suffer because of it

fter a month of disrupted services, it is time for normalcy to return to government hospitals in West Bengal. To that end, the A Supreme Court's direction to doctors in the state, who have been on a protest since the August 9 rape-murder of a doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hopsital, to return to work must be heeded. There is no denying that the doctors' protest is wholly legitimate and just. The grisly rape and murder of the doctor at the government-run hospital in Kolkata exposed the punishing conditions that doctors face at work and the postballers. work and the particular vulnerability of women doctors. Till the time the infrastructural and procedural deficiencies at the workplace are not addressed, and the doctors are not assured of their safety and security, their anxieties will remain and the administration shouldn't play these down. Such changes, of course, won't occur overnight, but the state has to demonstrate intent. Against this backdrop, the Supreme Court's direction to the West Bengal government to submit details of the steps taken to

government to summit details of the steps taken to rensure the safety of medical professionals needs to be complied with urgently.

The other demand, for a credible investigation of the crime and justice for the victim, also needs to be taken seriously. The mishandling of the case by the state administration eroded not just the doctors' faith in a fair probe but also that of the public at large. It will be hard for the doctors to put aside their distrust and return to work for the same administration that failed their colleague. The doctors' insistence on continuing the agitation even after the apex court's direction needs to be seen in this light.

Brutal crackdowns on protest marches and poorly concealed threats against "absenteeism" by the state's ruling party leaders have stoked apprehensions of reprisal. While the top court has directed the state government to take no punitive action against doctors,

government to take no punture action against occors, there is perhaps a case for court-supervised monitoring to ensure this.

The agitation, however, must end now, given the fallout for health services in the state. The government claims "absenteeism" has caused 23 deaths in the state; whatever the number, the vulnerable sections that need enveryment-run, beach sensitive the proof control to the control of the control of the sections. that need government-run health services the most must not become collateral damage in the stand-off. The case shone a spotlight on the doctors' plight, and fostered public support for their demands. Their dignified stance of remaining politically neutral earned them respect. But both could quickly run out if the protests continue to impose a human cost

### Need to make Delhi's firecracker ban work

Vell ahead of the winter smog and pollution in the national Capital, the Delhi access the national Capital, the Delhi government has announced a ban on firecrackers till January I, 2025. The ban is an annual affair, though the early announcement this time could help traders avoid losses from unsold stock—a common complaint against last-minute promulgations. But whether a longer lead time minute promugatons. But whether a longer lead unie will help move the needle on its efficacy remains to be seen. Cracker bans—including the first, Supreme-Court-ordered one in 2017—have been conspicuous failures, with Delhi's air quality falling to "severe" during Diwall. Crackers are sold in open defiance of the ban, in grey markets and ferried from across state borders. There is little doubt about the harm that crackers cause, and the breathability crisis they stoke in the NCR, albeit temporarily, pushing air pollution caused by stubble burning into dangerous territory. Both are exacerbated by the fine road/construction dust in the region and the winter inversion phenomenon.

The ban, though brazenly violated, is used to stoke a reactionary, communal narrative of the State singling out a Hindu festival. Hefty fines for both sellers and endusers could have a deterrent effect, but given how deeply unpopular the ban is, its enforcement remains well short of half-hearted. Unless the Centre and the state are convinced they can come together to enforce the ban, there is little meaning in announcing one. The communication has to be consistent: Delhi's air is not good through the year; winter inversion makes it bad; stubble burning, worse; and, for a few days, crackers push it over the edge, to levels that are positively life threatening for the vulnerable. The argument that the bigger factors behind Delhi's bad air need to be addressed is a valid one, but it does not change the simple fact that crackers are polluting.

# Developed India needs civil governance reforms

greater inclusion, without which the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 will be hard to realise

developed India by 2047 is impossible without an inclusive India, where we will be a supported in the country of the country of only need to develop to the country of only need to doubt-digit growth to raise its per capita increme, but it also needs to secure the demographic dividend through better human capital. With half the population set to live in urban locations in the next ten years, urban governance for the poor needs a transformation. There are several areas where evid governance must make a difference, from the income of the bottom quinties to health and nutrition, from educational attainment and skilling orgen growth. It must secure the State-citizes in interface to contribute to ease of living and doing business. Communities will have to playa critical role in developing accountability at all levels.

By general consensus, India's fall-ure to ensure quality universal delivery of public goods like education, health, nutrition, clean environment, and urban living spaces compromises ta quest for an inclusive society and economy, with concomitant fallout for productivity and wages that can developed India by 2047

lead to lives of dignity. Civil govern-ance has to reorganise itself on the basis of evidence from below, on what works and what does not. Here are some considerations to be kept in mind as we go about restructuring civil governance. First, decentralised community action under the leadership of gram angulary

child governance.

If governance, consider the control governance, control governance, control governance, control governance, control gram panethysis and urban local bodies, with funds, functions, and functionaries, monitored by women's collectives is the best way forward. Neebsade provision of professionals along with flexible untied grants and adequacy of public resources is non-negotiable. Convergence has to be a bottom-up process, through decentralised community action and planning for the 29 sectors in rural and 18 in urban that are in the lith and the 12th Schedules of the Constitution. Second, there is a need to make standard setting, city-wide planning, social and financial sauding, transcolal and though the properties of the constitution. Second, there is a need to make standard setting, city-wide planning, the properties of the constitution of the control of the contr

delivered through convergence as the gains in each of these sectors have consequences for other sectors. The graminthan basif sabhas need to be monitored to ensure the participation of every line-department functionary, or the same of the same of



tionaries in gram panchayats/urban local bodies as well as block, district, and state offices. Transformation in human development sectors takes time, and there is a role for the continuity of people, policies, and programmes. In human development sectors takes time, and there is a role for the continuity of people, policies, and programmes. In human development five to seven years, So, transfer policies need to be revisited. There is also a very strong case for performance seasessement of frontline workers — school teachers, auxiliary nurse mid-wice, anganwadi workers, and others. Performance-based incentives for the effectiveness of schools, skill centres, anganwadis, and health and well-ness centres need to be considered. Sixth, institutional flexibility and autonomy is need to be considered. Sixth, institutional flexibility and autonomy is needed to botser school health centre/arganwadi-level exect lence. Third-party assessments have to be institutional face of the middle party of the party of the party as the party assessments have to be institutional flexibility and the party of the party as the party assessments be to be come the basis for innovations for outcomes.

Seventh, local, state, and national vernments must partner for civil vernance outcomes. Central and te funding in the sectors falling in local government's domain must the local government's domain must necessarily be spent with the approval of local governments, after validation

YOAV GALLANT | DEFENCE MINISTER OF ISRAEL

ty-led planning process. Eighth, emphasis must be given to evidence-based selection of beneficiaevidence-based selection of beneficiaries of systemment programmes, with objectively verifiable indicators. The Socio-Economic Census 2011 was one such effort. Its adoption across programmes such as Ujjwala. Pradhan Mantri Awar Sipiana (PMAY), Sauthagya, Pradham Mantri Jan Arogya Yedjana (PMAY), Sauthagya, Pradham Mantri Jan Arogya deprived across region, religion, caste and creed. Technology must be effectively leveraged for transparent identification and updating of beneficiary lists.

tification and uposting or textocoust, lists.

Ninth, civil and technical services must be guided by evidence rather than the pressures and pulls of democracy. Evidence-based action and outcome-based governance are what the higher civil and technical services ought to provide.

The achievement of outcomes is only possible with conviction-driven leadership across levels that are driven by hard evidence. That alone will secure an infall for all, an inclusive and developed India.

### Brazil-X fight, and limits of free speech in democracies

The decision of Braull's Supreme Court to ban the popular social media platform X (formerly Twitter) is a miles at time to ban the popular social media platform X (formerly Twitter) is a miles at time to the platform X (formerly Twitter) is a miles at the platform X (formerly Twitter) is a miles at the platform X (formerly Twitter) is a miles at the platform X (formerly Twitter) in the world's fourth-largest democracy, where it had 22 million daily active users, is a sign that free societies are increasingly being forced to grapple with a dilemma hitherto believed to be confined to dictatorships—how much freedom of expression should be allowed before it upends public interest and order?

Prodictably, X has proscribed in the proscribed in the platform X (formerly X

Musk's endorsement of former US president Donald Trump (whose own X account had been blocked in 2021 but restored in 2022 after Musk bought the company) has made him a darling of the Right wing. The fact that



tens of thousands of supporters of the "Trump of the tropics", Bolsonarch, have been protesting X's ban in Brazil and lionising Musik as a "superhero" and a "saviour of their country from communism", shows how far the world's richest man has waded into domestic politics of different countries, Using the bull-horn of his B?" million followers on X, Musik has become too big and too loudly partisan, with a keen sense of his own power to shake up global public opinion.

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Ignoring X is not an option in today's world, where wast numbers of neizines say that social media is their primary source of news and information. The sheer size and cascading impact that social media giants have in setting the narrative and moulding people's minds demand that they be regulated and held responsible for the content pouring out of their accounts.

responsible for the content powing of their accounts. The usual excuse of libertarian digital mogula like Musikor Pavel Durov, the founder of Telegram, who was detained in France for non-compliance with local laws, is that content moderation is censorship that deprives neitzens from accessing diverse viewpoints. But X and Telegram are raking in massive revenues, and given the global systemic influence that they are exercising, they must be held accountable.

that they are exercising, they must be held accountable. Even in India, authorities have had multiple run-ins with X about objectionable content on issues such as the farmers' process, the coronavirus pandemic and terrorist propaganda. Unlike Brazil, however, India managed to leash X and other big American social media companies through an array of densely technical rules, judgments and law enforcement actions.

nical rules, judgments and taw ensurecement actions.

Musk's willingness to comply with India's persistent pressure regarding dangerous con-tent on X has been critiqued by internet free-dom advocates as a sellout. But the bottom line is that India's less overzeadous regulatory approach has ensured that the approximately 26 million Indian users of X have not been deprived of the platform. Unlike angry Brazil-ians, whose X apps have all gone blank, Indi-arus can access their virtual public square unimpeded.

unimpeded.
The conduct of X and Musk is indeed problematic and it must be tarned. If not reformed. However, the Brazilian method is crude and counterproductive. The subtler Indian strategy is actually the template that other democracies should emulate as they contemplate how to regulate the digital masters of the universe.

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Israel should achieve an agreement that will bring a pause for six weeks, and bring back hostages. We maintain the right to achieve our goals including Hamas' destruction

### Blended finance can help meet decarbonisation costs

The climate crisis is staring us in the face. Interne summers, flash floods, and raging storms are signs that the planet is witnessing unprecedented change. This calls for immediate and swith action. At the 26th Conference of Parties in Glasgow in 2021, India had announced a 'net zero by 2070' goal. To achieve this, investments of \$10-20 trillion are required. More than 50% of these investments are entiseged from the power sector and 15% in green bydrogen alone. This transition will be required. More than 50% of these investments are entiseged from the power sector and 15% in green bydrogen alone. This transition will be the Union government. I.e., increasing the renewable generation capacity to 505 GW and accelerating green hydrogen production to five million metric tonous per annum by 2303. However, integrating variable renewable energy into the grid and entsuring availability during peak demand hours requires affordable energy storage and offshore wind. This spotlights the financing challenge. Despite the government's ciforts such as viability gap funding covering 35-40% of cappex, emerging technologies, outside of pure-play solar and omshore wind, have not yet reached commencial parity with conventional energy. And even in the absence of commondity-demand-risk, this results in higher risk perception. The start of the start of the production of the conventional energy. And even in the absence of commondity-demand-risk, this results in higher risk perception. Benefit themselves the conventional energy and the start of the production of the start of the production of the conventional energy of the production of the development of the conventional energy of the production of the conventional energy of

on the latest discovered capacity charge of €3.72 lakly/M/mombh in a Gujarattender.
Government's intervention, through the ₹3,400 crore VGF scheme funding up to 40% of the capital cost will likely reduce the battery storage trafff to ₹3.35 kWh. To lower this traff further, behaded finance map be explored. Blustratively, a blended finance facility comprising 5% capital grain, concessional deeth of 15% nat of latesters, and concessional equity with return trafff to −24.02.2 kWh.
Wind energy helps address the issue of renewable energy availability during non-solar hours −offshore wind has better availability at higher trafffs (10-12kWh). Compared to the more established onshore wind (23.6-33/kWh). Government announced VGF, coupled with localisation, is expected to reduce the offshore wind tarnff to ±67/kWh. A smillar blended finance facility can reduce offshore wind tarnff to ±67/kWh. Smillar blended finance facility can reduce offshore wind tarnff to ±76/kWh. thereby attaining commercial parity. Both these measures shall directly impact staining commercial parity. Both these measures shall directly impact staining commercial parity. Both these measures shall directly impact staining commercial parity. Both these measures shall directly impact staining commercial parity. Both these measures shall directly impact staining commercial parity is designed for emerging technologies. The facility may have a three-tiered structure comprising concessional debt, tonocesional debt, concessional debt, concessional debt, concessional debt, concessional debt while sovereign wealth funds and persion funds may contribute with concessional equity, Multilaterals and the government may provide cupital grants and/or credit enhancement guarants resting on an overarried of the proposal concessional debt while sovereign wealth funds and persion funds may contribute with concessional edition on contribute with concessional edition of this facility.

His perfunct that a robust blended finance can support India's energy transification tapi



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### Editorial



### Soothing salvo

The GST Council has held out hope for some relief for insurance consumers

eeting for the second time after the decided programmers and Services Tax (GST) Council on Monday sought to calm some of the rising clamour against the 18% indirect tax levy on insurance premium payments. A new Group of Ministers is being formed to urgently recommend tax changes for life and health insurance policies, with an ansaurance the Council would meet again in November to take a call on its report. This marks a notable shift from last month, when Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had staunchly defended the levy in Parliament, noting that States earn a large chunk of these revenues and Members of Parliament, who took on the Centre on the matermust flag it with States' Ministers as they are a party to the Council's decisions. It must be noted that a reconsideration of GST levies on insurance and come up at least three times under the Council's aggis, starting a year and a half since the GST's July 2017 launch, but the status quo was preferred each time. What is plausibly different this time around is

preferred each time. What is plausibly different this time around is What is pausibly different his the dependent of the sentiment. While Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has averred that the GST levy on life insurance premise of um is tantamount to taxing the uncertainties of life, the BJP's now-critical allies such as the TDP um is tantamount to taxing the uncertainties of life, the BIP's now-critical allies such as the TDP and Jana Sena Parry have also sought a rollback of he levies on health and life insurance. Perhaps not unrelated is the government's post-poll decision to desist from tom-tomming GST's buoyant monthly collections, perceived by many as a celebration of high levies on consumers. GST revenues just from health insurance premia rose over 54% between 2021-22 and 2023-24, yielding 82,262 crore last year. One hopes that any reduction in the GST on health covers considered by the Council is not selective or limited, for instance, to group policies or senior citizens or with a cap on the cover, and it is ensured they translate into real cuts in premia payments. After the COVID-19 pandemic, while awareness levels about health cover needs have risen, hospitalisation and insurance cover costs have spiked even faster. Given India's inadequate public health systems, a serious disease or malaise afflicting a single family member can push an average household into poverty. For life covers, the Council could take a more nuanced approach by extender member to policies. note into poverty. For life coverts, the Council could take a more manced approach by extend-ing most relief to pure term insurance policies that help families tide over shocks, rather than to myriad market-linked investment products of-fered by the industry in the guise of insurance. If, in the Council's wisdom, helicopter services availed on a 'shared seat' basis must attract only 5% GST, insurance policies surely deserve more benign taxation too.

### Future, at last

Tennis gets a settled look with the rise of a new generation

ne of the toughest tests for a modern-day tennis player is to maintain excellence all year round. The season starts in early January and ends only in mid-November, traversing continents, different time zones and a multi-ude of playing surfaces. The first and the last Grand Slam tournaments themselves are separated by roughly eight months, making success in both — even though they are similar hard-court Majors — one of the most impressive feats. Since the turn of the millennium, only Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic (thrice each) and Angelique Kerberh admanaged to win at Melbourne Park and ber had managed to win at Melbourne Park and Flushing Meadows in the same year. What Jannik Sinner and Aryna Sabalenka achieved in New Flushing Meadows in the same year. What Jannik Sinner and Aryna Sabalenka achieved in New York, of winning their maiden. US Open singles titles to go with their Australian Open crowns from earlier in the season, is thus an ode to their fitness, consistency and all-round playing ability. For Sinner, the twin successes bookend a career-best year, the recent doping cloud he came under notwithstanding. He won the Masters 1000 trophies in Miami and Cincinnati, ATP 500s in Rotterdam and Halle, reached the semifinals at French Open, quarterfinals at Wimbledon and rose to No.1 in the world. Sabalenka, World No.2, has been just as prolific, winning Cincinnati, reaching the final at Madrid and Rome, and making the quarters at Roland-Garros.

While their triumphs will no doubt embellish their respective careers, the accomplishments will, in all probability, shape the future of tennis. Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz have now split 2024's four Slams, and for the first time since 2002, there is no winner from the legendary trio of Februs 2020, there is no winner from the legendary trio of Februs 2020.

four stams, and for the first time since 2002, there is no winner from the legendary trio of Fe-derer, Rafael Nadal and Djokovic. Their ascent has also come at a time when tennis needed va-riety. Sinner's clinically efficient and workman-like game, and Akaraz's all-court dazzle and razzriety. Sinner's clinically efficient and workmanike game, and Alcarax's all-court dazzle and razzmatazz make the upper echelons of men's tennis
an eclectic place instead of the one-dimensional
hub it was threatening to turn into with the rise of
players like Daniil Medvedev and Alexander Zverev. Meanwhille, Sabalenka's victory has made
2024 the first year since 2014 without a first-time
women's singles champion at the Majors, a clear
sign that the WTA Tour has finally settled down.
Like Sinner-Alcaraz, there is the Sabalenka-lga
Swiatek duopoly, with the pair having secured seven of the past II Slams. While Sabalenka – also
the Australian Open winner and US Open runnerup in 2023 – has been consistent, with sevensemifinal or better finishes at her last eight Majors, Swiatek is a five-time Slam champion and
the No.1 from April 2022 for all but eight weeks.
All of which proves that tennis' brand-new era is
well and truly here.

## A panoramic view of the 2024 China-Africa summit

frica figures prominently in China's worldview and in the conduct of its foreign policy in the 21st century. During the past 24 years, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has emerged as an all-encompassing and effective platform for dialogue, interaction and planning between the two sides. African countries, despite their

dialogue, interaction and planning between the two sides. African countries, despite their reservations and grievances, have found it useful to enhance their proximity to China. Unlike the previous decade, African governments and institutions of multiple hues now find it increasingly more comfortable to deal with their Chinese counterparts. In this light, the outcomes of the Ninth Ministerial Conference of FOCAC, which just concluded in Beljing, merit a dispassionate scrutiny.

As scholar George Yu noted in 1968, 'studying China in Africa is much like pursuing a dragon in the bush. The dragon is imposing, but the bush is dense.' In the latter half of the 20th century, especially in its last decade, China laid the foundations of a strong partnership with Africa. This has blossomed during the FOCAC era which began with the first summit held in Belijing in 2000. Since then, a total of five conferences took place in Belijing and one each in Ethiopia, Egypt, South Africa, and Senegal. The Beljing summit last week confirms China's consistency and steadfastness in pursuing its goals relating to Africa. They are economic, political and strategic in nature, reflecting Belijins long-held view that Africa. They are economic, political and strategic in nature, reflecting Beijing's long-held view that Africa is vital to the world's future – therefore, it should be motivated to stand alongside China.

### The main elements

A careful look at the 30-paragraph-long Beijing Declaration of the latest summit reveals its key

First, the jointly negotiated document which bears predominantly the stamp of Chinese draftsmanship, has six sections, namely outlining the high-level 'China Africa Community with a Shared Future'; fostering 'synergy' between China's Belt and Road Initiative (BR), AU's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 UN Agenda for sustainable development; the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GCI); and spelling out the review and outlook for FOCAC.

Second, both sides have committed themselves to expanding exchanges on governance, First, the jointly negotiated document which

second, bour suces nave committee themselves to expanding exchanges on governance, modernisation and poverty reduction so that medimisation based on 'the characteristics of their own civilisations' is promoted. Further, they favour 'mutually beneficial and inclusive indualy oriental and inclusive economic globalization' that focuses on the concerns of African countries. China supports Africa in increasing Africa's influence and role in global governance. The declaration states: 'Africa



Rajiv Bhar... Distinguished Fellow at Gateway House, a former Indian High sioner to Commissioner to South Africa, Kenya and Lesotho, and the author of 'India-Africa Relations: Changing Horizons' (2022) appreciates it that China is the first country to support the AU in joining the G2O.' Besides, the parties stand for an equal and orderly multipolar

support the AU in joining the G2O. Besides, the parties stand for an equal and orderly multipolar world, and for necessary reform and strengthening of the United Nations (UN), including its Security Council.

Third, there is little new in the goal to promote synergy involving Chinese, African and UN plans for development as this has been often articulated in the past. However, China has now hailed progress in the African Continental Free Trade Area (ARCFTA) and expressed readiness to sign a framework agreement for economic partnership with Africa. On the issue of financing projects and businesses in Africa, the Chinese side astutely shifted responsibility by calling on international financial institutions and commercial creditors to participate in debt treatment for African countries.

Fourth, China's three flagship plans – GDI, GSI, and GCI – have been firmly embedded into the purportedly joint strategy to create a common path to all round security and development part adjem. The declaration, for example, voices China's support for increased UN funding for Africa's independent peace operations, counterterrorism activities and maritime security challenges. Further, the document waxes eloquent in highlighting the need for joint action for deepening dialogue among cultures and civilisations.

Fifth, the concluding section points to the

Fifth, the concluding section points to the transfer of responsibility of Africa's FOCAC co-chair from Senegal to the Republic of the Congo and confirmation that the tenth conference will be held in 2027 in Congo.

Beneath the surface, a familiar template The international media product Beneath the surface, a familiar template
The international media produced numerous
headlines while covering Chinese President Xi
Jinjing's keynote address at the inauguration of
the Beijing Summit, unaware that it sticks to a
familiar template used on such occasions in the
past. He presented the offer of new financing
amounting to nearly \$51 billion in soft loans,
grants and investment promotion to African
nations. He identified 10 partnership actions
relating to trade connectivity, green
development, industrial chain cooperation, and
health, as he did in the past. On the surface, his
big announcements such as provision of 60,000
raining opportunities for women and youth,
invitation to 1,000 members of African political
parties to visit China, and training for 7,000
military and police personnel from Africa sound
impressive, but opacity will prevail about the
degree of their implementation in the future as it
did in the past. What, however, is noteworthy on
this occasion is China's decision to give all 33
African least developed countries zero tariff
freatment for 100% tariff lines. When African least developed countries zero tariff treatment for 100% tariff lines. When

implemented, it could boost African exports to China.

implemented, it could boost African exports to China.

Concerning the growing multi-dimensional cooperation between China and Africa, three principal perspectives should be factored in. First, the Chinese view is that a natural partnership exists between China, the largest developing country in the world, and Africa, the continent with the largest number of developing countries. With its cown economic success, China has shown an alternative path to modernisation which is different from westernisation. The Chinese path is highly relevant to Africa, according to this school.

Second, a sober African view recognises the benefits and risks of close partnership with China, but as pointed out by Paul Nantulya of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, the FOCAC-centered process is still largely shaped by "a donor-recipient dynamic where African countries mostly take a back seat while China initiates most of the agenda".

Third, the prevalent American perception has been presented by Michael Schuman of the Adantic Council who argues that China's interest in the developing world is shaped by Xi Jinping's anti-Americanism. He is of the opinion that the aim of Mr. Xi's strategy is to build a coalition of states within the Global South to act as 'a counter weight' to the U.S. global alliance. A more sophisticated viewpoint was articulated by a European foreign minister visiting India in 2019. He cautioned against interpreting the Chinese role in Africa' in black and white terms'. It was He cautioned against interpreting the Chinese role in Africa 'in black and white terms'. It was doing some good as in the health and education fields and it was also expanding its power and influence on the continent, he noted.

The import for India Finally, what are the takeaways for India from the latest FOCAC summit? At least three seem fairly

atest POCAC summit? At least three seem fairly obvious.

First, consistency in cultivation of Africa at the highest political levels is a must. After holding three India-Africa Forum Summits, India paused its Africa-retred conference diplomacy in 2015, Almost a decade has elapsed since then. Second, strong historical bonds, ideational contributions and stirring rhetoric are useful, but they must be backed by financial generosity. This demands substantial additional resources for fuelling India-Africa cooperation. Without them, our diplomatic and business initiatives would become handicapped. Third, Africa's place in the list of India's diplomatic priorities must be reviewed. If the continent enjoys a high priority, the Indian polity must be enabled and encouraged to act accordingly.

accordingly.

India's Africanists have presented a range of practical policy choices to the government. What is now needed is stronger political will.

# UAE-India ties are rooted in affinity, trust and respect

uring the visit of Sheikh Khaled, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, to Delhi this week, there was one engagement that had emblematic significance for him and for the ties between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and India.

ties between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and India.
Visiting Rajghat, His Highness planted a tree in memory of Mahatma Gandhi, following the example of his father, sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, in 2016, and his grandfather, the founding president of our country, Sheikh Zayed, in 1992.
The three trees, planted by three generations of the past, current and future leaders of our country, within the span of three decades, will stand side by side, a symbol of the deeply-rooted and growing ties between our two countries: embedded in the past but reaching towards the future. At first glance, our countries appear to be very different. India is almost 40 times larger than the UAE in size and is also the most populous country in the world. There are more than 1,000 Indian citizens for every Emirati than 1,000 Indian citizens for every Emirati citizen. Our economies too are founded on different strengths: agriculture is a key pillar of India's economy, for example, but only makes up less than 1% of the UAE's GDP. And while we both emerged as modern nations in the 20th century, our histories and governance are very different. Yet, the strongest ties between nations are those where common interests and values are enriched by complementary strengths and diversity, embracing difference rather than seeking to paper over it.

Deep connections, of people and progress
The secret of the success – and distinctiveness –
of the UAE-India relationship is the way it is
rooted in affinity, trust and respect, derived from
generations of human connections, Just as trees
depend on strong roots to draw the water and



With African governments finding it more comfortable to

deal with China, the recent FOCAC conference

needs objective

scrutiny; there are takeaways

Reem Al Hashimy

the United Arab nirates (UAE) nister of State for ernational Cooperation and the UAE Special Envoy to the Republic of India

Given their long history of connections, the

two countries are determined to keep growing

and innovating

nutrients they need for growth and to hold them fast in tough times, partnerships between nations must have these qualities in order to thrive.

must have these qualities in order to thrive.

Ours has always been a relationship about people and progress. The first trade links between the Arabian Gulf and India go back thousands of years, as people, goods and ideas crossed back and forth across the ocean. Pottery discovered in recent archaeological excavations in Abu Dhabi shows connections to the Indus Valley civilisations of more than four millennia ago. In my parents' time, many Emiratis travelled to India for medical treatment, and when my children catch the typical colds and flus of childhood, I turn to Indian homoeopathic medicine first, before other remedies.

Strength of the expatriate community The UAE is home to more than 3.5 million Indians, the largest expatriate community in our country. Our success is built on our leaders' far-sighted commitment to tolerance, inclusion and the empowerment of women and minorities, and we are grateful for the contribution Indian nationals make to the strength and vibrancy of

nationals make to the strength and vibrancy of our economy. The degree of connectivity between our countries can be seen in the simple fact that there are more than 1,500 flights between the UAE and India every single week. When a relationship is founded on respect and a sincere inclination towards partnership and collaboration, there is no limit to what can be achieved. In February 2022, India became the first country with which the UAE signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. Trade negotiations often take years, if not decades, and are sometimes abandoned due to insurmountable differences. We were able to agree our partnership agreement within six months, because of the trust and affinity at the

heart of our relationship. In its first year of operation, our bilateral trade jumped by over 15%. We have signed billions of rupees of additional investment deals, and plan to go much

Sheikh khaled recently attended the inauguration of the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi Abu Dhabi, which is the first overseas branch of the prestigious university. We have exchanged agreements on topics including health innovation and renewable energy, crucial to our nations' and the world's future. During the Crown Prince's visit, further co-operation agreements will be signed, including on civil nuclear technology: a domestic success story for the Emirates, but one rooted in international co-operation. India's research into nuclear desalination to produce clean drinking water which has obvious importance for a desert country such as the UAE – is one example of the many opportunities which our partnership can enable advances not just in green energy production but also in medical technology, scientific research, agriculture and industry. Sheikh Khaled recently attended the scientific research, agriculture and industry

### Ties that will flourish

Like his grandfather, Sheikh Khaled planted an amaltas tree, Cassia fistula. His father, Sheikh amaltas free, Cassia fistula. His father, Sheikh Mohamed bir Zayed, planted the moulsari tree (Mimusops elengi). Amaltas trees grow fast, embodying opportunity and renewal, while the słower growing moulsari points us to the virtues of stability and patient trust. As the UAE and India continue to develop our comprehensive strategic partnership, these different qualities symbolise our approach. We can have confidence in our mutual affinity and respect and our long history of connection, but also be determined to keep growing and innovating together, renewing our partnership and finding new ways to flourish.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Levy on policies

Levy on policies
It will be a great relief,
especially for senior citizens
and pensioners, if the new
Group of Ministers is able to
review the GST tax rate on
health and life insurance
policies (Page 1, September
10). The GST levy is a heavy
burden that weighs down
on the limited financial
strength of the middle class
and salaried sections, as
well as senior citizen
pensioners.

The high premium for medical and health medical and health insurance is discouraging the common man from buying himself adequate medical coverage. The need for medical insurance for a considerable sum has become imperative given how expensive hospital bills have become. The current tax percentage is almost a fifth of the premium. The rule that once the sum assured is fixed, the policyholder cannot take coverage for a lesser sum

when renewing the poperhaps a way to ensu that there is a flow of money to insurance companies. If taking medical and health insurance is to aid the policyholder, the government must be considerate.

V. Lakshmanan,
Tirupur, Tamil Nadu when renewing the policy is

Focus on race courses Yesterday it was the iconic Ooty race course and earlier Hyderabad, Bangalore and

Bombay. Now the spotlight is on the Madras Race Course, which is being subject to bureaucratic and political whims, without any thought being given to the heavy damage that it does to the entire economic ecology.

Land prices being what they are, no course can afford to pay the dues calculated by the revenue surplus generated. However these are more than made up by indirect and direct tax generation. The large-scale unorganised

Land prices being what they

### Corrections & Clarifications

An editing error. The Kolkata rape and murder incident happened on Au gust 9 and not August 5, as mentioned in a front page report, "5C asks West Bengal doctors to resume hospital duty today" (September 10, 2024).

employment generation is also no small matter. We also no small matter. We are well aware of what forces will be at play once these lands go back to the government. The media needs to make out a case for the retention of these spaces before they become concrete jungles. Srinivas Gade, Chennai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in nust carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials. 













# With their ancestors' help, weak cancer cells can form tough tumours

investigating them. The researchers behind a new study realised this approach removes an important bit of context that could affect the cells prospects

Joel P. Joseph

cientists have cracked the mystery of how some cancer cells that ought not to survive could actually take help from their "neighbours" to succeed and form drug-resistant tumours instead.

Drug resistance is one of the world's major crises of the 21st century. When a pathogen that causes an infection or disease becomes drug-resistant, drugs that could cure these conditions become less effective. Pathogens acquire this less effective. Pathogens acquire this ability in the form of certain genetic

ability in the form of certain genetic mutations, although some non-genetic factors are also in play.

When a cancer takes root in a person's body, the cancer cells can also become drug-resistant in the same way. Simple logic dictates that when the person takes a drug to destroy these cells, the drug-resistant cells will proliferate while the non-resistant cells will. However. the non-resistant cells won't. However, the genetic changes that conferred drug-resistance to the cells will also have undermined their overall 'fitness'. When undermined their overall 'fitness'. When the person isn't taking a drug to treat the cancer, the drug-resistant cells should thus have a harder time surviving than their non-resistant peers. They are said to suffer a 'growth penalty'.

How the evolutionarily less-fit cells survive such conditions is a puzzle scientists have been trying to solve for years.

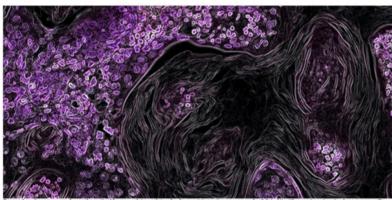
A complex ecosystem

In past studies, scientists have tried to In past studies, scientists have tried to understand drug resistance by separating the corresponding cells from a larger population, making copies of them in the lab, and investigating them further. The researchers behind the new study realised this approach removes an important bit of context that could affect the cells' prospects: the influence of other cells in their surroundings, essecially the

the cells' prospects: the influence of other cells in their surroundings, especially the ancestors from whom they 'devlated' by accumulating genetic changes.

Jeff Maltas, a postdoctoral research fellow at Cleveland Clinic and the lead author of the study, said scientists have appreciated the idea of tumours as a complex ecological system. He said his team's idea came from multiple disciplines plus previous reports of high mutation rates within a tumour that had changes in pl H and oxygen levels, among changes in pH and oxygen levels, among

In a study published in 2022, for example, some members of the sam in a study published in 2022, for example, some members of the same team of researchers and others showed that even in the absence of a drug, drug-resistant mutant cells undergo large changes in growth rate. The authors attributed this to the environment in



esentative image of Kras-driven lung cancer cells. ERIC SNYDER/U.S. NCI

which the cells existed.

A surprise in a model
Conventionally, mutated cells have a
certain growth rate in the presence of a
drug and a lower one in its absence. In
the new study, the researchers built a
mathematical model based on the idea
that these growthe stee depend on the that these growth rates depend on the presence of a drug and on the cells' environment. When cultured alone,

environment. When cultured alone, drug-resistant cells grew more slowly than the cells from which they were "descended." But when these cells and their ancestors were cultured together, the former grew much faster.

The model also revealed that the more ancestral cells there are in the same culture, the drug-resistant daughter cells also proliferated faster — so much so that the growth penalty vanished. The resulting tumour would be resistant to the drugs to come. drugs to come.

drugs to come.

The researchers also found that even when there is no drug, the interactions between the evolving drug-resistant cells in the tumour's environment still promoted drug resistance. The implication is that drug-resistant cells could be present in larger numbers, perhaps more than a clinician or medical researcher might expect, even before researcher might expect, even before treatment begins.

treatment begins.
The authors wrote in their paper that
their work "both complements and builds
off of recent studies from a wide range of
disciplines, ranging from theoretical
population genetics and ecology to
clinical trials across several biological
kingdoms."

Drug resistance is one of the major crises of the 21st century. When a pathogen that causes an infection or disease becomes drug-resistant, drugs that could cure these conditions become less effective.

The ancestral advantage
The researchers proposed a mathematical framework to explain why drug resistance is common and validated it with experiments using lung cancer cells.
First, they engineered three drug-resistant mutations in lung cancer cells in the lab and grew them together with different amounts of drug-sensitive ancestor cells. Then they observed how the different abundances of mutations in the cells affected their growth rate.
The mutations they picked to engineer are commonly seen in lung cancer patients. They found that all the drug-resistant cells grew slower than their ancestors when grown in isolation. But when grown with their ancestors, they built up faster. The researchers also grew two types of drug-resistant cells together without the ancestor, and their growth ut the ancestor, and their growth without the ancestor, and their growth rate didn't increase. That is, interactions between evolutionarily different cells didn't provide any growth advantage. Only interactions with ancestral cells did. The idea that a mutation's frequency or relative abundance dictates how fit the cells that have it are is not new, but

THE CIST

Researchers have shown that even in the absence of a drug, drug-resistant mutant cells undergo large changes in growth rate. This was attributed to the environr in which the cells existed

drug-resistant cells grew more slowly than the cells from which they were 'descended.' But when these cells and

xperts said the current study emphasises this idea in the context of cancer cells accumulating drug-resistant mutations

Clue to a new treatment 'A key conclusion... is that the ecological environment can greatly impact the phenotype of the mutant being studied. Removing that mutant from the ecology leads to an incomplete scientific picture."

Mohit Kumar Jolly, an associate Mohit Kumar Jolly, an associate professor of bioengineering at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, said, "Most, if not all, current therapies in the clinic do not consider the impact of these interactions, and this study reveals how considering this important dimension can help potentially design more effective therapies."

The researchers also said their findings

The researchers also said their findings could be extendable to any evolving system, including viruses that mutate and bacteria that acquire resistance to

antibiotics.

The study also indicated a potential new target for developing drugs to fight cancer and infectious diseases. "If this phenomenon is as general as we think," Maltas said, "future treatments may be described to dispose the proposal of the pr developed to disrupt the ecological interactions themselves, leading to higher interactions themselves, leading to highe cure rates. "The study was conducted by scientists from Cleveland Clinic and Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland. The findings were published in the journal PRX Life in June 2024. (Joel P. Joseph is a freelance science journalist and researcher. joelpjoseph2009@gmail.com)

### **BIG SHOT**



### QUESTION CORNER

### The kindest cuts



Q: Why doesn't cutting hair hurt? A: Hair is made of dead epithelial cells strengthened by a protein called keratin. The

keratin. The epidermis – the upper layer of the skin – descends into the dermis, the inner layer, to form flask-shaped structures. These structures, called hair follicles, have a group of epithelial cells that form a bulb.

that form a bulb.

Below this bulb is the hair
papilla, which consists of
connective tissues supplied richly
with blood vessels and connected
by nerves. This region supplies
nourishment to the hair's root
cells

root divide rapidly. As new cells form, the old cells are pushed

upwards in the form of hair. upwards in the form of hair. Beyond the bulb region, the cells die and become horny with the addition of keratin. As the dead cells continue to add up rapidly in the root, the shaft grows in length and pierces through the epidermal layer and projects out as hair. Hair normally grows about 18 cm in a year.

Thus the root is the only living part of the hair. When hair above the skin is cut, it doesn't hurt. If the hair is pulled out, the sensory nerves in the hair papilla trigger a



The root is the only living part of the hair. When hair above the skin is cut, it doesn't hurt. If the hair is pulled out, the sensory nerves in the hair papilla trigger a pain sensation GETTY IMAGES



ar panels under construction on the sea in Binzhou, in eastern China's Shandong province on Septe

# Montelukast: overused and dangerous

n February 2018, Harry Miller, a 14-year-old British teenager, died by suicide after struggling to cope with mental health issues for two years. Miller, who had been suffering from asthma, had been prescribed from asthma, had been prescribed montelukast on an ongoing basis for those two years. A couple of years after this incident, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) added a 'black box warning' to montelukast and the Medicines and Healthcare Products
Regulatory Agency, U.K. issued a health warning saving the drug health warning saying the drug could cause serious could cause serious neuropsychiatric adverse effects. Several patient advocacy groups across the world have been lobbying for the restricted use of this drug. While caution is being exercised everywhere, the sale of this drug in India is unregulated, largely irrational, and seems to be largely irrational, and seems to be

increasing exponentially. Montelukast, developed by Merck and Co., was approved by the FDA in 1998 and marketed under the brand name 'Singulair' under the brand name 'Singulair'.
The oral medication was approved to be prescribed daily for long-term use as a "preventer" or "controller" of asthma and allergic rhinitis. There is universal consensus, based on multiple comparative studies, that as a treatment for asthma, the drug is inferior to inhaled corticosteroids, inferior to inhaled corticoster which are considered first-line therapy for the control of the disease. For allergic rhinitis, in guidelines across the world recommend intranasal control of the corticosteroids and/or antihistamines; montelukast is not recommended first-line therapy.

### Unrestricted use in India

Unrestricted use in India Yet, it is widely prescribed in India. There are multiple reasons for this. Patients prefer short-term oral medication over long-term inhalers and topical nasal sprays. Inhalers are often thought to have an addictive potential and are considered unsafe. There is also considered unsafe. There is also stigma associated with the use of inhalers, and patients do not w to be seen by their family and



Lancelot Pinto Consultant epidemiologist at P.D. Hinduja National



Sanjitha Muneeswaran

Postgraduate studen in the Department of Respiratory Medicine at P.D. Hinduja National Hospital, Mumbai. Views are personal

While caution is being exercised everywhere, the sale of this drug in India is unregulated. largely irrational, and seems to be increasing exponentially

peers as needing inhalers to breathe. In the treatment of children, parents are often concerned about the effect of inhaled corticosteroids on growth, and montelukast has been considered to be safe in comparison. This is despite the comparison. This is despite the fact that poorly controlled asthma can have far more deleterious effects on growth and development than those caused by inhalers. There also appears to be widespread ignorance of the adverse effects of the drug in India, resulting in rampant India, resulting in rampant over-the-counter use. Even among over-tne-counter use. Even amony physicians, the adverse effects of the drug do not appear to be widely known, as evidenced by the cavalier prescribing practices. Most prescriptions even for the common cold appear to have the drug in combinations for short-term use. short-term use.

### With antihistamines

With antinistamines
What is especially worrying is the
unrestricted use of the drug in
combination with antihistamines.
This is unscientific, as the drug is
approved for use as a controller,
and not as a short-term reliever
medication, as is being widely
marketed. A prescription of marketed. A prescription of montelukast for 10 days is unscientific. Patients possibly unscientific. Patients possibly benefit with time-tested antihistamines, such as levocetrizine, loratadine or fexofenadine, in combinations, while being exposed to the adverse effects of montelukast. Such combinations appear to be driven by profits – combining driven by profits - combining antihistamines with montelukast often triples the price of the drug. often triples the price of the drug. This is true, despite the patent on the drug expiring in 2012. Industry sources inform us that over 193 registered brands offer such combination treatment in India. The annual sales of montelukast were more than £2,400 crore during the April 2023-24 period. Less than 3% of these sales are protentially wideline-based, i.e. potentially guideline-based, i.e. the sales of the drug alone; the rest are in irrational and unindicated combinations with

antihistamines, oral bronchodilators, and mucolytics. Concerns related to the drug

re not a recent phenomenon. They were investigated as early as 2009, when an FDA review reported serious post-marketing concerns regarding the neuropsychiatric adverse effects. There is growing recognition that the drug can cause aggression, nightmares, depression, and cognitive impairment. It has been associated with deaths by suicide. A study from the University of 2009, when an FDA review A study from the University of Oxford, published in IAMA in 2022, concluded a much higher 2022, concluded a much higher risk of anxiety and insomnia, among other neuropsychiatric adverse effects, from this drug. Large studies in Denmark, the U.S., Korea, and the U.K. have suggested a strong association between the use of the drug and serious mental health issues. As nulmonologists we notice.

As pulmonologists, we notice a trend of aggressive marketing of montelukast in combinations by the pharmaceutical industry the pharmaceutical industry. Every major pharmaceutical company markets the drug in combination with an assortmen of quick-acting, reliever medications. Our ENT colleague have experienced a similar trend. This possibly explains the 25% growth in sales over the past year (industry sources).

Time for regulators to step in Regulators need to step in to ensure that the abuse of this drug stops, and that these health concerns are amplified among both physicians and patients. Not only will this protect citizens from a harmful drug, but it will also a harmful drug, but it will also ensure that patients are prescribed inexpensive and time-tested options for short-term use, and better ones for long-term use. In a country where post-marketing surveillance tends to be limited, and mental health issues are largely under-reported and stigmatised, we need to raise awareness and prevent an awareness and prevent an epidemic of neuropsychiatric adverse effects, especially in young children

### Steering through troubled waters

Questions on the Yettinahole Project continue to haunt the government

STATE OF PLAY

Sathish G.T.

he Congress govern-ment in Karnataka, which has been strug-gling to deal with controver-sies raised by the Opposition as well as its own internal squabbles over leadership, got a much-peeded break from a much-needed break from bad press when it inaugurated the ambitious Yettinahole In the ambitious Yettinahole In-tegrated Drinking Water Pro-ject last week. The project aims to harness 24.01 tmcft of water from the catchment area of the Nethravathi River, which originates in the West-ern Chats and flows through ern Ghats and flows through the hilly Malnad districts and coastal area, to provide water to seven arid districts of southto seven ar ... ern Karnataka.

ern Karnataka.

However, the project, which is being implemented at an estimated cost of ₹23,251 crore, has been controversial since its inception. It has its genesis in a report submitted by Dr. G.S. Paramashivaiah, who petired as Superinedent by Dr. G.S. Paramashivaiah, who retired as Superintendent Engineer with the State go-vernment, on providing per-manent irrigation facilities for arid districts by diverting ex-cess water from west-flowing rivers. The Yettinahole project is part of what he had initially recommended in his report.

Paramashivaiah himself was unhappy with the way the project was being planned, ar-guing that it should be impleguing that it should be imple-mented in its entirety. The pe-ople of the Malnad and coastal regions too have been oppos-ing the project, alleging that it would affect both the Western Ghats, a biodiversity hotspot, and the people who depend on the Nethravathi in the downstream. Despite these protests, in 2012, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) govern



ment, led by D.V. Sadanada Gowda, gave administrative approval for the project.

approval for the project.
Activists then moved the
National Green Tribunal
(NGT) opposing the project.
They maintained that the government was implementing
it without obtaining forest and
environmental clearances.
However, their petitions were
quashed by the principal
bench of the NGT in 2019,
which unbeld the governbench of the NGT in 2019, which upheld the govern-ment's argument that the pro-ject was meant to provide drinking water in arid areas. The Congress government, led by Siddaramaiah, laid the foundation stone for the pro-ject in Chikkaballapur in 2014. The first stace has now been

The first stage has now been inaugurated. The Water Resources Department assessed that 24.01 tmcft of water could that 24.01 tmcft of water could be lifted by diverting streams of the Nethravathi – Yettina-hole, Kerihole, Hongadahalla, and Kadumane Holla – at eight locations. When completed, the project will benefit the Tumakuru, Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Bengaluru Rural, Raagara, Hassan, and Chikkamagaluru districts

Ramagaturu districts.

Deputy Chief Minister D.K.
Shivakumar, who also holds
the Water Resources portfolio,
gave special attention to clearing the hurdles involved in executing the project in the last one year. At the inaugural ce-remony, the Chief Minister and he said that they would clear the remaining hurdles in acquiring land required for

the gravity canal and feeder canals, and ensure that the project is completed by March

However, this won't be an However, this won't be an easy task, as people in the Mal-nad and coastal areas conti-nue to oppose the project. The residents of Kolar and Chikka-ballapur have raised doubts about whether they will get the water assured by the go-vernment, given the yield. Some experts who have as-

Some experts who have as-ssed the availability of water sessed the availability of water in the project area say that there could be only 9.55 tmcft of water available and not 24.01 tmcft, as projected by the government. Mr. Siddaramaiah has instructed officers to conduct a survey to tap water from a few more streams further below the project. further below the project area, while arguing that shorarea, while arguing that shortage is no more than 5 tmcft. However, his statement has caused more worry among environmentalists. Kishor Kumar, one of the petitioners before the NGT, has said that such a move will damage the forests further.

During heavy rains in tuly

During heavy rains in July During heavy rains in July this year, several landslips were reported in parts of Saka-leshpur taluk in Hassan dis-trict. Some of the locations were close to the places where the Yettinahole project work had been executed. The resi-dents of these areas blamed the project for the tragedy, while officers of Visveswaraya Jala Nigam Limited, which is Jala Nigam Limited, which is

Jala Nigam Limited, which is executing the project, argued that the project had nothing to do with the landslips.

While the people in drought-prone areas need long-term solutions to the drinking water crisis that haunts them every summer, the multiple issues surrounding the Yettinahole project show how hard it is to find them in a sustainable and amicable wax.

# Explaining the close contests in swing States

Battleground States have middling urbanisation and college graduate numbers, and a diverse mix of racial and religiously non-affiliated voters

Srinivasan Ramani Jasmin Nihalani

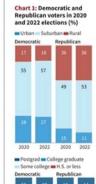
n earlier Data Point foa cussed on the importance of swing States in deciding the outcome of the 2024 U.S. presidential polls. Here, we explain why these States are battlegrounds by looking at the background variables of voters, such as demogrably. religion, esporabilical type. phy, religion, geographical type, and college education.

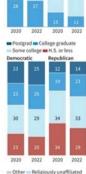
Urban voters largely favour the Democrats, while rural voters lar Democrats, while rural voters lar-gely favour the Republicans. Vo-ters who identify themselves as re-ligiously unaffiliated tend to prefer the Democrats, while Protestants and evangelical voters prefer the Republicans. Voters of the Black/ African American community dis-tinctively favour the Democrats. College-educated white voters are

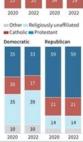
College-educated white voters are largely Democratic voters, while non-college educated white voters are overwhelmingly Republican. When these variables are bro-ken down State-wise, we find that States with higher urban popula-tions (with exceptions) tend to fa-vour the Democrats, while those with higher rural populations vote vour the Democrats, while those with higher rural populations vote Republican. Swing States have middling urbanisation (measured as an index by 538.com), i.e. they have a mix of rural, suburban, and urban voters. That is why they are competitive with near equal numbers of Democratic and Republican voters. They also fall somewhere in the middle when we look at the share of the population who are college graduates. are college graduates.

States such as Georgia have a re-States such as Georgia have a re-latively higher number of voters who identify themselves as Chris-tian, but Georgia has a relatively higher share of Black voters, which makes it competitive. States such as Pennsylvania and Michigan have a lower share of racial minor-tiv voters. but also a relatively high ity voters, but also a relatively high

### Swing States are not typical

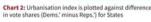




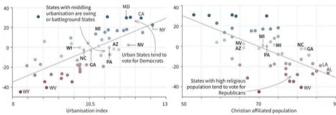


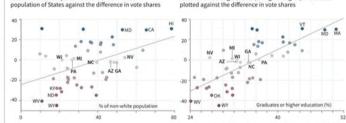












### FROM THE ARCHIVES



FIFTY YEARS AGO SEPTEMBER 11, 1974

### Nuclear plants: German help to Pak. likely

London, Sept. 10: According to press reports here, the West German Government is assisting Pakistan in conducting a study to determine the feasibility of setting up a chain of nuclear plants of 50 mw capacity to be located even in distant corners of Pakistan. The Chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, Dr. Khan said these plants would be in addition to the 600 mw nuclear station now being built near Chasma Barrage. Plans were also being worked out for building a nuclear complex near Karachi to meet most of Pakistan's nuclear requirements locally. The Pakistan Atomic Energy locally. The Pakistan Atomic Energy locally. The Pakistan Atomic Energy
Commission wanted the country to be
self-sufficient in its nuclear need and wanted to
manufacture nuclear components in Pakistan.
Dr. Khan said Pakistan was in touch with
"certain friendly countries to start joint
production of nuclear plants. Although he did
not name the friendly countries, it is widely
assumed that he could be referring to China and
possibly the United States. possibly the United States. Dr. Khan said Pakistan had to build itself up as

Dr. Khan said Pakistan had to build itself up as a modern technological society not for the sake of facing India and protecting national integrity but for the "sake of the entire Muslim world which so heavily depends upon Pakistan." Dr. Khan hoped that except for very large and heavy components and highly sophisticated systems "we will be able to make most of the muclear power plants ourselves."

nuclear power plants ourselves.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO SEPT. 11, 1924

### Assam Cooly exodus.

Calcutta, Sept. 10: The "Foreward's" Nowgong correspondent wires that about 700 coolies arrived at Jakhlabandha on foot from Jerhat (in Assam), a distance of about 150 miles. A Magistrate with the police is attending them and the Commissioner of Assam Valley is also the Commissioner of Assam Vauley's also present. They are extremely helpless and are being fed by the public. Some European planters are trying to persuade them to return to their gardens. But the coolies are determined not to return. No steps have yet been taken to repatriate them. Many are suffering, some have already succumbed, several cases of delivery occurred on the way. The local people with occurred on the way. The local people with some Congress workers are taking great interest

# Text&Context

### THEMOMHINDU

### **NEWS IN NUMBERS**

The number of people who died in the Vietnam storm

Typhoon Yagi and subsequent heavy rains have triggered floods and landslides in the country injuring more than a 100 people. At least 70 people were reported missing. Typhoon Yagi was the strongest typhoon to hit Vietnam in decades. W

The Palestinians killed in the Gaza Strip since October 7

41,020 The toll includes 32 deaths in the last 24 hours, according to the health ministry in Gaza. At least 94,925 people have been wounded in the Gaza Strip since the war started. MP

The fine to be paid by Google in the antitrust shopping case

In \$ billion. Google lost its final legal challenge on Tuesday against a European Union penalty for giving its shopping mendations an illegal advantage over rivals in search results, ending a long-running antitrust case. A

Number of days for which Internet will be suspended in Manipur

The State government suspended internet services from September 10 to 15 amid intensified agitation by students. The State Home department said that the decision was taken to curb the use of social media for transmission of hate speech and hate videos. PTI

Number of CRPF personnel deployed to the State of Manipur

2,000 The Centre has directed declarates of two fresh CRPF battalions in Manipur. This comes after the withdrawal of two Assam Rifles battalions from the State. COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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# On ANI's defamation suit against Wikipedia

Why has the news agency Asian News International filed a lawsuit against the Wikimedia Foundation? What has the Delhi High Court asked the Foundation to reveal? Who can make and edit pages on the Wikipedia site? Will Wikipedia be blocked in India?

EXPLAINER

Aroon Deep

The story so far:

he news agency ANI sued
Wikipedia parent Wikimedia
Foundation last month for
defamation, due to a
description of the news agency as a
propagator of government propaganda on
the website. Last week, a Delih High
Court luidse threatened to order the Court judge threatened to order the government to block Wikipedia if the Foundation didn't provide details of the users who made these edits.

What does the page on ANI say?
When Wikipedia's page for the news agency. Asian News International started reflecting new reporting scrutinising the firm's record in 2020, a back-and-forth edit war ensued among users—seasoned editors on one side, and largely new accounts that only edited the ANI page, according to public logs of changes made to the entry—for months. The agency, which largely syndicates video and text feeds from around the country to news channels and other outlets (including to The Hindul), was described as "running [a] pro India fake news network aimed at influencing European think tank [sic] against Pakistan," a version of the article then read. Over time, this rough sentence influencing European think tank [sic] against Pakistan," a version of the article then read. Over time, this rough sentence in the page's introduction was smoothed out, annotated, and crystallised into what it says today: that the agency is "accused of having served as a propaganda tool for the incumbent central government, distributing materials from a vast network of fake news websites, and misreporting events on multiple occasions." ANI found the description, along with a longer section detailing these descriptions, defamatory. They sued the Wikimedia Foundation, which runs Wikipedia, in the Delih High Court earlier this year, seeking \$2 crore in damages. In statements to The Hindu, the Wikimedia Foundation has stood by the ANI page, saying that the descriptions in that entry are borne out by reliable sources (which include The Diplomat, the EU Disinfol.ab, and The Caravan

EU DisinfoLab, and *The Caravan* magazine). Users who have made more than 300 edits and have an account that is at least a month old are free to "improv the page, the Foundation said.

What has the Delhi High Court ordered in the case so far? At the second hearing on August 20, Justice Navin Chawla ordered the company to serve three of its users with a summons to appear in the case, and provide "details" about these users. The demand appeared to be aimed at unmasking the individual editors who made these changes, something that the Foundation has historically not done outside the U.S. Even as the non-profit communicated with AN's lawyers shortly before the subsequent hearing on Thursday, the latter filed a contempt application. At the Thursday hearing, Mr. Chawla issued a verbal threat to order the Indian government to block Wikipedia if it did not comply. An "authorised representative" of the non-profit was directed to be personally present at the next hearing on October 25. What has the Delhi High Court irected to be personally pr ext hearing on October 25

Does Wikipedia face lawsuits and censorship threats elsewhere? Wikipedia has faced bans and lawsuits from around the world by individuals and organisations that have been aggrieved by descriptions of them. In Russia, Wikipedia editors have been targeted with arrests and intimidation since the beginning of

### Wikipedia and some key numbers

In August this year, India recorded the fifth highest number of Wikipedia users — 78 crore — with United States leading the list followed by Japan, Great Britain and Germany . The "free encyclopedia" includes articles in all but two (Bodo and Dogri) of the 22 languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Among them, the highest number of articles were in Urdu, at 2 lakh, followed by Tamil, at 1.5 lakh. Zooming out, globally, the Engish language had the highest number of articles, closely followed by Cebuano, a regional language spoken in the Phillippines. By The Hindu Data Team

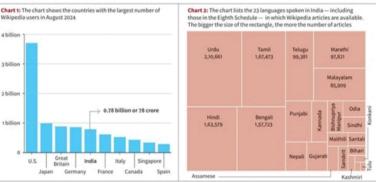
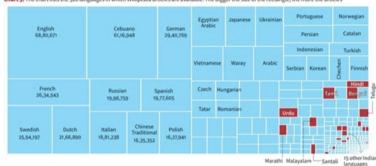


Chart 3: The chart lists the 320 languages in which Wikipedia articles are available. The bigger the size of the rectangle, the more the articles



that country's invasion of Ukraine. In 2019, a German court ordered the Foundation to remove records of an older version of an article about academic Alex Waible!, in the U.S., the firm routinely faces lawsuiss, and nearly all cases have either been withdrawn or found in the non-profit's favour, due to the country's ironclad protections for web platforms.

The encyclopedia allows nearly anyone to edit posts, even without being logged in. However, some posts on contentious topics are restricted (sometimes for a long duration) to registered users with a track record of making contributions that have been upheld by other users. Norms on the site are decided by the community, and may be enforced unevenly, with and may be enforced unevenly, with articles on less notable subjects suffering from issues like advertising-like language

Does Wikipedia content have an Ideological bias?
The current policies followed by Wikipedia users do not have an explicit ideological flavour. These include guidelines such as having a "neutral point of view," only including "notable" information and having reliable sources decided by the community. However, the site is often accused of a progressive, liberal bias, something that a few studies have also attested to. Conservative grievances with

Conservative grievances with

Wikipedia users' editorial slant have invariably become part of the discourse around the AN-Wikipedia case. Opindia, a right wing news portal that has covered the AN lawsuit closely, has accused Wikipedia editors of propagating liberal "propaganda" on the site; has previously revealed the identity of an individual editor who started and contributed to the entry on the 2020 Delhi riots; and has criticised the site's description of the riots for allegedly downplaying attacks by Muslim rioters. The portal's editor on Sunday vowed to put out a detailed "dossier" outlining these allegations. Wikipedia's volunteer editors have had a general prohibition on Opindia articles Wikipedia users' editorial slant have general prohibition on OpIndia articles since 2009, with the site being described since 2003, with the site being describ by a Wikipedia policy page on reliable sources by/for editors as "considered generally unreliable due to its poor reputation for fact-checking and accuracy".

Has Wikipedia faced criticism for content vandalism in India before? Wikipedia has faced the Union government's ire at least once in the past due to vandalism. The cricketer Arshdeep Singh's page was briefly vandalised last year, and then-Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar said the vandalism was inconsistent with the government's

principles for the Indian internet. The

principles for the Indian internet. The site's volunteers had quickly addressed the vandalism and restricted the page to experienced editors. The site also suffers from a weakness under Indian law — unlike social media companies, it has no procedure in place to block access to articles after receiving a court order. In 2019, the Wikimedia Foundation termed a prior draft of the TT Rules, 2021, which enable such blocking orders, as having "the potential to limit free expression rights for internet users across the country".

Can Wikipedia be blocked? However, Wikipedia may not be completely immune from arm-twisting or blocking. China, for instance, has had the blocking. China, for instance, has had the site blocked for years. While Russia has not blocked the site, it has arrested volunteer editors of Russian-language Wikipedia, and told search engines to mark the site as a violator of Russian laws. Since Wikipedia content is licenced under what is called Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike Licence 4.0, its pages can be legally mirrored to a "fork" setup that can edit and censor its content as per government demands or individual biases. Ruwidi is an example of such a fork, which complies with Russian authorities' narratives on the Russia-Ukraine war. Russia-Ukraine war.

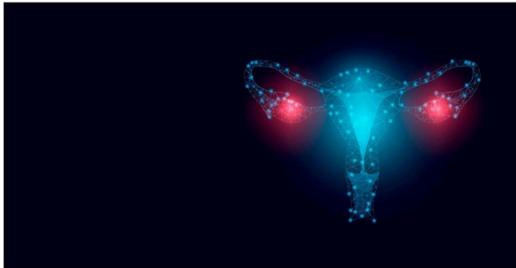
### THE GIST

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# Understanding ovarian cancer: its causes, symptoms, and screening methods

This September, during Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, understanding the cancer's lesser-known facts — from subtle symptoms to genetic and lifestyle risks - can lead to earlier detection, personalised treatment, and preventive strategies

Anup Rawool Vid Karmarkar

Note: The information in this article is provided as such and is not intended as medical advice. If you have any concerns, please consult your physician. varian cancer is the most

varian cancer is the most lettal gymecological malignancy. It is often called a "sitlent killer" because its symptoms are non-specific and mimic less serious conditions that lead to late diagnosis and a poor prognosis. In India, ovarian cancer ranks among the top three cancers, contributing to 6.6% of all women's cancers.

women's cancers.
In 2022, India reported 47,333 new ovarian cancer cases and 32,978 deaths. These alarming figures highlight the gravity of the disease. Understanding lesser-known aspects of ovarian cancer

lesser-known aspects of ovarian cancer can enhance prevention, early detection, and treatment efforts, offering hope to patients and healthcare providers.

Unlike other cancers, ovarian cancer presents vague symptoms such as bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, loss of appetite, feeling full quickly, and an urgent or frequent need to urinate. Other signs include indigestion, constipation, back pain, persistent fatigue, weight loss, and postmenopausal vaginal bleeding. These symptoms are often mistaken for common aliments, leading to late diagnosis. A 2004 study reported women with (malignam) ovarian cancer typically experience these symptoms 20 to 30 times a month, and which are more severe than those without the disease. severe than those without the disease Unfortunately, because of the overlapping nature of these symptoms with other common ailments, they can be dismissed until the cancer has advanced. Healthcare providers must be vigilant when women

report persistent symptoms.

### Cancer subtypes and screening

Ovarian cancer is not a uniform disease. It has two main subtypes: type I and type II. Type I tumours are less common, typically diagnosed at an early stage, and ve a better prognosis. Type II tumours more common, more aggressive, ally diagnosed at an advanced stage.

usually diagnosed at an advanced stage, and are responsible for most deaths due to ovarian cancer.

The survival rate for patients with ovarian cancer depends on the stage of detection and access to appropriate treatment. Researchers reported in September 2022 that around 20% of patients with advanced ovarian cancer who receive optimal surgery and platinum-based chemotherapy could be disease-free at 10 years and might be considered potentially cured. Unlike breast or cervical cancer, there

Unlike breast or cervical cancer, there are no effective screening tests for ovarian cancer. The CAI25 blood test, often included in cancer screening packages, is not recommended for routine screening not recommended for routine screening in women at average risk due to its limited specificity. While CA125 is useful to monitor ovarian cancer after diagnosis, it is less effective at screening asymptomatic women as it can lead to false positives and unnecessary further testing, amxiety, and potentially over-treatment.

Due to the absence of a reliable screening tool, awareness of risk factors and symptoms becomes crucial. Regular consultations with healthcare providers and discussions about family history can lead to earlier detection and better

lead to earlier detection and better ment of ovarian cancer.

Genes and endometriosis While it's possible to develop ovarian cancer even without a family history of

breast or ovarian cancer, it's the most heritable of all cancers: 65-85% of hereditary ovarian cancer cases in mutations in the BRCA1 or the BRCA2 genes. Women with these mutations have a significantly higher risk of developing ovarian cancer – up to 50% for BRCAI and around 15% for BRCA2. Some other

and around 15% for BRCA2. Some other genes have also been associated with hereditary ovarian cancer.

Genetic testing allows for personalised risk management, including tailored clinical surveillance, chemoprevention, and prophylactic surgeries, which can reduce the risk of developing ovarian cancer in high-risk women. Endometriosis, a condition where uterine-like tissue grows outside the uterus, has been linked to an increased risk of certain types of ovarian cancer, particularly endometrioid and clear-cell cancers. This said, endometriois-linked ovarian cancer risk is low and radical measures, such as a bilateral measures, such as a bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy, to prevent ovarian cancer alone are rarely justified.

### Lifestyle factors

Lifestyle factors
Certain lifestyle factors are linked to
ovarian cancer risk. For example, the use
of talcum powder in the genital area has
long been debated, with mixed evidence
about its potential link to ovarian cancer.
In the past, some tale products contained
asbestos, a known carcinogen, but the
evidence regarding modern, asbestos-free
tale is still inconclusive. Experts including
the American Cancer Society have called
for more research to settle these
questions. Another emerging area of questions. Another emerging area of concern is the use of chemical hair products. Some studies have shown a possible link between the prolonged use of hair dyes and an increased risk of

Additionally, frequent use of hair straighteners, relaxers or pressing products that release formaldehyde gas – a known carcinogen - may elevate the risk of developing ovarian cancer. Again, more research is required.

### HRT, menopause, and genetic ounselling

counselling
Hormone replacement therapy (HRT),
commonly used to alleviate menopausal
symptoms, has been linked to a higher
risk of ovarian cancer even when used for
less than five years. Postmenopausal
women considering HRT should weigh
this risk against the benefits and explore
alternatives with their healthcare
provider to make informed decisions.
For women with a family history of
ovarian or breast cancer, genetic
counselling is a valuable tool. This
process helps identify individuals at risk
for hereditary cancers and provides
tailored guidance on preventive measures

tailored guidance on preventive measures and potential treatments. Through

and potential treatments. Through personalised risk management strategies, genetic counselling can improve outcomes and help reduce the likelihood of developing ovarian cancer. Ovarian cancer may be elusive, but knowledge is power. This September, during Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, understanding its lesser-known facts – from subtle symptoms to genetic and lifestyle risks – can lead to earlier detection, personalised treatment, and preventive strategies. Empower yourself preventive strategies. Empower yourself and others with this knowledge – it can

Anup Rawool is a Clinical and Cancer Geneticist and the founder of Sahaj Genetics Clinic, Comprehensive Medical Genetics & Counseling Center. Vid Karmarkar is the founder and CEO of



### FROM THE ARCHIVES

### Know your English

### K. Subrahmanian Upendran

"Had a good night's sleep?"
"Oh yes. In fact, I fell asleep as soon as I hit the sack.'"
"Went out like a light, did you?"

"No, there was no power failure at our place yesterday." "Power failure?"

"Didn't you say something about the lights going out?"
"Lights going out? Oh, yes. I asked you if you went out like a light. Do you know

"No."
"If someone goes out like a light,
he/she falls asleep or becomes
unconscious suddenly."
"Well, I didn't become unconscious. I
merely fell asleep. Went out like a light as
you said."
"Good. How's your grandfather? Is he
still mad at your father for not taking his
addice?"

No, he has cooled down.

"That's good. So, does he sit watching the goggle box all day?" "Goggle box?"

"Yes, goggle box is an informal word for television."

for television."

"TV. is called the goggle box? I didn't know that. I know it is called the idiot box, but why goggle box?"

"Before I answer that, let me tell you how the word is pronounced. The 'o' sounds like the 'o' in 'hot', 'got' and 'not',"

"So it's goggle. Goggle box."

"Do you know what goggle means?"

"Doesn't it mean to stare at something with your eyes wide open?"

"Yes, that's part of the meaning. You see when you goggle at someone, you

with your eyes wide open?"
"Yes, that's part of the meaning. You see when you goggle at someone, you stare at him/her with your eyes open because you are surprised by what you see. I can say 'I goggled at the new shirt he was wearing,"
"I think I understand now why T.V. is called the goggle box. Most people who watch it have their eyes wide open."
"And many of them have their mouth wide open too!"
"And while we're on the subject of television, 'I'd like to know why so many women are particular about what their nose looks like."
"What are your talking about?"
"I watch a lot of foreign programmes. Every now and then some woman says 'You must excuse me. I'd like to powder my nose'... Why are you laughing?"
"Tm sorry. Please continue."
"Why do they keep newdering their

"I'm sorry. Please continue."
"Why do they keep powdering their nose so often?"

"Well, some time ago, we talked about asking for the bathroom in a direct and

indirect manner. Do you remember?"
"Of course, I remember. That's when
you talked about something called

you talked about something called euphemism."
"That's right."
"But what's the connection between powdering one's nose and going to the bathroom?"
"If a lady says I'd like to powder my nose, it means she wants to use the bathroom. It's an indirect way of asking you where the bathroom is."
"Powder-room" or 'powdering-room' is a women's cloakroom or lavatory in a women's cloakroom or lavatory in a public building.

"That's very interesting." Published in The Hindu on May 4, 1993.

Word of the day

wet through and through; thoroughly wet

Pronunciation: bit.ly/soddenpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /so.dan/

Usage: The playing fields were sodden after

### THE DAILY QUIZ

The September 11 attacks, commonly known as 9/11, were coordinated terrorist suicide attacks carried out by the al-Qaeda against the U.S. in 2001. A quiz on that fateful day

### Sindhu Nagaraj

### QUESTION 1

On the morning of September 11, 19 terrorists hijacked how many commercial airliners scheduled to travel from the East Coast to California?

### QUESTION 2

crashed the first two crashed the first two planes into the Twin Towers of the WTC, and the third team succeeded in striking the Pentagon. Where did the fourth plane

### QUESTION 3 What is the term for the global counter terrorist military campaign initiated by the United States

following the September 11 attacks of 2001?

### QUESTION 4

The U.S. invoked which article of the NATO to call upon allies to fight the al-Qaeda? How many has the U.S. invoked this

### OUESTION 5

Regarding the 9/11 attack, one of the sites is termed Ground Zero. Which is it?



estions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This country topped the medals to with 220 medals in the Paris Paralympics. Ans: China
2. These two Indian athletes became two-time gold

2. These two Indian athletes became two-time go medal winners at the Paris Games. Ans: Shooter Avani Lekhara and shot putter Sumit Antil 3. India recorded a one-two in athletics for the fir time in this event. Ans: Men's club throw F51

event
4. This athlete became the first Indian to win medals
at three consecutive Paralympics. Ans: Mariyappan
Thangavelu (High jump T42 class)
5. India's youngest Paralympic medallist. Ans:
Armless archer Sheetal Devi

6. The reason Dutch cyclist Caroline Groot and ranian powerlifter Ahmad Aminzadeh made news Ans: First and last of the 549 gold medal

(isual: Name this neutral athlete. Ans: Ihar Boki Early Birds: Varghese Joseph| Tamal Bis Shiladitya| Kevin Toms Skaria



Sodden:

Synonym: soppy





# WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2024



### TRADE WITH NEIGHBOUR

Foreign minister S Jaishanka

We are not closed to business from China... I think the issue is, which sectors do you do business and what terms do you do business? It's far more complicated than a black and white

### Choices before GST council

Rather than raise rates, the govt must fix the tax's faulty design and bring in larger transaction volumes

HE 54TH MEETING of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council reportedly saw many state governments expressing discomfiture over this broader consumption tax yielding lower revenue growth in comparison to the taxes it replaced. The states are more vulnerable to GST's low revenue potential now, than in the first five years of this tax through June 2022, when they enjoyed guaranteed revenue growth of 1.4% annually. Not just at the level of individual states, but even the trajectory of gross GST collections may at best be approaching the pre-GST trend growth onw, after seriously lagging it in the initial five years. To be sure, the additional impost on demerit goods, which were designed to generate proceeds to compensate the state governments for any shortfall, proved insufficient. Of course, this was partly due to the pandemic, and the level of revenue guarantee being high. The cess was therefore extended beyond the compensation period to finance the loans arranged to make up for the shortfall.

The ratio between GST and the gross domestic product (GDP) was 6.2% for the first five years, but improved to 6.9% in 2023-24. It may now be showing signs of plateauing. Minus the cess proceeds, which is how GST recipits are to be compared with pre-GST period, the collections are still stagnating at around 5.6% of GDP.At first glance, this situation should impart a renewed urgency for raising the weighted average are from 11.6% at present to the so-called "revenue neutral rate" (RNR) of over 15%. Put plainly, the reflex exacts a destruction over the total exacts and examples are true for the research of the content of the solution of the reflex exacts at the test are treated. HE 54TH MEETING of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council

ataround 3-6% of the Arrivant grance, this situation should impart a renewed urgency for raising the weighted average rate from 11.6% at present to the so-called "revenue neutral rate" (RNR) of over 15%. Put plainly, the reflex may be to hike the tax rates substantially and exemptions removed, for a wide array of goods and services. In this context, a group of ministers for rate rationalisation is now working against a tighter deadline.

However, it may not be worthwhile to resort to rate increases for revenue gains. After all, the concept of permanent RNR is fallible, as innovations and echnology constantly create new goods and services. As such, a task force under the 13th Finance Commission had computed the RNR at just 12%. The absence of the promised revenue productivity in the GST has much to do with its structural infirmities, rather than (low) rates. Significant parts of the economic value chain isn't captured by India's GST, which is one reason why the tax authorities are tempted to adopt an artificially expansive definition of "services", and end up burning their fingers. The hefty tax notices to IT companies for their remittances to overseas branches, under the reverse charge mechanism, is a case in point.

As former finance secretary Vijay Kelkar had pointed out, the practice of setting tax rates "largely with the objective to maintain revenue neutrality" could be "counter-productive", and make it lucrative for the fraudsters to evade taxes. It may be hard to bring auto fuels under the GST ambit as states will resist "loss of autonomy", but there is a strong case for levying GST on sale of land and ready-made immovable property. This will not raise the tax

wall resist loss of autonomy, our there is a property. This will not raise the tax burden much, as work contracts are already taxed, but would help ameliorate black money. The GST slab reign must simplify the structure by reducing the tax rates to two, including (a lower) merit rate, and eliminate some of the exemptions to capture wider transaction volumes. A broader consumption revival that the economy is waiting for must not be thwarted with onerous indirect taxes.

GREEN SWITCH

THERE IS A CASE FOR SUPPLY-BASED MANDATES OVER DEMAND-BASED INCENTIVES IN INDIA

# Future-proofing EV market

VERTHE LAST five years, the electric vehicle (EV) industry in India has the control of the contr essential to maintain its growth momen-tum as it strives to attain its EV30@30

essential to maintain its growth momentum as it strives to attain its EV30(@30) goals. In 20.24, however, there has been a slight decline in EV passenger sales, as opposed to the impressive growth rates of more than 100% showcased since 20.22. This deceleration isn't unique to india; the global EV industry is also facing a slowdown. Therefore, understanding the lay drivers and impediments to this recent shift in EV growth becomes essential to recalibrate the policies to ensure india progresses swirtly in its electric mobility journey.

They sear 20.23 sawthe Indian EV market record its highest sales to date, with around 1.5 million units and the four-wheeler segment registering a staggering 1.0% growthy-ear-on-year(>-0-yHow-ever, in the first four months of FY2.5, 4.7 lakh units of EVs were sold in India, down 3.1.3% from last year. The decline was mainly caused by the weak performance of the two- and four-wheeler segments, both experiencing a fall of 11-9y-o-y. This decline in the sales trajectoring a fall of 11-9y-o-y. This decline in the sales trajectoring a smith control of the EV30,000 goal is a concerntal arrest satention. Even with unparalleled growth rates since 20.22, India EV sector was able to reach a meagre 2.13% penetration in the overall passenger vehicle growth rates since 2022, India's EV sector was able to reach a meager 2.1 3% penetration in the overall passenger vehicle market. At this juncture, the nation cannot afford a reduction in these numbers if it aims to achieve its environmental and economic imperatives. Many factors contribute to the low EV penetration numbers in the economy. The



primary culprit behind the low adoption of EVs is their high price compared to traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) weblicks, making the former a less financially viable option. An analysis of the automobile market shows that there are only three EV models within the average purchasing power bracket (i.e. below ₹10 akity) as opposed to more than 50 models of ICE vehicles in the same price range. Despite low running costs, avery selective range of EVs in the price bracket discourages widespread adoption. The government of India has acknowledged the significance of this issue atvarious levels. These stabilished comprehensive demands for EVs. In 2015, it launched the first phase of its flashes better 4 dontine with its flashes in the stable of the stable of

ing adoption and raising demand for EVs. In 2015, it launched the first phase of its flagship Faster Adoption and Manufacturing (of Hybridand) Electric Vehicles (FAME) policy, which was further supplemented by a second phase in 2019. Under both phases of the policy, major demand-driving incentives were provided to consumers through subsidies of up to 10,000 per kilowatt hour for four-wheelers; this reduces the price of many vehicles by up to 1,1 slash for consumers. With FAME-II finally ending in March, the government launched the Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme (EMPS), providing subsidies for

purchasing two- and three-wheeler EVs.
Moreover, since 2019, the government has moved EVs to the lowest goods and services tax slab at 59 has opposed to EC and such the state level, all states have exempted road tax for registration feers for EVs. Evernatus have either subsidised or exempted road tax for EVs. To reduce the burden of charging costs for the people, 21 states offer subsidies on the cost of electricity consumed for charging EVs.

The various demand intentives provided by the fact the conomies demand-side incentives amonobe along-terms olution to overcome India's the Evernatus demand-side incentives demand-side incentives amonobe along-terms olution to overcome India's the Evernatus demonstrated by the fact that the reduction in sales of electric passenger vehicles

In a bid to produce cost-efficient vehicles, the industry has to achieve economies of scale that would culminate solely with increased production of zero emission vehicles

that the reduction in sales of electric passenger webselves of electric passenger webselves wheeler purchase subsidy from the EMPS. Hence this presents a case for India to move away from the demand-driven incentive space and focus on solutions that encourage the production of cost-efficient vehicles leading to a fall in their prices and greater affordability. In a bild to produce cost-efficient vehicles, the industry has to achieve a certain level of economies of scale that would cul-

minate solely with increased production of zero emission vehicles (ZEVe) in the market. The government of India, to amplify EV production, has launched two schemes to incentivise production of advanced technology auto components and advanced chemistry cells (for EV battery production). However, given the juncture at which the industry finds itself in respect to the EV30@30 Jarget, a stronger policy is needed to augment production and achieve economies of scale. A ZEV mandate is what the country needs. Such a mandate would compel automakers to produce a specific share of their production as ZEVs, a deflance of which could lead to heavy monetary fines. The mandate, if implemented, would also allow manufacturers to trade credits on the basis of their implemented, may exceed the service of the control of the production. Any excess rectilts earned by producing EVs above the mandated limit can be sold at a market chetermined price to automakers who are unable to full such a mandate in their production!

by producing EVs above the mandated limit can be sold at a market cletermined price to automakers who are unable to full such a mandate in their production. Hence, besides being a legal obligation, the mandate is a potential source for increasing revenues of automakers. This dual nature of the mandate is a legislation and incentive — is ideal for the EV industry as it would need automakers to develop production capabilities and innovate to churn out cheaper EVs.

India faces a mountain in its journey to a chieving clean mobility targets through it has been able to tread along based on an approach twelled by demand incentives and subsidies, this approach is not equipped to scale the summit ahead. Achange of approach fuelled by a production-based mandate would not only give the country the acceleration it needs but also a fair chance of reaching its destination — a clean erenvironment made possible through an absolute switch to green mobility in the coming years.

Co-authored with Kartik, researcher.

Co-authored with Kartik, researcher, Institute for Competitiveness

### Trump is the only one threatening the dollar

DONALD TRUMP'S STRATEGY for reelection is centred on speaking to the deepest, darkest fears of Americans. In his view, migrants streaming over the border are taking jobs away from Americans, especially Black workers (whatever that means). They're not. Crime, he asserts, is way up. It's down. The economy, he claims, is in a shambles. The opposite is more accurate. Now, the former president has come up with the idea that countries are avoiding the greenback. The dollar is 'under major siege', the Republican presidential nominee said on Saturdayat a rally in Wisconsin. "You leave the dollar and you're not doing business with the United States because we are going to put a 100% staff on your goods." The implication, like most things Trump says these days, is that only he can prevent such a calamity! If were truly happening—but it's not. The dollar is the world's primary reserve currency, which is the source of the US' exorbitant privilege", which allows the government to fund budget deficits in perpetuity and keeps interest rates lower than they might otherwise be. So, a move away from the dollar by foreign investors would make it harder for the US to borrow, therefore causing borrowing costs to spike.

away from the dollar by foreign investors would make it harder for the US to borrow, therefore causing borrowing costs to spike.

For those not steeped in the foreign-exchange market, Trump seems to be riffing off the "de-dollarisation" speculation that has cropped up in recent years. The thinking is that the US has "weaponised" the dollar through heavy financial sanctions imposed on Russia, including preventing that country's central bank from accessing its foreign-currency reserves. As such, countries whose ideological leanings conflict with those of the US might want to move their reserves into the currency of a more friendly country. Indeed, when the foreign ministers of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa convened in Cape Town in mid-2023, Biomeber Revus reported they asked the bloc's specially created bank to provide guidance on how a continuous control of the US might want to move their reserves into the currency of a more friendly country. Indeed, when the foreign ministers of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa convened in Cape Town in mid-2023, Biomeber Revus reported they asked the bloc's specially created bank to provide guidance on how it could shield other member countries from the impact of sanctions such as those imposed on Russia.

It won't be an easy task. Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, use of the dollarin global transactions has a corrected by the countries. A decade ago, the dollar's share was less than 35% Clearly, the world sees a benefit in transacting business in a currency where the rule of law takes precedence.

It's that commitment to the rule of Jaw that draws capital from around the world.

rations in 210 countries. A decade ago, the dollar's share was less than 35%. Clearly, the world sees a benefit in transacting business in a currency where the rule of law takes precedence.

It's that commitment to the rule of faw that draws capital from around the world to the US. Foreign holdings of US Treasury securities have surged by \$1.14 trillion since them dol (2020) through June, better than the \$1.07 trillion underall for ruys and Trump. It's why the Bidomberg dollar index has strengthened 10.2% under the Biden administration after weakening 11.6% under the Trump administration. It's why the MSCI USA index of equities has surged 4.2% since the end of 2020, almost 17 times the gain of the MSCI All-Country World Index excluding the US.

What Trump conveniently neglects to mention is how much dramage he did to the dollar while president. Erratic and unpredictable policies along with periodic threats as a table place to invest. The dollar's share of global currency reserves tumbled from 5.4% when the took office in 2017 to 60.7% when he left at the end of 2020 — the lowest since 1995. Under Biden, the dollar's share of floab aumency reserves tumbled from \$5.4% when the took office in 2017 to 60.7% when he left at the end of 2020 — the lowest since 1995. Under Biden, the dollar's share of has stabilized, amounting to \$8.9% at the end of 1020 — the lowest since 1995. Under Biden, the dollar's share of has stabilized, amounting to \$8.9% at the end of 1020 — the lowest since 1995. Under Biden, the dollar's share of has stabilized, amounting to statistic and the stabilized of the stabil

### India's march towards deep tech As India embraces the deep-tech revolution, the

### RAMEESH KAILASAM, FAISAL AHMED & GAURAY GAGGAR

DEEP TECH REFERS to deep technology that involves path-breaking scientific lessarch and innovation. It is not the innovation is not into the innovation is not into the innovation is not into the innovation is self but refers to the category of start-ups that create an impact through scientific discovery and engineering, creating an enabling power for their users. Deep tech cuts a cross areas, including processing and computing capabilities of a highernature that support decision-making. They can power new designs, algorithms, techniques, and intelligence.

Indul's deep-tech journey has begun with new-age entrepreneurs daring to innovate into uncharted territories. Indul as been as offware and consumer internet story so far. However, a growing need for high-impact, long-term solutions to global challenges such as climate change, healthcare, usustainable energy, and so on has fuelled a shift towards deep tech. Unlike traditional tech models that teplicate global standards, deep-tech start-ups are pioneering new paradigms, creating first-of-tis-kind solutions. Indian deep-tech start-ups are redefining the tech landscape and solving some of the world's most complex challenges.

India's deep-tech ecosystem, currently at around 4,000 by 2030 according to estimates by the department for promotion of industry and internal trade. The deep-tech start-ups are working towards tackling complex challenges should advanted the control of the promotion of industry and internal trade. The deep-tech start-ups are working towards tackling complex challenges should advanted the promotion of industry and internal trade. The deep-tech start-ups are working towards tackling complex challenges should advanced technology Start-ups its self-towards tackling complex challenges should advanced technology Start-ups its Skynort Aerospace, the first private Indian company to launch a rocket, and

ideaForge Technology, a leader in un-manned aerial vehicle (UAV) manufactur-ing, are setting benchmarks. These com-panies reflect a broader trend of Indian deep-tech start-ups emerging as global trenductres, developing technologies that were once the exclusive domain of estab-

lished international players.
Skyroot Aerospace's vision of lowering the cost of access to space led to the Hyder

SkyrootAerospace's vision ot lowering hecostof access to space led to the rlyderabad-based company's successful launch of the Vikarn-Srocket in 2022, making it the first Indian private firm toachievesuch a feat.ideaf-orge Technology is revolutionising the IUAY market with its advanced drones which are used in defence, homeland security, and industrial applications. In the field of quantum computing, QNu Labs is leading the development of quantum-safe cryptographic solutions that ensure secure data transmission against quantum computer attacks, recognised globally for its workin secure communication. Boson QP is uses quantum computing to accelerate computational fluid dynamics simulation.

putational fluid dynamics simulation, essential for acrospace, automotive, and manufacturing sectors.
The rise of India's deep-tech sector has given birth to a new breed of entrepreneurs, the "deep-tech titans" who are not just aiming for financial success but are also driven by a mission to improve lives. They are creating technologies that challenge conventional boundaries, redefine

next wave of technological breakthroughs will come from the labs and start-ups in the space

possibilities, and place India at the forefront of global tech leadership.
The government of India's policies
have also helped nurture this ecosystem.
Initiatives such as the National Mission
on Quantum Technologies and Applications, with a budget of (8,000 crore, aim
to elevate India's capabilities in quanturn computing. The draft National
Deep Tech Start-up Folicy 2023 is targeted at accelerating technological
growth, enhancing global competitiveness, and positioning
growth, enhancing global competitiveness, and positioning
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Start-ups continue to navigate a complex regulatory landscape besides trying to attract and retain top-tier talent

nearly \$40 billion in 2023 alone.
Government emphasis on AI and
machine learning is particularly significant. Initiativesuch as the national strategy on AI and the establishment of AI
capabilities. Gnanial, a Bengaluru-based
research institutes are driving india's AI
capabilities. Gnanial, a Bengaluru-based
stat-up, demonstrates the trend by developing conversational AI and voice biometrie solutions that revolutionises customer service and fraud detection. Observe.AI

has raised over \$214 million to develop a conversational intelligence platform that sets new standards in AI-powered cus-

convensational intelligence platform that sets new standards in Al-powered customer engagement.

Cell Propulsion, an electric vehicle technology start-up, is driving innovation in the logistics and transport sectors with its fully integrated electric mobility solutions. Biotech firms such as Biocon and Syngene are leading the way in genomics and personalised medicine research.

As deep-tech competition intensifies globally, India's unique strengths are being reflected. With a strong foroundation in science, technology, engineering, and anthematics education, when start-up culture, and a flourishing ecosystem or research institutions, India is positioned to assume leadership in the years to come. Already ranked sixth in the deep-tech ecosystem, the potential for India is immense, although challenges remain. Start-ups continue to navigate a complex regulatory landscape besides trying to attract and retain top-tier talent and attempting to secure the much needed patient capital for long-term R&D. Deep-tech companies often face longer gestation periods and higher costs, requiring sustained investment and strategic partnerships to bring their innovations to market. Deep-tech start-ups acrequipped to tackle india's most critical challenges. As India continues to embrace the deep-tech revolution, the next wave of technological breakthroughs will come from the labs and start-ups in the space that has the potential to put the country ahead of the curve in innovation.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Start-up failing

TO IEATH IESSONS
Apropos of "Lessons from Dunzo"
(FE, September 9), not just Dunzo
but many other once high-flying
enterprises have come down with a
crash. While each may have a different
reason for their current position,
the nature of business is that not
everybody will succeed. For every
success story, there will be thousands
of others with not such a happy

ending. The retail space is getting crowded with players with deep pockets and new start-ups are going to find it harder to survive. There are all kinds of pressures on retail start-ups including financial and regulatory. Regulations are often bypassed in order to beat the competition. But sooner or later their short cuts return to haunt them. This is a oft-repeated story but yet few lessons seem to have been learnt.

—Anthony Henriques, Maharashtra

### Abuse of drones

Reports of drones being used by suspected militants in Manipur to attack security forces are troubling. Manipur is a tinderbox with the 15-month-old ethnic conflict showing signs of abating. Drones add a dangerous new dimension that must be sensibly countered. The main security challenge is that hobbyist drones can be modified for sinister ends. In Manipur, it's suspected that

New Delhi

drones were fitted with ammunition looted from the state armoury. But this shouldn't force a reversal of the government's liberal drone policy of 2021. Innovation is the bedrock of the 2021. Innovation is the bedrock of the industry. Security agencies must stay ahead and develop anti-drone systems. Manipur should never have been allowed to escalate. This is a wake-up call, and a lesson for all. —Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

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### THE ASIAN AGE

### Why is BJP worked up about Rahul's China, RSS remarks?

Rahul's China, RSS remarks?

Is perhaps the favourite word that India's right-wing politicians use to spin their own narrative about the politics of their opponents. They would like the people to believe that this nation—its past, and present—has been nothing short of perfect and that anyone who wants to throw working this strategy and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sahha, Rahul Gandhi, has been its most frequent victim.

Rahul Gandhi, has been its most frequent victim.

Is the common that is the strategy and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sahha, Rahul Gandhi, has been its most frequent victim.

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Is the common that is the service of the common that is the service of the delivered of the common that is the service of the strategy and the strateg

### Insurance GST: Pressure shows

Insurance GST: Pressure shows

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council reached a broad consensus on reducing taxes on health and life insurance premiums. Based on the recommendations of a Group of Ministers, which was set up specifically on this issue, a final decision would be taken in the next Council meeting in November 1.

The genesis of the demand lies in a letter written by Union minister Nitin Agents of the Council meeting in November 1.

The genesis of the demand lies in a letter written by Union minister Nitin Agents of the written with the Nitin Minister Nitin Agents of the Without the Council meeting the Council meeting the Council meeting the Council of the Without Minister Nitin Agents of the Without Minister Nitin Agents of the Without Minister Nitin Agents of the Council of the Without Minister Nitin Agents of the Council of the Without Minister Nitin Agents of the Without Minister Natendra Modi — someting unlike Mr Modi. Though the BJP appears to remain confident, it seems shaken by the lower than expected majority in the Lok Sabha. It is seems shaken by the lower than expected majority in the Lok Sabha. It is seems shaken by the lower than expected majority in the Lok Sabha. It is seems shaken by the lower than expected majority in the Lok Sabha. It is seems shaken by the lower than expected majority in the Lok Sabha. It was also indicates growing pressures on the Modi 3.0 government in accommodating the interests of its allies.

While the decision to withdraw tax on insurance has strong moral agonds like medicine, and paramedical services like diagnostics attract a CST of 12 per cent. At some point in time, one could raise a question on how medicines and preventive diagnostics could attract a 12 per cent tax when he buys any particular commodity as a rich person would. It is always known to everyone that a tax levide on goods and services is considered a regressive tax, yet no one across the world could do away with it. If the Modi government coming under political compulsions seeks to review

### THE ASIAN AGE

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# Manipur: Local ethnic 'war' turns into a national crisis



Wasbir Hussain

the san as a local ethnic "war" between the majority Meiteis and the minority but 16 months down the line, the violence in Manipur has clearly become a national security security and the security security security security security security and the security security and the security security payloads of rocket-propelled grenades to attack civilians. And the security property of security payloads of rocket-propelled grenades to attack civilians. And talled a 78-year-old Meitel priest at the ancestral home of Manipur's first chief minister M. Koireng near the INA Memorial in Moirang, in the state's Bishnupur district. The use of drones and the security setablishment sit up and take a deeper look at the prevailing situation. The use of these weapons meant that the attackers, whichever side they belonged to, could strike at will from create have of fithey wanted to Besides, it has also raised questions as to the source of these weapons because Manipur shares a 388 km-long porous border with strife-torn Myanmar. This is a serious cause for worry because vill warntent Myanmar has any hard property of the second manipur shares and having in their possession sophisticated weapons and military hardware even for sale to raise funds.

raise funds.

Already, Manipur has turned out to be one of the most militarised states in

the country. Within months of the ethnic violence starting on May 3, 2023, agitated mobs, mainly in the Imphal Valley, looted weapons belongting mostly to state security forces. Estimates say around 5,000 automatic and semi-automatic weapons and 500,000 have been looted from armouries and other facilities belonging to the Manipur police. So, a group of people in the Manipur police, so, a group of people in the fimphal Valley suddenly had a lot of arms and ammunition in their hands, and, this during a blistering ethnic clash added to the security chalsolded to the security chalof this, the Valley-based Meitei insurgents who had bases across the border in Myanmar appeared to have returned home in the wake of the war in Myanmar between the military junt and the perdemocracy militias. In the hills, the spollight, the spollight, the spollight is supported to the proposed to the second to the se

Myammar between the military junta and the prodemocracy militias. In the hills, the spoflight, right from the start of the ethnic upsuring, has been on the 2,000-plus Kukir tebel cadres (officially list-ed) under the banner of the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and the United Benocratic Front (UDF), who has been on a Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with the crument since 2006. These Kuki rebels have been accused by groups in the Imphal Valley of leading the attacks of the Meiteis, along with others, a charge these SoO groups have denied. Manipur chief minister N. Biren Singh and his government swants the SoO agreement abrogated. The SoO agreement basic and has not been official stand has not been official the rebels are supposed to be still staying at the 14 designated camps. The leaders of these groups

withdraw at least two battalions of the Assam Rifles from the hill areas opposing, saying it's required to stay for their safety

under truce say that their weapons are under double lock and key, with one set of keys with the state authorities. But, despite such claims, the Sol groups have continued to be accused by leaders and organisations in the

arouge have continued to be accused by leaders and organisations in the Imphal Valley of being involved in attacks on Meliteis.

During the past few days, from Friday to Sunday, chief minister Biren Singh, chaired two Cabinet meetings and met governor Laoman Prassad Acharya twice, alone on Saturday and along with several ministers and adaptive strength of the several ministers and alliance on Sunday. The chief minister clearly told the Centre, through the governor, to vest full powers on the state government to deal with the situation and give the charge of the Unified Command of security forces to the state. The fact that the chief minister has even made such a demand (awa and order is he may coase and order is he may compare the manufacture of the manufacture of the more than a year now. What is Article 355 This provision states that It shall be the duty of the duty of the stall be the duty of the duty of the stall be the duty of the stall be the duty of the

more than a year now. What is Article 353° This provision states that it shall be the duty of the Union to protect every said to the Union to protect every saggression at external disturbance. By asking the Centre to be more proactive (not in so many words though) and seeking the charge of the Unified Command, the state leadership in Manipur seeks to send out a message that it does not have the full authority or have the full authority or any of the product of the pr

fencing of the border with Myanmar and stricter implementation of the ban on the Free Movement

stegime (PMR) with Myanmar. The FMR, that allowed people of both India and Myanmar to go up to a distance of 16 km into the territory of the other country, has been discontinued after the ethnic violence.

This indicates the fear or suspicion of the Birent education of the Singh base as the border regions of Myanmar is inhabited by people belonging to the same Kuki-Chin group. "I am not against the original Kukis. Our threat is from the Kuki immigrants from Myanmar," and Birent Singh has said.

Drawn into the vortex of the conflict is a section of the Central security forces, particularly the paramilitary Assam Riffes, the nation's oldest paramilitary Assam Riffes, the nation's oldest paramilitary assam Riffes, however, denies this covered the Assam Riffes, however, denies this accusation. Nonetheless, there is a move to withdraw at least and therefore not playing a neutral role. The Assam Riffes, however, denies this accusation. Nonetheless, there is a move to withdraw at least and therefore not playing a neutral role. The Assam Riffes is required to stay for their safety against the "onslaught from the Valley".

from the Valley".

If there is no end to the violence in sight, there is also no solid attempt at brokering peace between the two sides. The tragedy in Manipur, therefore, is likely to continue and become a long-drawn battle.

Washir Hussain, author

### WHY NOT MANIPUR

The reluctance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to act decisively on the question of Manipur is impossible to understand. His critics will forever remind him of his failure to visit Manipur when the state required a helping hand. Now the fires are once more spi-ralling out of control as violence has seen a resurgence in the state with an ex-Army offi-cial lynched and more houses belonging to BJP leaders set on fire. Use of drones in the violence means a bigger threat to peace and stability in the region. While the BJP is leading from the front in its demands to replace Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal, it is doing nothing similar for Manipur where the situation is

**Anthony Henriques** 

### NO TIME FOR KUKIS

THE CAUSE of the persistent sociopolitical distress in Manipur has remained too distant for Delhi. The strife is unending and the state has long been left to fend for itself. It would appear that that in comparison, the Ukraine and even the Gaza conflicts are far more tractable as we see Delhi being sought as a mediator in both. Armed with successful outcomes in one or even both cases, it might be hoped that Delhi would eventually put that experience to good use in Manipur. Charity need not begin at home.

R. Narayanan Navi Mumba

### **CBI'S PRIORITY**

IS THE CBI more interested in solving the graft case at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital arther than the rape-murder case? It has become evident after the CBI lawyer's turning up annoyingly late to oppose the bail plea for the rape-murder accused when the case camp for hearing at the Sealidah court on September 6. Initially, only an assistant in restligation officer on on september 6. Initianly, only an assistant investigation officer on behalf of the CBI was present at the ing. The CBI counsel appeared only after the judge took strong exception to this. The judge was even heard asking whether he should grant bail to the accused in such a situation.

Sujit De
Kolkata





All that India's women really need is respect and equality In the aftermath of the recent rape and murder case at Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, the Supreme Court has declared that the nation cannot afford to wait for anoth-er rape for change to happen on the ground. This stark observation by the highest court of the cour-side of the court of the court of the cour-woman is raped every 20 to 30 minutes. However, it is always women who are often expected to prove their innocence.

woman is raped every 20 to 30 minutes. However, it is always women who are often expected to prove their innocent, who are often expected to prove their innocent as a society, we have traditionally framed this issue as "violence against women". Taker than recognising it as "men's violence against women". This change in wording is crucial as it correctly dentifies the problem as rooted in male behaviour. However, holding the perpetrators accountable challenges the patriarchal system that shields men and suppresses any dislogue that demands their taking responsibility.

The expectation for women to Swent where violence against women is often seen as a women's problem rather than a broader societal issue. Every day, I/O rape cases are reported in India, with 40 per cent involving minors, while many more go unreported. According to a Thomson Reuters Foundation study, India is ranked as the most dangerous country for women.

Unfortunately, efforts to improve women's secrity often appear to be more about political posturing aimed at gaining votes rather than genuine

attempts to address the issue.

In our political system, blame game and finger pointing is overshadowing constructive problem solving in India. When all that governments and political leaders focus on more is assigning blame to previous administrations or other parties rather than addressing it as a social issue together. The problem continues to perspetuate.

While its not all men, it is always must be proposed to the proposed of the problem of the pr

such cases can lean to the second a call to action. Every instance of rape should prompt a change.

In some Muslim-majority nations, the punish-

ment for rape is instant death. In India, however, capital punishment is a contentious subject and the country is divided on its very utility. It is, therefore, reserved for the "irrarest of rare" cases, where the offence is so severe that it demands the death sentence. However, years of data shows that the death penalty does not effectively lower violent crime rates, including rape and terrorism. The so-called "Nirbhaya" gangrape case, also known as the Delhi gangrape case, is a well-known example, where capital punishment was given to the convicts.

The so-called "Nirbhaya" gangrape case, also would-known example, where capital punishment was given to be convicts.

The control outery that followed the crime gave birth to expectations for change in India. In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that the severity with which the act was perpetrated cannot be overlooked, and there was no hope of redemption. Hence, the accused should be hanged.

The term "rarest of rare" originated in a 1980 judgment which urged judges to award capital punishment sparingly. It recommended that the judges should consider factors such as ago, income, premeditation, mental illness, and prior commended that the judges should consider factors such as ago, income, premeditation, mental illness, and prior commender that the judges should consider factors such as ago, income, premeditation, mental illness, and prior commender that the judges should consider factors such as ago, income, premeditation, mental illness, and prior commender that the judges should consider factors such as ago, the such as a prior commender that the judges should consider factors such as ago, the such as a prior commender that the judges should consider factors such as ago, the such as a prior commender that the punch as a prior commender that the judges should consider factors such as ago, the prior death of the death penalty for the most heinous crimes. The idea is to examine all factors influencing the internet prior the death penalty for the most heinous crime

we have several rules in place to control such beinous crimes, but when it comes to implemen-

tation, we are found lacking. As a result, the offence is viewed differently, resulting in a miscarriage of justice.

Worshipping women or mothers is widely practised in India. However, we can see the paradigm dainy alway these days. Women are now viewed mostly as sex objects, resulting in the rising instances of women getting raped.

Due to the perverted actions of momen men, as woman does not feel secure travelling alone at night, wearing short or revealing clothes, or going clubbing at ringht. We have several laws in place to protect their lives, yet they appear to be riddled with loopholes.

One of the ways to address societal issues like sexual violence is to sensitise boys through a value-based education in both homes and schools.

cair contribute to a nignes prevent all governments—both at the Centre and in the states—to come together to devise a long-term strategy to reffect a change in society's perception towards women. So, the fight is essentially for respect and