# THE ASIAN AGE

# India's space hopes rise as Shukla makes history

The Indian Air Force's Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla has made history by becoming the first Indian astronaut to dock at the International Space Station (ISS), a global collaborative space lab, the Soviet Union's Salyut space station.

Apart from Rakesh Sharma, there were at least four persons with Indian rovis, who reached the Earth's orbit or sub-orbit. Three of them are persons of Indian origin, namely Kalpana Chawla (1997 and 2000), Sunit williams (2006, 2012, 2024) and Sirisha Bandla (2021), while an Indian citizen, Gopichand Thotakura, became India's first civilian space tourist in 2024.

However, the June 25 launch aboard the SpaceV Enternation.

sons of Indian origin, namely Kalpana Chawla (1997 and 2000), Suntia Williams (2006, 2012, 2024) and Sirisha Bandia (2021), while an Indian citizen, Gopichand Thotakura, became India's first civilian space tourist 1900s.

Indian Company of the Co

## Punish cops detaining citizens

that it took the intervention of the apex court to get the release of a defendant whom it had granted bail two months ago is a sad commentary on the way the executive can undermine the fundamental rights of the people at will. It also reflects the cavalier way administration of criminal justice is conducted in this

reflects the cavaner way administration to the country.

The court — which reiterated its position that liberty is a very valuable right guaranteed under the Constitution — a position every single court in the country must insist upon every day and every moment — took strong exception to the officials refusing to release the person on the grounds that a sub-section of a provision of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021, had

of the Uttar Fradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021, had not been mentioned in the bail order.

That the officers took a routine approach to an issue that concerns personal liberty forced the apex court to summon the director-general of prisons of Uttar Pradesh and ask him what steps were needed to sensitise the jail officials about the same. The court also ordered a provisional compensation of \$5 lakh for the womonths the accused was made to stay in the jail despite an order granting him bail in April

months the accused was made to stay in the jail despite an order granting num sea in April.

The apex court has, time and again, reminded the state and its various arms including, the judiciary, especially at the lower level, that they must be mindful of the people's right to liberty and that it should be curtailed only through legal means and to the extent mandated. It has repeatedly reminded courts that ball is the rule and jail is the exception, but its words have not had the impact intended, either among the judicial officers or those in the criminal administration system. This would effectively mean that liberty is still at stake in our country even while varience of the state of

## THE ASIAN AGE



# Migrants and voting: EC 'stealth ops' start in Bihar



Shikha Mukerjee

ome are not citizene and some who is who? The mission, for starters. If this sounds like a party game, perish the thought. A special intensive revision of the voters' list for the coming Assembly elections in Bihar, which is less than six months commission says, will be a template for future voters' list revision.

Stripped of the many layers of justification, the revision of the electoral roll in Bihar is about weeding out illegal immigrants on the one hand and ensuring that the revision of the electoral roll in Bihar is about weeding out illegal immigrants on the one hand and ensuring that the revision of the electoral roll in Bihar is about weeding out urbanisation to the state are registered as voters. Why the EC has picked out urbanisation to explain its sudden decision to undertake a SIR is a mystery. Bihar is not the most rapidly urbanising state in hold, even though the hold, even though the hold, even though the the top urbanising state in hold, even though the the top urbanising state in the country. Migration out of Bihar is certainly a matter of concern for the Election Commission. The young and the not a young had the not a young had the not a young the promission of the end of the promission. The summer of the end of the country, and hopefully the EC will pay sufficient attention to these migrants, who routinely return to their home state to the priority of detecting illegal immigrants, by checking whose

of birth of eligible voters by screening the approved list of documents. After all, illegal immigrants are a campaign issue. It was a campaign issue in the Jharkhand elections, in the Maharashtra elections and will be a priority issue.

and will be a priority issue in the 2025 state Assembly elections in West Bengal 2025 at the Assembly elections in West Bengal 2025 at the Assembly elections in West Bengal 2025 at the Assembly elections and doubt of demographic invasion by Muslims in areas adjacent to the Bangladesh border, fear mongering and "othering", is the new normal from the BJP's perspective. In the Bihar elections, the issue of the illegal immigrant will be top of the agenda, especially in places such as Kishangani, which has 62.3 per cent Muslim voters. The narrative of the "Muslim vote banks distribution of the "Muslim vote banks, is familiar. From colourful comparisons of the "termite" to "Ek Hain to Safe Hain" (united we are safe) and "Batenge to Katange" (divided we will be slaughtered) to the "9-20" distribution of Hindus and Muslims in the population, the BJP has crated a new vocabulary, since the 1990s, to describe and define the suspected libe.

1990s, to describe and define the suspected illegal immigrant and the doubtful indian citizen. The normalisation of dividing the population on the basis of religious identity has progressed to the third has progressed to defecting voter eligibility, is now checking citizenship and illegal immigration. When the EC lists "no ineligible voter is included in the electoral rolls", and links it to the Citizenship Act of 1950, then the SIP acquires a dimension that pushes it

For the Election Commission, the Challenge is to be seen to be trying to achieve perfection, instead of being attacked for the stealth inclusion of fake voters in the electoral rolls in select states

intensive effort to ensure intensive effort to ensure legitimate right to vote is enabled to do so.

The Election Commission need not have launched a neak ambush against Indian citizens in its pursuit of purifying the voters' list in India. It could have concentrated in the limited time it has, before the election process before the election process the process of the process of

responsible for the inclusion; he complained of bogus' voters, in his estimate some 38 lakh voters, being added to the electoral rolls shead of the control rolls shead of the Assembly Mahasahtra Mahasahtra

fect. There will be flavs. For the Election Commission, the challenge is to be seen to be trying to achieve perfection, instead of being attacked for the stealth inclusion of fake voters in the electoral rolls in select states. Nor should the EC be required to be a should be a shou

be part of the political campaign in every election.

That was perhaps not quite the intention of the EC when it chose to include illegal immigrants as one of the reasons for an urgent SIR. By doing so, it has merely conhave always known; it is not quite the impartial and neutral and independent institution it was meant to be under the Constitution. It has, in the public imagination, acquired a mythology for serving political ends.

Shithe Milperfee (s.

Shikha Mukerjee is a senior journalist in Kolkata

Scientists from France have discovered a new blood group with the French Blood Establishment identified a rare blood type in a Frenchwoman from Guadeloupe. The blood sample, taken 15 years ago before surgery, has now been confirmed as a unique type never seen before. Named Gwada Negative, it has been offi-cially recognised as the world's 48th blood group system. This rare finding highlights the hidden diversity in human blood; however, the woman is undoubtedly the only

> Sabir Ahmed New Delhi

## **EMERGENCY DRAMA**

NOT MUCH CEREBRAL exercise needs to be done to understand the modus NOT MUCH CRREBERAL exercise needs to be done to understand the modus operand of the BJP behind commemorating the Emergency which is nothing but a trick to boodwink the public to cover up its own massive failures. Assuming that the present government at the Centre has done a commendable job and the beneficiaries are large in numbers, what prompted the government to now commemorate the Emergency with so much fanfare and for whose benefit? Why will the people benefit? Why will the people benefit? Why will the people hortific? The condition of the prominent place making the lives of the people hortific? The condition of the prominent opposition leaders are far worse for they are in constant fear of facing the wrath of the CBI and the ED while discharging their constitutional obligations.

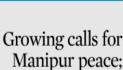
Arun Gupta

## LET STUDENTS SPEAK

to inspire, but many now resemble load rituals — role prayers, slogans, and claps. Where is reflection? Students stand in lines, but do they stand for anything? Assemblies could nurture awareness — on mental health, climate, digital habits. Why not let students speak? A minute of expression is worth more than 30 minutes of silence. Schools claim to shape citizens, but silence isn't characteristic than the contract of the contract of the contraction of the contract of the co

Hasnain Rabbani

Pradeep



as Meiteis, Kukis hold Delhi talks

Thas been a little over two years since the Manipur violence began in May 2023. During period across India and around the world. The current year has seen more wars between couries than at any other time since the Second World War. The Israel-US war with Iran is currently hogging all the limelight, amid talk of a ceasefire. As a consequence, unfortunately, events in Manipur have largely been out of the mind space of most people in our country. It is necessary to bring to the fore the current situation in Manipur, especially after the imposition of President's Rulle on Pérorary 13 this year-time of President State of the Inspection of President's Rulle on Pérorary 13 this year-time of President State of the Inspection of President's Rulle on Perorary 13 this year-time of President State of President

flight that crashed in Ahmedabad on June 12, further makes the situation in Manipar look even the state of th

in the entire state, with many arrests.

A key IAS reshuffle has gone unnoticed, which has placed experienced officers in critical positions in the power, irrigation, transport and tourism sectors, which clearly shows a reinjugarated focus towards administration. The state has seen inaugurations of a few projects and infrastructure, as well as a Sate Krishi Mela to enhance agriculture awareness and introduce new agricultural technologies.

enhance agriculture awareness and introduce new agricultural technologies.

The most important development, of course, has been an effort to get the Kukis and the Meiteis on to the negotiating table. The leaders of both the communities were recently called to Delhi. While the official word has not been out on what the outcome of the tables has been, many have gone on to deride these talks and point a pall of gloom. But the important part here is that leaders of both the groups did come to Delhi and expressed their both communities were unwilling to even talk or initiate a peace process. Now, it is increasingly been heard in the state that some kind of talks between the two communities are likely to begin sooner rather than later.

The two flight crew members from Manipur on board the ill-flated Air India 171, Kongbrailatpam Nganthoi Sharma (Meitei) and Lammunthem Singson (Kuki, would have enjoyed a great bond between themselves, with no baggage of any kind about the happenings in their state (the loss of

about the happenings in their state (the loss of these two young lives in their prime has been a

tragedy to their families and to the whole of Manipur collectively). Exactly a week after the crash, I was travelling on a Delhi-London Air India Boeing 767-9 Dreamliner on June 19, where on board the flight I met three cabin crew from Manipur. One was a Meitel from Imphal, the other a Kuki from Churachandpur, and the third a Naga from Senapati. During the long 10-hour flight, as I chatted with them, they told me that not only were been part of the property of the property

The writer is a retired lieutenant-general who is a former director-general of the Assam Rifles and has extensively served in the Northeast

















## ACT OF TERROR

Union defence minister Rajnath Singh

Every act of terrorism is criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivation whenever, wherever, and committed by whomsoever

# Closing the stable door...

The world's third largest aviation market deserves much better than a toothless regulator

HEAVIATION REGULATOR'S flurry of activity in the wake of the Air India plane crash is a textbook example of closing the stable door after the horse has bolted. As expected, Air India has faced intense scrutinyafter the June 12 accident that killed 271 people. Last week, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) warned that it may suspend or even withdraw the airline's operating licence if it did not remove three officials guilty of repeated lapses from roles linked to crew rescheduling and rostering. It also introduced a new audit framework for the sector that aims to replace the siloed style of domain-specific safety checks

rescheduling and rostering, if also introduced a newaudit framework for the sector that aims to replace the siloed style of domain-specific safety checks carried out by different directorates with a "360-degree evaluation" across airports, airlines, maintenance firms, training institutes, and ground handling companies.

And on Tuesday, the findings of a special DGCA audit only added to the mounting fears of flyers. It discovered instances of aircraft defective monitoring at airports in Delhi and Mumbai, which pointed to "ineffective monitoring at airports in Delhi and Mumbai, which pointed to "ineffective monitoring and inadequate rectification action" Although the regulator did not name any entities, its survey covered areas critical to flight safety and the anomalies ranged from a faded line marking of a runway to a lack of update of obstruction limitation data and a flight getting delayed due to worn-out tyres. The DGCA has given a week to fix the lapses. In addition to routine measures such as an annual audit of Air India that the DGCA has cancelled as the airline grapples with the West Asia turmoil, these are necessary and welcome steps. However, the timing of it all begs the question: Why wait until a tragedy strikes to stir into urgent action? A regulator should not be seen as an enforcer onlywhen public confidence takes a beating. This is not to suggest that airlines do not have their task cut out to prioritise safety. Obviously they can't cut corners and risk passenger safety in a virtually duopolistic Indian market that is ranked the third-largest in the world. On its part, the DGCA has pulled up airlines periodically. For instance, it has penalised Air India, albeit with weakly fines, for violations in the past and hab briefly placed Spicelet under an enhanced surveillance mechanism last year. The DGCA often issues advisories rather than taking decisive action against stilines that violate safety regulations or operational guidelines, suggesting a weakness in enforcement.

For the DGCA to be effectiv

and functions as a subordinate office of the ministry of civil aviation. It is handicapped by a lack of operational and financial autonomy and is severely understaffed — as of March, 814 out of its 1,692 sanctioned positions were vacant. A reliance on civil service hiring processes contributes to an inability to attract experts, while it desperately needs to cut the red tape to allow speedy decision-making. Inspiration can be drawn from similar agencies in the US and the UK, which enjoy greater autonomy with their own personnel and procurement systems. In fact, back in 2013, the previous government had mooted replacing the DGCA with a Civil Aviation Authority, on the lines of the Federal Aviation Administration in the US. Rethinking such a greyamphan is warranted as India's regulatory infrastructure struegles to a revamp plan is warranted, as India's regulatory infrastructure struggles to keep pace with a growing aviation market and ensure it does not compro-mise consumer interests and safety.

## Trade isn't supposed to be emotional. It is now

SINGAPORE FIGURED IT had done a lot right in handling commercial ties with the U.S. Leaders emphasised America's surplus and put huge store in the nations' two-decade-old free trade accord. When President Donald Trump hit the city-state with a 10% levy, it was small comfort that the penalty was so much lower than that imposed on neighbours. How can long time partners put a traditionally strong relationship back on track?

So when former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull was asked a sim

with a 10% levy, it was small comfort that the penalty was so much lower than tam posed on neighbours. How can longtime partners put a traditionally strong relationship back on track?

Sowhen former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull was asked a similar question at a Nomura conference in Singapore this month, the hotel ballroom was all ears.

The challenge for negotiators, said Turnbull, is figuring out what the White House wants. It's not just about the levies themselves, it's the constant flux. Tariffs are on, then paused. They're ratcheted up, then dialled down. Even the rationale hasshifted in Trump's first term, when Turnbull was prime minister, the station was with trade deficits. Now, it's reindustrialisation and generating revenue to offset tax cuts.

But while all that may be true, it's missing a broader point. What if tariffs are as much about looking tough as achieving meaningful results? If that's the case, then there's little that America's partners can do to satisfy the president's demands assuming they reven intended to be met. And that they won't change. The 90-day pause on so-called reciprocal tariffs ends in two weeks. We'll find out.

Looking for logic might be missing the whole idea, according to a new e-book by Richard Baldwin, a professor at the International Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland. The duties reflect what the author describes as a "Grievance Doctrine". Distilled into a word, trade policy is now about emotion.

The act itself was visuporters. Never mind the stated objective of making more stuffin America. The key is understanding the performance of the proper study of the people of the proper study of the peop

the end of the year.

It would be ironic if the nations Washington used to lecture about free trade became bastions of a system the US has tired of.

DIGITAL DECEPTION

THERE IS A NEED TO PRESCRIBE A PUBLIC MECHANISM FOR FASTER TAKEDOWN OF VIOLATIVE CONTENT

# Sebi must rein in finfluencers

HE WEAPONS OF financial deception may have evolved, but the script remain drearily familiar: misinformatic may be compared to the script remain drearily familiar: misinformatic may be compared to the script remains and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) recently passed an order in the pump-and-dump case involving Sadnia Broadcast Limited (Sell, shedding light on howdigi-alplatformas en ownertnation south schemes. Today's conartists have swapped cold calls and call centres for content creators and clickbait thumbnalis with the result that their reach has grown exponentially. A pump-and-dump scheme involves artificially inflating the price of a stock using false or misleading information, only formanipulators to selloff their holdings at the peak, leaving retail investors with steep losses. In the SBL affair, Sebi uncovered an orchestrated campaign of circular trading and deceptive YouTube videos, with a scripted price action.

It began with promoters and related entities engaging in circular trading resentially tossing the stock back and forthamong themselves to create the Illusion of market activity. With SBL's shares withing from low liquidity, even small volunes could cause large price movements. Serior for movements are stage left the "finifuencers". YouTube videos, peddled by certain notices, promoted SBL as the next multi-bagger, dressed

ter stage left: the "finfluencers". You'lube videos, peddled by certain notices, promoted SBL as the next multi-bager, dressed up in the language of financial literacybut dripping with hype and half-truths.

Retail investors, seduced by visions of quick returns and slick presentations, poured in. The exit liquidity provided by their enthusiasm allowed the manipulators to "dump" their shares with perfect timing — a wolf in sheep's clothing dismised as a financial guru. guised as a financial guru. Sebi's order in the SBL case connected

Sebi's order in the SBL case connected the dots between price manipulation, paid digital promotions, and the orchestrated dump of shares. The regulator ordered disgorgement, imposed monetary penalties, and barred several individuals and entities from the market. These measures send a strong message that such conduct will not go unpunished. However, such regulatory actions are remedial and retro-

THE OUTBREAK OF a new war in West



spective by their nature.

Not long ago, these schemes lived in the shadows of boller rooms and SMS spam campaigns. Their reach was limited by manpower and mobile networks. The digital ecosystem, however, lets financial misinformation scale with frightening ease. Finfluencers — part educator, part entertainer, and occasionally part illusionist— now command audiences in the millions, often with little more than a Wi-Fi signal and an alarming Fi signal and an alarming

Fi signal and an alarming degree of confidence. It is therefore pertinent to note that in an age where pump-and-dump schemes are amplified by finflu-encers and social media campaigns, ex-post facto enforcement is necessary but not sufficient. Sebi's task is undoubtedly difficult. The primary challenge in neur-The accessibility and relatability of finfluencers give them credibility, sometimes more than the institutions

but not sufficient. Sebis task is sundoubtedly difficult. The primary challenge in regulating such platforms and content lies in distinguishing financial literacy content from investment advice. The distinction between the two often collapses when creators promise guaranteed returns or package unverified claims as credible investment ideas. Similarly, it is important to preserve free speech and distinguishing it from investment advice can be hard. Imagine if all stock-specific views were considered investment advice, then an Indian Warren Buffett talking about Coke as a great investment with great potential would be considered lilegal.

Sebi has attempted to regulate this space by imposing obligations primarily on registered intermediaries and regulated entities to verify their identities with online platforms before publishing investment-related advertisements — where it

has in fact gone too far in over-regulating. The intent here is to curb fraudulent promotions and ensure only verified entity. Bublish financial content. Furthermore, Sebi has issued directives restricting the nature of content that can be disseminated. For instance, a circular probibits fin-fluencers from using five stock prices in their educational content, mandating instead the use of price data that is at least instead the use of price data that is at least three months old. This is intended to pre-

soid. Insistintended to pre-vent "educational" platfor-ms from being subtly used to provide time-sensitive, unregistered investment advice. Regulators globally agree on preventing publi-cation of unregulated financial content online.

We are not unsympath-etic to the challenges faced by Sebi in this task, particu-larly in regulating the distr-ibution of such content

barymreguating the discussion between the content through encrypted platforms like What-shappandTelegarm However, with respect to other non-encrypted social media platforms such as YouTube and X, there is a growing consensus that they must assume greater responsibility for the financial content they host. This includes implementing robust and proactions in India, the Information Technology Act, 2000, provides a "safe removing misleading or fraudulent financial promotions. In India, the Information Technology Act, 2000, provides a "safe habous" to intermediaries (social media platforms in this case), absolving them from liability for third-party content hosted on their platforms, provided they comply with prescribed due diligence requirements. In this regard, while Sebi has undertaken consultations with such

platforms, there is a need to prescribe a formal and public mechanism for faster takedown of content that is violative of laws, clearer definitions of harmful financial promotion, stricter verification procedures and due dilligence thresholds for paid financial promotions and marefenholds for paid financial promotions and marefenholds for paid financial promotions and marefenholds for paid financial regulators. Ultimately, the strongest line of defence is an informed investor. Regulatory frameworks, platformacountability, and enforcement actions must be complemented by financial liter acyef for stat tacks, seep ticks mas much as strategy. Howoften does anyone well, up to you in a market-place handing over 4500 notes? It is almost as probable that anyone would give you free advice on the internet or other channels on how to find underpriced assets. We live in a financial ecosystem where

annels on how to find underpriced assets. We live in a financial ecosystem where every smartphone is a trading terminal, and every influencer a potential advisor. But the problem is deeper than mere manipulation—it's one of trust. Retailinvestors are increasingly relying on intenent personalities rather than regulated advisors, not because the former speak in plain finglish, not financial Esperanto. The accessibility and relatability of finitheoreose; with them

because the former speakin plain English, and financial Esperanto. The accessibility and relatability of finfluencers give them credibility, sometimes more than the institutions themselves. This is both a strength and a danger. Moreover, the monetisation model of these platforms is complicit. Algorithms that reward engagement do not pause to verify the truth. A video hyping a penny stock might receive ten times the traction of a cautious explainer on index funds. The system is tilted in favour of the loud, not the learned. In essence, we need a modernof a cautious explainer on indextrunds. The system is tilted in favour of the loud, not the learned. In essence, we need a modern-day financial Hippocratic Oath for those dispensing advice — first, do no harm. Until then, perhaps investors would do well to remember: not every 'expert' with a ring light and a You Tube channel is look-ing out for your wealth. Sometimes, they're just chasing theirs.

Co-authored with Aniket Singh an and Yash Vardhan, associates at Finsec Law Advisors

# STEPHEN S ROACH

Fast-forward to today.

possibility of a tentative ceasefine, the odds of imminent global recession have increased sharply.

One shock was bad enough. US President Donald Trump's tariffs, wherever they eventually settle, imply downside increased sharply.

One shock was bad enough. US President Donald Trump's tariffs, wherever they eventually settle, imply downside insks to global growth. But the potential for assecond shock—a warbetween Israeland Iran that has now ensanared the United States—compounds the problems for an increasingly vulnerable world economy, It fits with my theory of cyclical risk: It does not take the problems for an increasingly vulnerable world economy, which generally "stall speed" into outright recession.

This simple rule has worked remarkably well in predicting global recessions over the past 45 years. Unlike a recession is an individual economy, which generally reflects a contraction of real output, one at an individual economy with generally reflects a contraction of real output, one at the global level typically involves about half the world's economies contracting while the remainder continue to expand. As a result, a worldwide recession is usually associated with global GDP growth slowing to the still positive 2-2.5% range — a shortfall of 0.8 to 1.3 percentage points from the post-1980 trend of 3.3%. The exceptions were in 2009 and 2020, when the global financial crists and the pandemic, respectively, caused outright contractions in global output.

The stall speed holds the key to cyclical risk assessment. It can be thought of as a zone of vulnerability, measured by significant downside deviations from trend growth. Looking back over the past 49 years, Iwould place the global economy's stall speed in the 2.5 -3% range: when in this zone, the world lacks the resilience needed to with stand a shock. That is what he respected to with stand a shock. That is what he respected in such of the sart for useful. happened in each of the past four global recessions.

Fast-forward to today. According to the Interna-tional Monetary Fund's lat-est World Economic Out-look, global GDP growth is expected to slow to 2.8% in 2025 — right in the middle of the stall-speed zone. Whereas recent global rece-ssions were the result of sin-

ssionswere the result of single shocks, today the world economy could be hit by two economy could be hit by two a tariff war and a kinetic war in West Asia. The possibility of a double-shock combination only increases the odds of global rocession; in forecasting circles, it's as close to a smoking gun as you can get. As a always, the devil is in the details — in this case, the specific transmission efficients case, the specific transmission efficients case, the proposition of the two shocks to global growth. The trade war, by now, is oldnews. My assumption is that the Trump tariff package that eventually emerges from ongoing legal disputes will feature something close to a

to slow precipitously

Israeli-US attack on Iran and Donald Trump's

tariff war come as global GDP growth continues

A double shock to the world economy

10% global tariff, a considerably higher tariff rate for China, and steeper product-specific tariffs aimed at protecting America's legacy industries, such as motor vehicles and parts, steel, and aluminium. The 10% global tariff represents a roughly five-fold increase from the 1.9% average effective tariff rate during the 30years before Trump's "Liberation Day" back in early April — a shock by any standards. for the still export-dependent of the still e

for the still export-depen-dent Chinese economy and major uncertainty for the US economy, almost surely leading to pullbacks in capi-tal spending and hiring, whi-ich are dependent on busi-nesses' stable expectations of the future. With the US and Chinese economies col-lectivalty accounting for all businesses. The key to the near-term outlook is not US tariffs or the Iran war, but their geopolitical interplay

lectively accounting for a lit-tle over 40% of cumulative

tle over 40% of cumulative global GDP growth since 2010, one should not underestimate a tariff war's potential damage to the world economy.

As for West Asla, the macroeconomic impact of wars is typically measured through oil prices. Following Israel's launch of strikes against Iran on June 13, oil prices initially soared, but from three-year lows, and remained well below post-20.2 averages. Then, in the immediate aftermath of Trump's June 23 ceasefire announcement, oil prices retraced much of the war-Trump's June 23 ceasefire announcement, oil prices retraced much of the war

related run-up.ifhostilities continue – al-ways a possibility in West Asia – there will be significant upside risks to energy and other commodity prices as markets start to worry about Iran's options for retallar-ion, which could include disruption of oil production and distribution, as well as shipping lanes. On balance, the US bomb-ing of Iranian nuclear enrichment facili-ties only une 21 has injected a new element of uncertainty into an already hyper-volatile world.

of uncertainty into an aireasy hyper-volatile world. It is far too early to foretell how US en-try into Israel's war against Iran will affect global energy prices. But in one sense, the situation is reminiscent of Saddam Hus-sein's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, which led to adoubling of oil prices within three months. Significantly, the world economy was already slowing toward a 2.5% stall speed in 1991, and the war-related energy shock led to a mild global recession in 1992-93. The keyt othe near-term outfook is not volatile world.

recession in 1992-93. The key to the near-term outlook is not US tariffs or the Iran war, but their geopolitical interplay. These shocks have the potential to feed on each other, threatening a vulnerable world economy that is already at risk of stalling out. Cyclical calls are never a sure thing, But this year's twin shocks make a global recession look increasingly likely.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Rail fare hike will raise political storm

Apropos of "Being on the right track" (FE, June 26), the railways cannot be treated as a profit-making venture because it is the pivot around which the people of the nation move. As many as 24 million passengers use Indian Railways every day, making the biggest rail network in the world under a single management. Railway

carry all kind of commuters from the richest to the poorest, and it is the duty of the government to ensure the safety of all. Other conveniences can be covered by differential pricing. The proposed increase in fares is going to raise a political storm. The government should not be too perturbed because had it been in the opposition the same objections would have been raised by them.

—Anthony Henriques, Maharashtra

## Not on track

The proposed fare hike by the Indian Railways to raise ₹1,500 crore reflects deeper structural inefficiencies. Cross-subsidising passengers via freight is unsustainable, especially when passenger volume has grown just 27% since FY14. Rather than repeated fare hikes, the railways must focus on monetising non-core assets, public-private partnerships, operational

New Delhi

digitisation, and logistics integration to boost profitability. Electrification progress is laudable, now leverage it to phase out diesel and cut costs. Fare hikes should be targeted at premium segments, not common commuters. A modern, efficient, and commercially viable railways is possible — with bole reform, not band-aid pricing. — Nilesh Dubey, Ahmedabad — with bold

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# the hindu businessline.

# Gag order

Karnataka move to curb 'fake news' violates free speech

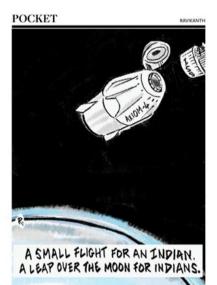
olitical dispensations, irrespective of their ideological hue, seem inclined to trample on individual rights — especially when their own capacity to govern is brought to question. A case in point is the tragedy in Bengaluru earlier this month when 11 people died and many others were injured during a stampede following Royal Challengers' win in the Indian Premier League (IPL) tournament. The Congress government in the State was attacked for its



Since then, the government has mooted a slew of egregious laws aimed at crowd management, controlling hate crimes and preventing harmful online content. Among these, the Karnataka Mis-information and Fake News (Prohibition) Bill, 2025 seeks to penalise the offences of 'mis-information' and purveying 'fake news' with jail terms of two-five years and fine in the first instance and seven years and a fine extending up to ₹10 lakh in the latter case. The draft bill proposes to establish an Authority that will ensure a complete ban on posting of content on social media that might be construed as "anti-feminism" on one hand or amounts to "disrespect of Sanatan symbols and beliefs" on the other. The Authority is also proposed to be tasked with ensuring that content posted on social media is based on authentic research on the subjects related to science, history, religion, philosophy, literature et al". However, the Authority does not include any scientist nor philosopher or even a journalist as a member. It will consist of the Minister for Kannada and Culture Information and Broadcasting as its ex-officio chairperson as well as an MLA and an MLC besides two representatives from social media platforms and an IAS officer. It goes on to define 'fake news' and misinformation' in wide terms and categorises them as cognisable and non-bailable offences. The Supreme Court has ruled against such

attempts to gag freedom of speech and expression. In Shreya Singhal-versus-Union of India (March 2015), the Court struck down Section 66A of the Information Technology Act (which provides for a jail term for 'offensive messages') as being violative of freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a). Mere expression under Article 19(1)(a). Mere discussion or even advocacy of a cause — howsoever unpopular or, indeed, "anti-feminism" or 'disrespectful of Sanatan symbols and beliefs' as the case may be — is protected under Article 19(1)(a). It is only when such discussion or advocacy reaches the level of incitement that Article 19(2) pertaining to 'reasonable restrictions' to

freedom of speech kicks in.
Within Article 19(2), there are specific restrictions prescribed, namely, sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence. The proposed law satisfies none of these reasonable restrictions and will likely be struck down by the courts. No government should attempt to suppress citizens who question its actions.





lobal supply chains are becoming increasingly fragile, strained by export restrictions, trade barriers, extreme weather events and geopolitical tensions. Against this backforp, countries like China—armed with integrated capabilities—across mining, refining, and processing—have gained a strategic advantage, driving technological advancement and expanding their geopolitical influence. Other extreme events such as the Cowid-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerabilities of global supply networks, underscoring the urgent need for strategic stockpiling as a critical tool to enhance national resilience. For resource constrained nations like India, maintaining a stable supply of critical minerals remains vital for safeguarding national security and supporting the clean energy transition. India's strategy must be multi-pronged: (a) establishing a global stockpiling alliance with clear mandates, (b) forging international partnerships that include long-term offtake lobal supply chains are

stockpilling alliance with clear mandates (b) forging international partnerships that include long-term offtake agreements, and (c) strengthening domestic exploration, refining, and recycling capabilities.

Time and again, countries worldwide have stockpiled emergency reserves for strategic, defence, and economic purposes. Recent export restrictions by China on minerals such as gallium, cormanium, and research elements. germanium, and rare earth elements have further exposed supply chain fragilities, particularly for import-dependent nations like India.

## GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES

GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES
The US established one of the earliest
and most institutionalised stockpiling
programmes, the National Defense
Stockpile, to ensure access to critical
materials like cobalt, titanium, and rare

Stockpie, to ensure access to critical materials like cobalt, titanium, and rare earths during times of crisis.

The US also supports stockpiling of critical metals from unconventional sources, such as deep-sea polymetallic nodules, to reduce reliance on China, though not without ecological concerns.

In contrast, Australia has taken a more market stabilising approach, recently announcing a \$1.2 billion Critical Minerals Stockpile Plan that funds the expansion of its Critical Minerals Facility.

The government acts as a guaranteed buyer to support domestic mining and reduce investor risk.

The EU's Critical Raw Materials Act encourages members to build national

# Stockpiling critical minerals, a must

STOCK UP. For a stable supply of critical minerals, India must establish a global stockpiling alliance and strengthen domestic exploration, refining and recycling capabilities



stockpiles while exploring joint procurement frameworks to improve

stockpies winie exporting joint procurement frameworks to improve resilience.

France and Germany are also exploring country-specific reserves. However, the UK emphasises supply chain flexibility, prioritising recycling and diversification while remaining open to collaborative stockpiling with international partners.

In Asia, Japan, through its oil, gas, and metals national corporation (JOGMEC) maintains strategic reserves of cobalt, tungsten, and nickel sufficient for 60 to 180 days. Similarly, South Korea's Korea Resources Corporation (KORES) targets reducing import dependency on critical minerals to 50 per cent by 2031 by expanding its stockpile capacity for rare metals from \$4\$ to 100 days by 2031. On the other hand, China relies on state-controlled reserves and export restrictions, most notably on gallium and germanium, for geopolitical and germanium, for geopolitical

leverage.
India, too, has acknowledged this need through the launch of the National Critical Minerals Mission (NCMM),

India remains largely dependent on imports for energy transition minerals and their compounds,

with complete dependency for minerals like lithium, cobalt and nickel.

which aims to secure critical mineral which aims to secure critical mineral supply chains via domestic exploration and international partnerships. The mission recognises critical mineral access as a strategic imperative but lacks detailed frameworks to implement national-scale stockpiling.

Herein lies an opportunity for countries to collaborate on building storage facilities, crafting procurement strategies and signing long-term offtake agreements to stabilish a stable pool of minerals.

### LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES

LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES
As India moves towards its net zero
target of 2070, the demand for critical
minerals, including lithium, nickel,
cobalt, copper and rare earth elements
is expected to grow substantially,
However, India's limited domestic
resources — except silicon — and
mining capacity make strategic
stockpiling essential for uninterrupted
access to these minerals while
supportine lone-term economic growth supporting long-term economic growth. To develop a robust stockpiling strategy,

To develop a robust stockpling strategy, India must: Establish a National Stockpling Alliance (NsA): NSA can develop flexible procurement mechanisms, balance long-term contracts with global partners and invest in storage and inventory management infrastructure. The Ministry of Mines should task the newly launched National Critical Mineral Ourseab Rome to. Minerals Outreach Forum to incorporate a comprehensive stockpiling plan into India's mineral

security strategy, Moreover, a national stockpile will boost recycler confidence by ensuring reliable offtake, encouraging capacity investment. This, in turn, can position India as a hub for processing imported black mass from other countries, enhancing the strategic value and volume of lits reserves through domestic refining and recycling.

Pursue strategic partnerships with nations like the US and Japan, along with other key nations like Australia to explore joint ventures, shared reserves, and diplomatic agreements that enhance mineral security. The Indian government should negotiate access to allied reserves or develop shared stockpiles through multilateral platforms such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, the Minerals Security Partnership, and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity.

Bolster domestic exploration, refining, and recycling capacity to ensure that stockpiling complements rather than substitutes long-term self-reliance.

By drawing from diverse international

rather than substitutes long-term self-reliance. By drawing from diverse international models and tailoring them to its unique needs, India can build a robust and adaptive critical mineral stockpiling strategy that supports its economic goals, strengthens national security, and enhances its global standing.

Fellow, Chair on India & Emerging Asia Economics, Center for Strategic and International Studies

# Trade credit plays big role in financial stability

Delays or defaults in trade credit, crucial for SMEs, ripple through supply chains and impact banks

India's bank-centric NPA (non-performing asset) resolution framework — from BIFR (Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction) to NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) — does not adequately address its underlying cause: adequately address its underlying cause: the growing erosion of payment discipline in the B2B trade credit (TC) ccosystem. Delays and defaults within this network eventually manifest as NPAs in the banking system. Given the strong cross-connectivity between banks and the TC network — encompassing supply chain finance, inter-firm payment. TC flows, financial re-intermediation, credit risk, and market liquidity — this policy gap, though critically important, has been overlooked.

overlooked.

Delays/defaults in TC ripple through Delays/defaults in TC ripple through supply chains, disrupting value chains and undermining financial stability. These disruptions trigger liquidity shortages, production slowdowns, and eventually defaults on bank redit. Yn NPA policies continue to treat them as isolated borrower failures, overlooking the systemic role of TC breakdowns in precipitating bank defaults.

THE INVISIBLE CREDIT ENGINE A 38-year analysis (1985-2023) of RBI's corporate data — covering 2.38 million company-years — reveals a clear trend: TC has consistently been the leading

source of working capital for companies of all sizes, surpassing bank credit in total amount.

A study of 24 Nifty 50 manufacturing companies (2013-2023) further confirms this pattern, revealing significant TC inflows from suppliers and minimal dependence of these top corporates on bank working capital. TC is the backbone of liquidity, especially for SMEs, functioning as the "last-mile" webiced and vital credit chain levelic and vital credit chain ferredit and internal accruals. Despite these, TC remains largely unmonitored and policy-invisible. The result: credit risk accumulates in supply chains, surfacing only when it hits bank balance sheets.

## THE DOMINO EFFECT

THE DOMINO EFFECT
When buyers defer payments, it forces suppliers — often MSMEs — into a liquidity reunch. These firms then default on their own obligations, including bank loans.
This fragility has several layers: Liquidity cascade: Payment delays, idefaults spread across supply chains, severely straining MSME working captal and fuelling MSME. However, large infrastructure and Potential of the projects financed by term loans and large companies with alternative funding sources may not be affected funding sources may not be affected

Silent strangulation: MSMEs endure payment delays/defaults, with existing



WORKING CAPITAL. Trade credit is a

complaint-based remedies proving inadequate and slow.

Economic downturns and major upheavals such as demonetisation, GST rollout or Covid-19 often trigger clustering of payment delays, leading to a contraction in TC that chokes working capital, disrupts production, and intensifies financial stress.

There is a direct link between TC volume and bank credit demand. This is visible in the sharp fall in cash credit's share of total bank lending — from 35 per cent in the 1990s to just 13 per cent today. The currently low NPAs are no assurance of its long-term sustainability and efficient credit intermediation — as imbalanced allocations, increased risk aversion, and elevated SLR investment. aversion, and elevated SLR investment often point to systemic inefficiencies in credit flow. India's NPA resolution architecture remains fixated on the banking system.

Mechanisms like CDR, SARFAESI,
DRTS, NCLT, ARCs, and OTS step in
only after financial distress has already
unfolded.
Bank-centric NPA policies fall short
due to a basic disconnect between where
financial stress begins and spreads, and
where policy responses are targeted.
This shows up several ways. Defaults are
treated as borrower failures, not as
consequences of upstream buyer
delays/defaults; data gaps: banks
monitor repayments but lack real-time
visibility into B2B payment flows.
To make credit system truly resilient,
India must realign its risk frameworks to
focus on the B2B payment layer — where
stress first brews.

focus on the B2B payment tayer — where stress first brews.

Leverage the GSTN system by adding two fields — payment due date and payment receipt date — to track payment behaviour, flag delayse arly, and integrate this into credit assessment; delayed payments should trigger consequences such as restricted credit, closer scrutiny, and higher credit costs, making timely payments imperative.

Monitor supply chain financing through GSTN system to target invoice-level payment bottlenecks, use network analysis to monitor systemic buyer-supplier nodes, and expand data-sharing platforms to include anonymised and dynamic GSTN-based B2B credit rating with privacy safeguards.

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

policy formulations. This assumes much significance as negotiations or FTAs with the US and the UK are going on and the tariffs negotiated with these two nations will have a bearing on the future course of our natiff policy formulations as well. The need for protecting and nurturing domestic manufacturers, especially MSMEs, cannot be overemphasised. Many events have proved beyond doubt that in international relations, there are no international relations. permanent friends, but only

permanent national interests. India's existing tariff system, coupled with calibrated customs duties, has served the country's interests very well. India should not succumb to the pressures from big powers. India should not reduce the tariffs at the Kosaraju Chandramouli

and aggregate supply including exports and imports of goods and services) to ensure economic stability. There is sectoral imbalance but it doesn't affect the stability of the economic

## **Assist SFBs**

moneylenders. Instead of those schemes of giving cash doles to women, better if the governmer help the SFBs with easier lending

Anthony Henriques

## RBI's dividend transfers

This refers to 'RBI as a source of abundant riches' (June 26). The RBI's dividend transiers it one government have been consistently rising. However, this growing dependence on RBI's surplus raise concerns about a potential shift in policy mindset possibly at the cost its core objectives: maintaining print

economic growth. Several monetary tools at the RBI's disposal, if not used strictly through the lens of monetary stability, may give rise to conflict stability, may repe against the dollar leads to valuation gains on RBI's foreign exchange reserves, but this often comes with higher imported inflation, adversely impacting consumers and importers. While dividend transfers are part of the central bank's mandate, emphasis on revenue generation could risk misaligning monetary tools away from their primary function ensuring monetary and financial stability. Srinivasan Velamur

# The sour taste of mango

Mango farmers are reeling from a price crash

ango is cultivated in the country in about 1,500 varieties, including 1,000 commercial ones. But for mango farmers, the fruit has tasted sour this year due to falling prices especially in States like Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka. Distressed farmers are demanding government compensation of around \$5,000 per arce to offset their losses. In 2023-24, mango acreage increased by 2.34 per cent, reaching 24.01 lakh hectares with an estimated production of 224.23

reacning 24.01 lakn nectares with an estimated production of 224.23 lakh tonnes, compared to 208.72 lakh thonnes produced from 23.46 lakh hectares the previous year. During FY24, the major export destinations were the UAE, the UK, the US, Kuwait, and Qatar.

Uttar Pradesh accounts for about 25-26 per cent of the country's total mango output.

PRICES PLUMMET
In Uttar Pradesh, mango prices
have plunged by up to one-third
year-on-year due to a surge in
supply. Prices for the popular
Dasshri vairety have dropped to
\$40-45 per kg, down from \$60 per
ke last year.

kg last year. UP mango production is estimated at 35 lakh tonnes estimated at 35 lakh tonnes this year, compared to 25 lakh tonnes last year. The region witnessed nearly 100 per cent flowering, resulting in excellent yields. While resulting in executert yields. The bumper harvest is a major factor behind the price decline, many farmers also harvested mangoes earlier than usual to protect the crop from potential damage caused by the early damage caused by the early monsoon, as forecasted by the Indian Meteorological

Indian Meteorological Department. In Andhra Pradesh, Totapuri mango farmers in the Chittoor and Tirupati districts are facing similar distress. Prices have crashed mainly due to delayed procurement by mango pulp factories, which are reportedly holding unsold stock from last

holding unsold stock from last year.

In Karnataka, the Chief Minister has written to the Centre requesting the launch of a Price Deficiency Payment and Market Intervention Scheme, along with innvenidate procurement through NAPED and NCCF, to support farmers. Market prices have crashed from 12,000 per quintal to ₹3,000 per quintal. In Tamil Nadu, mango is cultivated in 1.46 lakh hectares, vielding around 9.5 lakh tonnes

yielding around 9.5 lakh tonnes annually.



Tamil Nadu's mango farmers too have been hit by a supply glut and inadequate procurement. Prices have fallen sharply to as low as \$3-5 per lg, far below the breakeven price of \$25 per lg. Immediate measures are urgently needed to support mango farmers, as a vast majority of them are small and marginal cultivators. India's mango exports to the US are growing rapidly, reaching \$10.01 million in FY24, are growing rapidly, reaching \$10.01 million in FY24, are growing rapidly, reaching \$10.01 million in FY24, but the compared to the previous year. Total mango exports exceed \$60 million. However, a key irradiation

However, a key irradiation facility in Mumbai, which handles facility in Mumbai, which handles the largest volume of mangoes destined for the US market, faced a brief disruption in early May 2025 due to a data recording error. As a result, 12 consignments were rejected by US authorities. Such incidents must be avoided, as they can undermine India's reputation in international markets. in international markets

in international markets.

As an immediate measure, other State governments can consider adopting Andhra Pradesh's relief strategy. The Andhra Pradesh government has announced an interim relief package worth £168 crore, ensuring a minimum procurement price of £12 per kg for Totapur mangoes.

Under this plan, mango pulp processing companies will purchase mangoes at ₹8 per kg, while the government will directly credit an additional ₹4 per kg as a subsky into farmers' bank accounts.

suesup into latines to ank accounts. States could consider procuring mango pulp from processing units and distribute it through school breakfast and noon meal schemes. Additionally, horticulture departments, in collaboration with the tourism sector, could organise mango festivals across for farmers to connect directly with consumers and promote local varieties.

or. KCT Business School, Kumaraguru College of Technology



he handloom sector, with its rich legacy and deep socio-economic significance, remains one of India's largest cottage industries. According to the Fourth Handloom Census (2019-20)1, there are over 31 lakh handloom weavers and allied workers across the country. A vast majority — over 70 per cent — are women, and nearly 80 per cent operate from rural areas, making the sector a vital source of livelihood and cultural identity.

Despite its economic importance, the

Despite its economic importance, the andloom sector faces numerous nandloom sector faces numerous challenges — rising raw material costs, competition from power looms and synthetics, limited credit access, and weak marketing support. And, in recent years, lack of demand has emerged as a critical issue.

critical issue.

According to Census, 50 per cent of weavers cited lack of demand as the main reason for idle handlooms. This data is further supported by the NSSO's recent round of Unorganised Sector Surveys, which show a consistent rise in the proportion of handloom establishments reporting demand-related constraints.

establishments reporting demand-related constraints. In 2010-11, only 10 per cent of handloom establishments reported demand-side challenges as their major obstacle, which rose to 29 per cent in 2015-16, and in the wake of the pandemic further increased to 47 per cent in 2022-23.

Unfortunately, the latest round of the NSSO survey has not reported data on this crucial indicator — an omission that raises concerns given the preceding trend and the importance of the sector. The pandemic-induced slowdown, changing consumer preferences, and reduced purchasing power have severely impacted handloom sales, leaving many weavers with unsold stock and idle looms. This highlights a growing mismatch between supply and market demand.

Budget 2024-25 has continued support for schemes like the National Handloom Development Programme, focusing on training, tools, and raw materials. While these reflect a commitment to weavers' welfare, the current policy approach remains heavily

materials. While these reflect a commitment to weavers' welfare, the current policy approach remains heavily supply-side oriented. To truly revitalise the sector, greater emphasis on demand-side measures—market creation, product promotion, and consumer awareness—are essential. Though platforms like Government e-Marketplace (GeM) offer new salea swenue, broader adoption is needed. Without strong efforts to boost demand and improving buyer access, supply-side initiatives alone may fall short in revitalising this sector.



ROLE OF NGOs, PRIVATE SECTOR

ROLE OF NGO», PRIVATE SECTOR
Non-governmental organisations and
private enterprises have played a crucial
bridging role in supporting the
handloom sector. Organisations like
Dastkar, GoCoop, and Kala Cotton have
led market linkage initiatives that
connect weavers directly with
consumers through digital platforms,
exhibitions, and fair-trade partnerships.
Start-ups like Okhai and Thaneira have
brought fresh visibility to handloom
products by aligning them with
contemporary design and urban tastes.
These platforms also focus on
storytelling — sharing the weaver's
journey — which helps build customer
connection, justify premium pricing. journey — which helps build custome connection, justify premium pricing, and better margins for artisans.

STATE GOVTS' INITIATIVES

Several State governments have also adopted innovative strategies to boost demand. Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Odisha have institutionalised the use of handloom

The Fourth Handloom Census (2019-20) shows that many weavers were unaware of government schemes aimed at their welfare, indicating a

significant gap between policy design and ground-level impact

fabrics in school and police uniforms, as well as government furnishings providing steady income to the weavers. Schemes like Telangana's Chenetha Mitra and Andhra Pradesh's APCO Handloom brand offer financial incentives and e-commerce access. West Bengals 'Tantuja, Odisha's Boyanika, and Tamili Nadu's Co-optex have expanded online sales and

Boyanika, and Tamil Nadu's Co-optex have expanded online sales and diversified product offerings. Though these initiatives are promising, their impact remains geographically narrow and lacks scale.

CAN DIGITISATION HELP?

CAN DIGITISATION HELP?
Despite policies being in place,
awareness among weavers remains low.
The Handloom Census (2019–20) shows
that many weavers were unaware of
government schemes aimed at their
welfare, indicating a significant gap
between policy design and ground-level
impact. As markets go digital, online
platforms offer a powerful way for
weavers to access new customers and platforms offer a powerful way for weavers to access new customers and reduce reliance on middlemen. Yet barriers persist. More than 66 per cent of weavers earn less than \$5.00 per month, making smartphones and consistent internet access unaffordable. Digital literacy is also low, especially among older weavers, and the gendered digital divide further limits access for women, who form the majority of the workforce.

According to the Census, only 0.1 per cent of handloom enterprises were using e-commerce platforms for sales. This points to the immense untapped

potential of online selling to expand market reach and improve weavers' earnings — especially as digital access

earnings — especially as digital access improves.

This is evident from the NSSO data, which indicates handloom establishments using internet rose from 8 per cent in 2021-22 to 20 per documents of the 2024. Even though this is a modest trend, it indicates growing digital transition within the sector.

Organisations like Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) and Antaran (Tata Trusts) are already working on this front — conducting digital literacy workshops, training artisans to use WhatsApp for busines, and on-boarding them onto e-commerce platforms. platforms.

platforms.
To support this shift, digitisation must be treated as a necessity. The government can partner with such organisations to scale training efforts, invest in rural internet infrastructure, offer subsidised devices and data plans,

offer subsidised devices and data plans, and promote schemes through local-language outreach. India's handloom sector is a symbol of tradition and skill, but tradition alone won't ensure survival. A long-term plan must bridge products with market demand. By addressing demand-side gaps through awareness, digital tools, and outreach, and with supportive policies, the sector can revive and secure a sustainable future for weavers.

## thehindubusinessline.

TWENTY YEARS AGO TODAY.

June 27, 2005

GSPC finds gas reserves in KG Basin
An estimated gas reserve of 20 trillion cubic feet worth \$50 billion was found in Krishna Godward Basin in the Bay of Bergal by Gujarat State Peteroleum Corporation (S87C), which the Gujarat Chief Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, termed as the "largest" discovery, Dedicating the project named "Deen Dayal" to the nation, Mr Modi told reporters that the natural gas find made yas ago was worth Rs 2,00,000 crore, resulting from an investment of Rs 250 crore.

# Anil Ambani assumes charge at Infocomm

Mr Anil Ambani assumed charge as Chairman of Reliance Infocomm reconstituted the board of directors of the company. The two new on the board are Mr Gautam Doshi, a chartered accountant, and Pri Ramachandran of Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore. ntant, and Prof J.

## Finance Ministry and RBI differ on FDI in ARCs

Foreign assistance in cleaning up the Indian banking system's non-performing assets (NPAs) might take a while to come with the Finance Ministry and RBI unable to resolve their divergent views on the extent of FDI to be permitted in asset reconstruction companies (ARCs).

## Fake influencers need to be checked

Devanshi Mehra Ashish Gupta

Being an "influencer" has become a lucrative career choice among youth today. The feeling of creating content, sharing it on social media platforms, generating huge followings, and getting brand deals looks like a dream job. While also getting paid to do all these, is the icing on the cake.

getting paid to do all timese, is the icing on the cake. In 2019, the Harris Poll along with Lego conducted a survey globally which revealed that children (eight to 12 years old) were three times more interested in choosing YouTuber (29 per cent) as a career option than astronauts (11 per cent). The rise of Social media influencer as a popular career choice is linked to

EASY

ACROSS

07. Speaking

08. Friends and

admirers of England (11)

bombastically (13)

the creative fun of making content, the access to newly launched products, the monetary rewards, and the fame that comes with it.

However, in this age of social media, we are stuck in a never-ending race for likes, views, followers and subscribers. To achieve that social validation, a concerning number of wannabe-influencers are turning towards use of dishonest tactics.

In a simple Google search, we can find many such vendors who are offering "100 per cent real Instagram followers", often available at a very cheap price. India is one of the largest suppliers and buyers of fake followers. In 2023, influencer marketing platform Klugklug reported a shocking figure — nearly two out of three (58.5 per cent) Instagram profiles in India

vere found to have fake or spurious

were found to have fake or spurious followers.
Such trends are deeply damaging.
Brands often rely on parameters such as 'follower counts' and 'engagement rates' to choose which influencer they want to collaborate with. When influencers fraudulently inflate such metrics, brands end up paying for reach and impact, which does not really exist. Not only this, authentic creators have to compete with such artificially inflated peers.
Yet, fake influencers often get away without facing any real consequences. Many social media platforms have developed mechanisms to detect bots, but these tools are not enforced consistently while also being largely ineffective. The ongoing trend on these platforms to buy verification badges for

a minimal charge has made things worse — suddenly, anyone with a credit card can look credible.

This battle against fake influence cannot be won by platforms alone. It demands a collective effort because this is not just a technological or industry issue — this is a cultural one. As long as we continue to reward inflated numbers, influencers will have the incentive to fake them.

From the regulatory lens, we need clear guidelines to directly tackle this digital deception. Just as there are rules against false claims in traditional advertising, there should be stronger consequences for influencers who misrepresent their influence online.

## **BL TWO-WAY CROSSWORD 2727**



## DOWN

01. Song from opera (4) 02. Comfy, cosy (4)

03. Aviators (6)

05. Replete (4)

06. Burden of responsibility (4)

09. The great bat (7) 10. Country in northeast Africa (7)

12. Time Parliament 11. Interlocking of gears (4)

12. Mature (4) 13. Female (3)

14. Deep gorge (6) 16. Teemed (6) 15. Fitting (3)

18. Laundry

17. One in trade (6) 18. Hot season (6) 19. Species of crow (4) ffening (6) 19. High navai rank (4,7) 20. Coleridge's sacred river of Xanadu (4)

compendious (13)

21. Stratagem (4 22. To dwell (4)

## NOT SO EASY

## ACROSS

07. Equal grind not capable of such

high-flown meaning (13) 08. They like us to be English (11)

12. Time off from politics at the Hole in the Wall? (6)

14. Aver, in a different way, how deep

a split there is (6) 16. How one got out of jug

perhaps (6) 18. A reserve food may be taken from

the charts (6)

19. He may be a stem naval

officer (4,7)
23. All-embracing way I've chosen to work out perm (13)

01. A bit of opera In particular I always show (4)

02. Cosy way rifles are given up (4)

O3. It takes skilled navigators to slip out like this (6)
O4. Dam on motorway is something different (6)
O5. When the moon is round one can't take any more (4)

06. The burden of Latin is not on them (4)

09. One bat, Len, out (caught) (7)
10. Country showing the art Eire produces (7)
11. Some game-shows appear in the network (4)

12. It's right to make pie that's ready for eating (4)
13. The novel pronoun is feminine (3)
15. Is likely to find phosphor at getting round it (3)

17. One who, after shuffling, may be a trader (6)
18. The South gives me rum to mix when it's hot (6)
19. Charge one too much for a castle (4)

20. 'Where \_\_\_\_, the sacred river, ran' (Coleridge) (4)

21. It is a trick that's sure to go wrong (4)
22. Exist to be broadcast as it happens, by the look of it (4)

## SOLUTION: BL TWO-WAY CROSSWORD 2726

ACROSS 1. Redoubtable 7. Caution 9. Ague 11. Franc 12. Josté 14. Beauty spots 18. Locker 20. Raise 22. Sale 23. Ridding 24. In a nutshell DOWN 2. Educate 3. Buns 4. Light 5. Scoff 6. Meter 8. Included 10. Compared 13. Eye 15. Trivial 16. Close 17. Verge 19. Colon 21. Fret

### IN THE LIMELIGHT



# How 'Alappuzha Gymkhana' champions the idea of an atypical sports film

Alappuzha Gymkhana and films like Kacchey Limbu, Lubber Pandhu, and Godha break away from clichéd underdog stories, focusing instead on flawed characters, emotional honesty, and the joy of simply playing; these atypical sports films find beauty in sacrifices, celebrating not just triumph

Vivek M.V.

n June 7, Temba Bavuma had more supporters than he knew after he led South Africa to a historic World Test Championship triumph against Australia. Bavuma, ridiculed for his short stature,

Bavuma, ridiculed for his short stature, managed to turn critics into friends. Ahead of the final, despite being the captain, Bavuma wan't the one expected to be the X factor in the team. Experts rated the likes of Aiden Markram, Kagiso Rabada, and Ryan Rickelton higher than the top-order batsmen. Battling a hamstring issue, Bavuma had to play out of his skin to prove to the world that he was beyond the description of a black African cricketer.

Bavuma's journey is a testimony to the heart-over-height phenomenon in sports. The entertaining Malayalam film Alappuzha Gymkhana, currently streaming on SonyLiv, reflects this inspiring quality in a sportsperson. Director Khalid Rahman explores the idea Director Khalid Rahman explores the idea of the unlikely hero through a character named Shifas (played by Franco Francis). He is called "cheruh" (meaning small) for his build, and the film cleverly keeps our attention away until he knocks down an opponent inside the boxing ring, "I hope you all realised that being tall doesn't make you big," he snaps at his teammates after his win.

An atypical sports film is less obsessed An aspical sports limb is eso coessed with the sporting result and more interested in exploring the vulnerabilities of its characters. Alappuzha Gymkhana is yet another Malayalam film that beautifully subverts a popular cinematic trope. Boxing is a vast genre, and the temptation to follow the structure of the underdog story (a la *Rocky*) is hard to resist. Rahman chooses the path less

trodden.

In one line, Alappuzha Gymkhana can be described as a tale of amateurish boxers competing at a high level, only to realise they aren't good enough yet. A traditional boxing drama would have made the bunch of boys overnight champions. Director Rahman, who has co-written the script with Sreeni Saseendran, focuses on the mindset of the losers:

Naslen, who plays Jojo Johnson, is the lead of the movie, albeit only on paper, as the inventive writing strips off from Naslen's character all the qualities of a commercial hero. Jojo is a goofy youngster and a team player. He cheers up his teammates battling self-doubt. Jojo is less of a skilled boxer and more

of a cheerleader, Nalsen, with his charming screen presence and natural dialogue delivery, is perfect for the role. In a film filled with several adrenaline-inducing bouts, the clever casting produces several wonderful little moments, like when Jojo rallies for his crush with the famous line from Mohammad Ali, "Float like a butterfly,

sting like a bee." The story denies all the main sting like a bee."
The story denies all the main characters a conventional ending, bolstering the believability of the plot. The team's captain (essayed by Ganapathi) is willing to sacrifice a crucial game for the safety of his players. The coach openly talks about his imperfections in a heartwarming scene. The unusual treatment notwithstanding, Rahman never dilutes the "vibe" of a fun boxing drama and films the boxing battles with verve. The camera becomes an important character. Cinematographer Jimsh (Khalid captures the tension inside the ring and the minute expressions of the fighting participants.
Bollywood has squeezed the sports genre like a well-served tube of toothpaste. Amid the overdose of generic sports films, *Kacchey Limbu* (2022) stands apart for its ideas. In the movie, siblings Aditi Nath (Radhlika Madan) and Rajat Barmecha (Aakash Nath) see cricket as a breeding ground for their respective drams. Affitis seeks agence and

Barmecha (Aakash Nath) see cricket as a breeding ground for their respective dreams, Aditi seeks agency and self-respect, while Rajat tries to renegotiate his goals even as he enjoys his fame as a talented gully cricketer. The film indulges in the almost-forgotten idea of 'colony-cricket', yet it falls short of being perfect thanks to its over-stuffed themes, In Tamizharasan Pachamuthu's brilliant Lubber Pandhu, ego, not skill, defines the rivalry between the lead characters. You witness the conflict of the

generation gap, as an up-and-coming bowler and a veteran batsman don't see eye to eye. When cricket fades into the background, you feel the tension caused by the impending off-the-ground battles fuelled by two egoistic men.

Nothing is on the face in this rural drama that celebrates cricket in a drama that celebrates cricket in a delightfully casual manner. In the middle of intense cricketing encounters, commentators slip in details of memorable matches in a hilarious manner. A subtle scene elevates cricket when a woman asis a character why he loves the game so much. "Just love it, that's all," he says, with a beaming smile that reflects his love for the sport. And when it comes to the lead character losing for a cause, the message (caste discrimination) isn't thankfully hammered home.

Basil Joseph's Godha (2017) is as mainstream as it can get. It ticks every

mainstream as it can get. It ticks every cliche in the book, like a sportsperson (in this case, a wrestler) defying odds, a coming-of-age tale of a man, a love story, and a rousing climax. Yet, the writing focuses on the joy of small things, as the film brims with hlarious conversations and beautiful moments of realisation and the redemptive quality of sports. And in the final act, the movie organically portrays the hero as a second fiddle by providing ample room for the leading female character to shine, a significant sign of an atypical sports drama. coming-of-age tale of a man, a love story,

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

The Russian battleship Potemkin became famous 120 years ago on this day when her crew mutinied against its officers

## Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

Name the war the Russian Empire was fighting at the time the crew of the Potemkin mutinied. Russia suffered heavy losses during one particular battle in this war, forcing it to sue for peace and sending crew morale in its naval fleet plummeting. This was one of the causes of the mutiny.

Name the leader of the Bolshevik Party who said the First Russian Revolution as well as the Potenki mutiny, both of which transpired in 1905, were a "dress rehearsal" for the October Revolution that

Following the mutiny, to which country did the crew of the Potemkin appeal for asylum? The country granted asylum after the crew was disarmed and

irrendered its weapons. Two days later, a Russian rear admiral arrived to reclaim the vessel for the Russian navy.

## **OUESTION 4**

On October 12, 1905, a little more than the months after the mutiny, the Potemkin wa renamed \_\_\_\_\_\_ The name was derived from that of a Christian saint and which in Greek means "all-compassionate", it's also the name of a character in Philip Pullman's "His Dark Materials' series. Fill in the blank. On October 12, 1905, a little more than three

battleship. The label is ed from a Royal Navy battleship floated in 1906 whose design revolutionised naval power worldwide, so much so that the battleship's name became the label. Fill in



Potemkin mutiny in a 1925 silent film that has since been considered one of the greatest ever made. PUBLIC DOMAIN

Questions and Answers to to previous day's daily quiz: 1 How many objects are in the Messier catalogue? Ans: 110 2. Messier objects are classifie as what? Ans: Deep-sky

as what? Ans: Deep-sky objects 3, M45 is an asterism seen in the constellation Taurus. What is its more common name? Ans: The Pleiades 4 Which constellation contains

 Which constellation contains the most Messier objects? Ans: Sagittarius

5. How many nebulas did Charles Messier discover? Ans:

Visual: Identify the craters in the picture. Ans: Messier and Messier A craters Early Birds: Amar Pratap | Malik raz | Sneha Pachlash

:::



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

## Know Your English

## K. Subramaniam S. Upendran

"How do you pronounce E..d.,i.,b.l.,e?"
"The 'e' in the first syllable sounds like the 'e' in the words 'met', 'bet' and 'set'. The 'i' in the second syllable sounds like the 'I' in 'in'. And the final 'ble'...
"...sounds like the 'ble' in 'bubble'. I

suppose?

That's right. And the stress is on the first syllable. The word is pronounced

"Edible! I see. Edible means 'eatable',

right?"

"Well, yes. But there is a difference between 'eatable' and 'edible'."

"There is? What is the difference?"

"When you say something is 'edible', it means that it is safe for someone to eat it. For example, I can say, these berries are edible; but those are poisonous."

"But all mushrooms are edible."

"That's right, Some may be poisonous."

"So, when you use the word 'edible,"
you are only talking about whether something can be eaten or not. You are not talking about how the thing tastes. Is that correct?"

not talking about how the thing tastes. Is that correct?

"That's correct. When you say something is edible, all that you are saying is that it can be eaten. You are not saying whether it tastes good or not. If you want to talk about the taste of what you are eating, then you use the word 'eatable'." "So if I say, the idlis were eatable, it means...."

the taste of the idlis was reasonably

"...the taste of the idlis was reasonably good."
"I see. So, something may be edible, but not necessarily eatable."
"Exactly! Badly cooked food may be edible. That is it may be safe to eat it, but it may not always be eatable..."
"...it may taste so bad that you may not be able to eat it, lust like my cousin Uma's cooking!"
"Did you visit her recently?"
"I went there yesterday. She gave me a piece of cake and I had trouble eating it."
"I have met many bad cooks in my life. But she is the daddy of them all!"
"'Daddy of them all' is an informal expression and it means 'the best or most extreme example of someone or extreme example of someone or

something"."
"I see. So, in the example you just gave what you mean is that Uma is the worst

what you mean is that Uma is the worst cook you have ever met."

"Exactly! Here's another example. I have worked with many lazy people, but my present boss is the daddy of them all."

"Meaning he is the laziest person you have ever worked with."

"Right again! Last night's thunderstorm was the daddy of them all."

"You're right. But we need more such thunderstorms. Otherwise, we are going to have water shortage this summer."

"And water shortage means power cuts."

"And water shortage means power cuts."
"And I have a feeling this year's power cut is going to be the daddy of them all!" Published in The Hindu on January 21, 1997

## Word of the day

Succour: assistance in time of difficulty

Synonyms: aid, comfort, ease

Usage: She offered him succour in his time

Pronunciation: newsth.live/succourpro

International Phonetic

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





# 16 EXPLAINED

Revision of Bihar electoral rolls: Why, how

All electors will have to submit an enumeration form; those added to electoral rolls after 2003 will additionally have to furnish proof of citizenship

## WHAT WILL SERVE AS PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP

EXPLAINED GLOBAL

## WHY UN'S DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE IN SEVILLE MATTERS

# World Bank says 5.75% Indians live in abject poverty: How to read this data

TABLET
VARYING ESTIMATES OF INDIA'S POVERTY RATE (IN %)

INDIA'S POVERTY LINE (PER PERSON PER DAY), IN CONTEXT

Price of a litre of Amul milk in 2022 World Bank's poverty line for "lower middle-income" countries such as India. In 2022-23, 34.23 crore Indians (that is, 23.89% of all Indians) lived below this daily expenditure level

tensumar methodology®
World Bank's latest poverty line for lower
middle-income countries [int-54.2 a day (8s 87 a d
World Bank's latest poverty line for upper middleincome countries [int-58.30 a day (8s 171 a day)]®
Bhalla and Bhasin (using World Bank's int-51.9
a day poverty line)\*

en reteased on India's poverty ra e ratio of people who are official ed poor. On April 25, a Government of Is

# How Shubhanshu Shukla's Dragon spacecraft docked with the ISS



PHOENIX ARC PRIVATE LIMITED TAKE OVER OF POSSESSION NOTICE

# THE INDIAN EXPRESS, FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2025 12 THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

IN EVERY WORK OF ART, THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE AND THE INDIVIDUAL ARTIST'S SOUL UNITE.

- FRIEDRICH SCHLEGEL

# The Indian **EXPRESS**

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

# A space beyond Earth

Shubhanshu Shukla's voyage is a precursor to indigenous human spaceflight, global cooperation



## MYLSWAMY ANNADURAI

FILLING IN DETAILS Centre's decision to conduct household income survey is welcome. It should take cues from past exercises

NTHE PAST few years, the government has taken several steps to plug gaps in data availability. Recently, after considerable delay, it announced the dates for carrying out the Census. This week, it took another step towards making information robust — a household income survey has been tentatively scheduled for 2026. An expert committee has been formed to guide the statistics office in this endeavour. This is a welcome development.

The government has attempted to collect household income data in the past as well The government has attempted to collect household income data in the past as well. But these exercises have not yielded the desired results. For instance, data on household receipts and disbursements was collected as part of the Integrated Household Surveys during July 1964-June 1965 and July 1969-June 1970. But 'the estimates of income were lower than the estimates of consumption and savings put together'. Such underestima-tion is not confined to survey estimates of household income. The household consump-tion expenditure surveys have also been criticised for underestimating consumption when compared to the expenditure estimates in the National Accounts. Some other surveys do collect information on income, but their scope is limited. For instance, the periodic labour force surveys collect data on wages and salaries of casual labour and regular wage/salaried employment. The Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households also provides esti-mates of income though only for a sement of the neoulation. The 2019 survey collected material forces are supported to the past of the provides as the provides as the provides as the provides esti-mates of income though only for a sement of the neoulation. The 2019 survey collected mates of income, though only for a segment of the population. The 2019 survey collected information on income from wages, from leasing out land, from crop production (red.), faming of animals, and from non-fam business in the absence of an official all-india survey of household incomes, expenditure data from the consumption surveys tends to be used as a proxy. This data is used to estimate both poverty and inequality. However, inde-pendent surveys such as the India Human Development Survey show that inequality based on household income is higher than that based on consumption. There will be several issues to contend with. Households may not accurately report their incomes, with some preferring not to disclose all their avenues of income. Some jobs — and thus the incomes that accrue — are seasonal in nature. Respondent recall may not

be accurate. The extent of underestimation could be greater among households at the higher end of the distribution, However, granular data on incomes in society, collected regularly over a period of time, will not only provide a wealth of information about house-holds, but also greatly assist in understanding changes in the economy and society. For ex-ample, the University of Michigan's Panel Study of Income Dynamics, which began in 1968 with a sample of 18,000 individuals over 5,000 families, has collected information on these individuals and their descendants across several parameters such as income, expenditure health and education. This allows for an exploration of various facets of the US economy and society across generations. Such surveys can greatly aid policymaking.

## ASIA ON THE BOIL

Report on continent heating up faster than rest of world must push policymakers to find ways to increase people's resilience

"TS NOW WELL known that though climate change affects all parts of the world, some regions are more vulnerable than others. Asia, for example, is prone to almost all the consequences of global warming — heat waves, floods, erratic monsoons, melting glaciers and sea-level rises. A new report by the World Meteorological Organis warming twice as fast as the global average. Asia's vulnerability is exacerbated by its ge-ology. The continent has the largest landmass — 44.58 million square kilometres Temperature increases over land are greater than those over the oceans. The exceptionally high temperatures then cause oceans to warm up. That's why the continent experi enced marine heat waves last year, the WMO report points out. The surface tempera-tures of the Indian and Pacific Oceans touched a record high last year. Ocean temperatures

tures of the Indian and Pacific Oceans to uched a record high last year. Ocean temperatures around Asia have risen at 0.24 degrees Celsius per decade over the past 10 years — nearly double the global awerage of 0.13 degrees.

As natural dissaters over the past 10 years have underlined, communities in South and Southeast Asia are particularly vulnerable to sea-level rises. The WMO report also draws attention to floods in Pakistan and Kazakhstan, heatwaves in China and Central Asian countries, typhonosin in Southeast Asia and the landslide that struck Wayanad in Kerala last year. Outdoor work is important to the labour-intensive contomies of most countries in the re-gion, making people vulnerable to heat, rain and cold. Studies have also shown that though overall anticultural productivities has increased in Asia climate change has sleaved down overall agricultural productivity has increased in Asia, climate change has slowed down progress. Research now indicates threats to food and water security in the world's most pop-ulous continent. For instance, the vulnerability of rice — a key staple in the region — to droughts, increasing salinity and soil damage has been underscored by several studies in-cluding those by the IPCC.

Almost every Asian country has a global warming mitigation plan. Increasingly, how Almost every /ssan country has a global warming mitigation plan. Increasingly, now-ever, it's becoming clear that people will need to adapt to erratic weather. The WMO re-port underlines the need to put in place early warning systems. Such systems should help people deal with multiple hazards. For instance, intense spells of rain can trigger floods and landslides while high temperatures can spark wildfires or make them more severe. If there's one message in the WMO report, it's this — policymakers in Asia will need to in-vest in increasing people's resilience and weatherproofing economies.

# THE ART OF THE SELFIE

A visitor at Uffizi Gallery accidentally damaged a painting while posing. Is this the beginning of a new era of performance art?

HE DISTANCE BETWEEN the fine art of painting and the mundane selfic col-lapsed — quite literally — when a visitor at Florence's Uffizi Gallery tripped while posing for a photo with an 18th-century portrait of a Tuscan prince. According to the museum, the 300-year-old painting of Ferdinando of Wedici sustained en the visitor tumbled into it. It has now been removed for repairs, while the accidental vandal, who was reportedly trying to mimic the prince's pose when the incident

cidental vandal, who was reportedly trying to mimic the prince's pose when the incident occured, has been apprehended.

Galleries and museums across Europe have responded by bemoaning the scourge of the selfie-taking tourist — understandably so, given another recent incident where a cou-ple accidentally broke a sculpture inspired by Van Gogh's 'Chair' at the Palazzo Maffei in Verona (one of them accidentally fell backwards into the fragile artwork while pretending to sit in it). Yet, as the artist Nicola Bolla (who created the chair) points out, the institutional response of anger is not the only one. From the Dadaists in the early 20th century — who en-couraged visitors to destroy artworks at their notorious 1920 exhibition in Cologne — to artists like Maria Kulikowska and John Baldessari — who obliterated their creations as part of performances — the loss or destruction of works has been used to enrich art.

Each instance of damage might tell a story or ask a vital question, like when a gallery staffer cleaned up a Damien Hirst installation that was meant to look like the mess left be hind after a wild party. Was this vandalism or, as the artist himself concluded, an inadver-tent comment on art? Years from now, it is possible that the accidents of Florence and Verona will, as Bolla has already noted, be seen as "a kind of performance", perhaps telling a story about the Age of the Selfie

THE SIGHT OF a beaming Shubhanshu Shukla at the International Space Station (ISS) has to be one of the most indelible images of our be one of the most indelible images of our time. Shulda's journey opens a new chapter in India's space programme — the era of hu-man space travel. It builds upon a series of re-tremely impressive achievements of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in the past decade or so, each of which resulted int acquiring several critical new capabilities. Human spaceflight capability is the next achievement in this line. nievement in this line. The fact that Shukla's journey has not

achievement in this line. The fact that Shukla's journey has not come on India's own mission does not take anything away from the significance of this moment. The value of his feat is a little different not just from the other first-time astronauts on the Axiom-4 mission, but also from many other astronauts who have been to space on similar missions earlier. That's because it is not a one-offinication — it's the beginning of a process. Shukla himself put it aptly when he said it was not the beginning of his journey but the beginning of his journey space high programme.

So far, citizens from about 50 countries have been to space. But just three countries actually have the capacity to send humans to space—the United States, Russia and China. Very soon, India will be the fourth. Shukla could very well have been on an Indian mission, powered by an Indian rocket and travelling in an Indian space-craft. In fact, this is how it was meant to be. He. along with three others, were selected as astronauts for an Indian mission. The fact that the Axiom-4 mission reduced the selection of the state of the state

ers, were selected as astronauts for an Indian mission. The fact that the Axion "A mission materialised alread of India's Caganyaan mission provided an excellent opportunity for ISBO to gain first-hand experience in space travel. This mission will lead to a lot of learnings not just for Shukla but also for ISBO that will be directly applicable to the crewed missions of Caganyaan, the first of which is now scheduled for 2027, ISBO did well to grab this proportunity as it prepares to acquire its own

The experience gained by Shukla can have more immediate benefits, and not just as inputs in the Gaganyaan programme. Shukla, and the three other astronauts selected for the Gaganyaan mission, had to undergo training in Russia because India does not have those facilities. Shukla and Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, who was on standby for the through advanced training at a NASA facility. Their knowledge and experience can now be utilised to set up an advanced astronaut training facility in India,

particularly since we are embarking on a human spaceflight programme. This facility can be opened on

commercial terms to other countries as well.

human spaceflight capability. This is not the only reason this mission is significant for India. The space sector has been significant for minal. Insepace Sector has ocean going through avery exciting phase and is witnessing hecht cattwity. Private players, particularly in the US, are entering the field in a big way, and there has been a proliferation of space-based assets. The lower Earth orbits — 200 km to 2,000 km from the Earth—are the most active regions, primarily for commercial reasons. This is where most of the satellites and other assets and denhe asset and denhe assets and denhe assets and denhe asset and denhe asset and denhe assets and denhe asset and denh and other assets are deployed. The ISS is also located in this band.

located in this band.

The longer-term goal seems to be to leave this area largely to private players to exploit for commercial activities and service the growing need for space-based data for applications on Earth. National space agencies can cations on Earth, National space agencies can then focus their energies on more ambitious projects, like creating long-term settlements on the Moon, and possibly Mars. Human spaceflight, capability is a crucial element of these plans. The US and China are aggressively advancing their plans for the Moon. India can-not afford to be left behind. The lunar surface is now seen as fit for resource certaction and as a platform to venture deeper into space. Soon, mission to the Moon, including crewed

as a plation to venue decept and space. Soon, missions to the Moon, including rewed missions, will become as routine as satellite launches are today. Not having human space-flight capabilities would make India dependent on other countries, and slow downlis rown plans for the Moon.

Having this capability has other advantages as well. Space is a sector that has seen close cooperation even between bitter political rivals like the US and Russia. The ISS is a very good example of it. But this can happen only when both sides bring useful capabilities to the table. It is a recognition of ISRO's capabilities to the table. It is a recognition of ISRO's capabilities to the table. It is a recognition of ISRO's appartnership with it, which includes cooperation on human spaceflight missions, india's participation in the Axiom-4 mission was a result of this, It opens up the possibility of

ore India-US joint human space missions in more India-LI joint human space missions in the future. ISBO was not a passive participant in the Axiom-4 mission. It had sent a strong team to the US in the weeks leading up to the launch, which was closely involved with the launch operations. We will see more such cooperation in the future. The ISS is already on extension and is due to be decommissioned by 2007. The ISS is self is an excellent model of international conceptation with several countries; contributions

operation, with several countries contribut ing to its creation and operations. India is no ing to its creation and operations, linds as not a part of it. But replacement for the SSs will most likely have India as a key partner. India has plans to buld lits own space station by 2035. It is not yet clear, but the possibility of India's space station becoming a component of the future replacement for the ISS cannot be discounted. Space stations will increasingly become the hub of research activities and scientific exceniences that require increasingly

oecome mentuo or research activines and se-entific experiments that require microgravity conditions, and priority access to these would boost domestic research and development. The experience gained by Shuklacan have more immediate benefits, and not just as in-puts in the Gagnayaan programme. Shukla, and the three other astronauts selected for the Gaganyaan mission, had to undergo training in Russia because india does not have those facilities. Shukal and Prasanth Balatarishnan Nair, who was on standy for the Axiom Marison, also went through advanced training at a NASA facility. Their inzowiedge and experience can now be utilised to set up an advanced astronaut training facility in India, particularly since we are embarising on a human spaceflight programme. This facility can be opened on commercial terms to other countries as well.

The opportunities are immense, and Shukla's flight just offers a glimpse into what the future holds for India's space programme. Gaganyaan mission, had to undergo traini

The writer is former director, ISRO Satellite Centre. Benealuru

# **EMERGENCY'S WARNING**

It revealed how fragile liberty can be in the face of unchallenged power

ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL

ON JUNE 25, 1975, India witnessed its darkes

ON JINE 25, 1975, India witnessed its darkest democratic hour when Prime Minister India Gandhi declared a national Emergency that would leave an indelible scan on the nation's constitutional fabric. What followed was 21 months that fundamentally altered how Indians perceived their democracy, government, and constitutional heritage. The Allahabad High Court passed a crushing judgment convicting Mrs Gandhi for irregularities during the 1971 Lok Saba elections and disqualifying her from holding office. Confronted with increasing pressure to quit, she announced the decision that shocked the entire nation, recommending that President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, without the consent of the Union cabinet and on plain paper instead of official letterhead, invoke Article 352 of the Constitution ofting "internal disturbances" in

of official letterhead, invole Article 352 of the Constitution citing "internal distrubances" to declare a national Emergency. Constitutional liberties disappeared overnight. Worst of all, citizens lost access to courts under Article 32, referred to as the "heart and soul" of the Constitution by 8 R Ambedian. The Emergency's initial victims were Opposition leaders. Thousands were jailed under the draconian Maintenance of letternal Security, etc. (MSA) and Defence of letternal Security, etc. (MSA) and Defence of the constitution of letternal Security, etc. (MSA) and Defence of the constitution of th Internal Security Act (MISA) and Defence of India (DIR) Act.

My 92-year-old grandfather, while enyaz-year-on granutaner, wmie en-gaged in routine cow-earing activity, injured his hand and was taken to PBM Hospital in Bikamer for treatment. Once admitted, he dis-covered that the attending doctor, under pres-sure to meet sterilization targets set by the population control policies — heavily influ-neced by Sanjay Gandhi — had sinister plans to subject him to forced sterilisation. My grandfather fled the hospital, choosine to leave

INDIAN EXPRESS

My 92-year-old grandfather, while engaged in routine cow-rearing activity, injured his hand and was taken to PBM Hospital in Bikaner for treatment. Once admitted, he discovered that the attending doctor, under pressure to meet sterilisation targets set by the population control policies — heavily influenced by Sanjay Gandhi

— had sinister plans to subject him to forced sterilisation. My grandfather fled the hospital, choosing to leave his injury untreated. Unfortunately, unlike him, more than one crore people were forcibly sterilised during 1975-77.

JUNE 27, 1985, FORTY YEARS AGO

sterilised during 1975-77.

sterilised during 1975-77.

The blatant misuse of administrative machinery to serve the interests of a single family was glaringly evident. A striking example was Sanjay Gandhi's highly publicised visit to Bikaner on March 24, 1976, to address a yawa rally. Despire holding no constitutional position and not being a state guest, his visit witnessed a full-scale deployment of government resources. As a telephone operator in the Postal & Telegraph Department at the time, I found it particularly inonic that the administration was instructed to install a temporary telephone connection directly below the rally's rostrum—an arrangement typically reserved for the time with instructional Amendment excluded Emergency proclamations from the jurisdiction of courts and enhanced the power of the President and governors to pass ord

jurisdiction of courts and enhanced the power of the President and governors to pass ordinances. The 39th Amendment, enacted on Aquast 10, 1975, retrospectively barred courts from adjudicating election disputes involving high constitutional offices such as the PM. President, Vice President, and Lok Sabha. Speaker. The independence of the judiciary was systematically erooded. One of the most gairning examples was the inflamous ADM jabalpur vs Shiv Kant Shukla case, where the Summer Care to highly the h Jabaijur vs Shiv Kant Shukla case, where the Supreme Court upheld the suspension of fun-damental rights during the Emergency, Justice H. R. Khanna, the lone dissenting voice who courageously upheld the primacy of individ-ual liberty, would be superseded by Justice M. R Beg in the appointment of the Chief Justice of India. The 42nd Amendment — extending the term of the Lok Sabha from the succession. the term of the Lok Sabha from five to six years - diluted the democratic mandate and ex tended legislative power without fresh elec-toral legitimacy. It also made significant changes to the Preamble by adding three new

words: "Socialist", "secular", and "integrity".
Journalists were arrested for covering
Opposition leaders sympathetically. The
revered Naujian/Press, founded by Mahatma
Gandhi, had its presses confiscated. Four news
agencies — Press Trust of India, United News
of India, Hindustan Samachar and Samachar
Bhatti — were merged under compulsion into
one organisation called Samachar.
Fifty years after the Emergency, Congress's
duplicity stands exposed: It spreads misinformation in the name of "Samvidhan Bachao
Yatra" while ignoring how its leaders made a

aupincity stantas exposeed: it spreads in institutional mation in the name of "Samvidhan Bachao Yatra" while ignoring how its leaders made a mockery of the Constitution, Rajiv Candhi, on July 23, 1985, said in the Lol Sabha, "There is nothing wrong with an Emergency,"
PM Narendra Modi, then 25 years old, bravely opposed this authoritarian regime in unique ways. To avoid detection, he disguised himself, conducted underground meetings and helped with the publication of anti-Emergency, literature. He worked circlessly in maintaining democratic opposition to the authoritarian rule of the Congress government by working as general secretary of the newly formed Gujarat Lok Sangharsh Samiti.
Acknowledging the wounds of the past, the Modi government declared June 25 "Samvidhaan Halya Diwas".
Fifty years on, the Emergency reminds us that democracy demands constant vigilance.

that democracy demands constant vigilance Our Constitution embodies the sacrifices wisdom, hopes and aspirations of genera-tions. As India moves towards Viksit Bharat@2047 under PM Modi's leadership. tect and uphold its sanctity.

The writer is Union Minister of State for Law and Justice (I/C) and Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs

# AIR INDIA CRASH

INVESTIGATORS SAY THEY may never det mine what caused the crash of the Air In INVESTICATORS SAY THEY may never ceres-mine what caused the crash of the Air India jet, which killed all 329 people on board. So far only two per cent of the jet's fuselage has been recovered and its flight recorders, with vial data, are deep beneath the sea. The mea-gre evidence prompted one US investigator to say he was not optimistic about finding the cause of the crash of the Boeing 747.

SRI LANKA TALKS SOON THE SRI LANKAN government will hold pre-liminary talks with representatives of the

Tamil United Liberation Front and the mili tant groups in Thimphu, Bhutan "very soon" to resolve the island's ethnic problems. The Indian government will provide facilities like transport for all delegates. Officials declined to specify who would head the government team but indicated the possibility that it might be at the ministerial level,

## TOHRA ON PUNJAB POLL

THE SHIROMANI GURDWARA Parbandhal THE SHIROWANI GURLIWAKA PARDARDARA Committee (SGPC) chief, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, warned the government in Ludhiana that until it accepted all the demands of the Akali Dal (Longowal), it would not be possible to hold elections in Punjab. He added that if the Congress (I) thinks of forming a gov-emment after the next election without solv-ing the Punjab problem, it should learn a les-son from the past and recall the case of the Darbara Singh government, which had to be suspended after only half its term.

## IRAO-LIBYA TIES SOUR

IRAQ WITHDREW ITS recognition of Muammar Gaddaff's "Libyan regime" and said it was recalling its diplomatic mission from Tripoli. Iraq also asked the Libyan diplomatic mission in Baghdad to "leave", a foreign ministry spokesman said.

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# A rules-free order

From Russia-Ukraine hostilities to US operations in Iran, conflicts around world bear hallmarks of unilateralism. It's no longer a taboo to take recourse to battlefield for national security



PANKAJ SARAN

ACROSS THE WORLD, long-festering con-flicts are rearing their heads with devastating force. It is no longer taboo to take recourse to the battlefield to defend or promote national security interests. This applies not only to re-gional or sub-regional actors, but major pow-ers as well. From Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine in February 2022 to the United States" "Operation Midnight Hammer' in Iran a few days ago, the unilat-eral use of force is challenging international law with impunity. The attacks launched by Israel and the top-up strike by the US on Iranian nuclear sites have been destabilising and risky. Their reverberations will play out over time, includ-

reverberations will play out over time, includ-ing within Iran. Both the US and Israel have ing within tran. Both the US and Israel have asserted that fran's top military and nuclear leadership, along with its nuclear facilities, have been significantly degraded. Some of this has been confirmed by Iran. This would have been unthinkable a few years ago. There are notable takeaways from recent events.

nave been untininable a few years ago.
There are notable takeaways from recent events.
First, it all began on October 7, 2023. What Hamas started, Israel is finishing now. Iran is the last plucking on Israel's class board after Gaza, Lebanon and Syria. The pieces have fallen one by one. This is strategic sanitising on fast forward.
Second, there appear to be two key trends: Iran is degraded and stands pretty much alone in the region; Israel has prevailed militarily, but at the same time, it has lost international public opinion. Both trends are, however, only partially true. Iran's regime still survives while Israel's military victory is incomplete and bereft of a political solution. As in the case of the Palestinians, the Islamic world has not gone beyond lip service to support the targeted populations and entities. All Guil Cooperation Council countries individually condemned Iran's strikes against the US military base in Quata. These is identified among them over Iran's nuclear defanging, but uncertainty over its permanence. Russia and China have avoided jumping into the conflict. Western governments have supported the military strikes despite public outrage. The European diplomatic initiative with Iran was too little, too late.

Third, the rules-based international order, or whatever is left of it, has been hit with a knockout punch. Unilateralism has triumphed over multilateralism, exceptionalism over vulnersalism, and interests over values.

Fourth, double standards are not a fig-Fourth, double standards are not a fig-ment of our imagination. There are different standards for different countries. The needs of some countries are more important than others, while some lead a charmed life. If Iran is indicted for pursuing a nuclear weapons programme through deceit and theft, born of sin and cloaked in opacity, and of practic-ing terrorism as a tool of deterrence, surely there is a far more emerious actor that deing terrorism as a tool of deterrence, sure there is a far more egregious actor that de serves similar, if not harsher, treatment. It



impossible for a common Indian not to be aghast at the double standards as we con-tend with Pakistan. Additionally, from India's point of view, the spectre of the mastermind of the Pahalgam terror attack feasting in the White House a day before the most impor-tant US military action in recent memory has been galling. The idea of good and bad ter-rorists is, of course, and old one. Fifth, it is just as well that India launched Constrains Sindone In final keight where they are

Fifth, it is just as well that India launched Operation Sindoor. If finally did what others have done to defend their national interests. There are similarities between the US and Israel's frustration about Iran and India's about Pakistan. If geopolitical rivalries and interests prevent united global action, nations will take recourse to action they deem vital for their security.

Sixth, the name of the game in military affairs today is speed, precision and timing. All-out protracted war with boots on ground is being replaced by the use of contactless high-technology assets deployed in intelli-

is being replaced by the use of contactless high-technology assets deployed in intelligence-led precision mode for swift action over short periods of time.

The impact of a prolonged crisis in West Asia on India's interests is evident. We have much to lose. In taking a stand on the crisis, these factors have to be weighed carefully. Consistency of positions is, however, the least important factor. Europe's silence on and acquiescence to US and Israeli actions in Iran and Gaza. while leading the fielt and moral and Gaza while leading the fielt and moral of the control of and Gaza, while leading the fight and moral

and Gaza, while leading the fight and moral outrage against Russia's milltary operations in Ukraine, is a ready example. India is not the only country that has to balance its ties with Iran, the Gulf states and Israel. There are overlapping sonsitivities and crossed wires across the Gulf, the Arabian Peninsula and the Levant. The Indian ap-proach to this complexity mirrors the ap-

proach of the countries of the region them

proach of the countries of the region them-selves. Targeted country-specific policies, rather than a utopian pan-West Asian or pan-Arab policy, are what has made India's out-reach in the region successful. India's bilasteral relations with Israel have acquired a new chemistry and are at an all-time high. The two are united in their fight against terrorism. There is a history of them helping each other when it matters most. India can relate to the threats Israel faces from a nuclear or terror network. At the same time, India has made major inroads in the Gulf with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and other Arab states. Iran is a partner that cannot be dispensed with. There are good reasons why the India-Iran relationship has survived all odds. Apart from the civilisational linkage and Iran's ge-ographical location, the Padistan factor im-pacts the India-Iran relationship. There is more goodwill for India in Iran than there is for Padistan. Iran is a key counter-balance to Padistan. It was just last year that Iran con-ducted its own versus of Operation Sindoor against jaish-al-sido nof Operation Sindoor against jaish-al-sido repair in Padistan. West Asia is a region that has lurched from one crisis to another. It is home to mul-tiple conflicts. Today, it is experiencing its most profound moment of political reengi-

from one crisis to another, It is home to mul-tiple conflicts. Today, it is experiencing its most profound moment of political reengi-neering and strategic reordering. The ques-tion is, where will Iran go from here? Has it reached a tipping point internally? What will it take for it to be allowed to rejoin the inter-national mainstream?

al security advisor and ambassador

# Internal siege, external forces

"Yet while economic stability is sacrosanct to the global elite, starving and butchered Palestinian children do not raise much concern. This inhumanity end now. Mr Trump and other Western states must prevail upon Israel to end the

Unanswered questions related to the Emergency require a clinical analysis of global and domestic events leading up to it



IT HAS OFTEN crossed my mind that in the

ITHAS OFTEN crossed my mind that in the wake of the infamy of the internal Emergency imposed by the then Congress government five decades ago, the history of the period from December 16, 1971, to June 25, 1975, has never perhaps been properly documented. Was there a context to that decision that has never been clinically explored?

This is by no means a defence of the Emergency, Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, speaking at a public meeting on January 24, 1978 in Yawatmal, Maharashtra admitted to a lapse of judgement and said that she was taking the "entire responsibility for the same". She added that even if others responsible for mistakes and excesses were not willing to own up, she would own the responsibility for those mistakes. She, however, reminded the audience that the situation just before the imposition of the Emergency was grave, and the survival of the nation was threatened. If things were allowed to continue, the situation that had developed in Bangadesh would have been repeated in India.

What was this situation the late PM was referring to? December 1971 had been India's finest hour. The map of South Asia was referring to? December 1971 had been India's a finest hour. The map of South Asia was referring to? December 1971 the Creation of Bangladesh. Pakistan, anation created in the name of faith, had been dismembered because it could not keep people of the same faith, who were linguistically distinct, within

name of faith, had been dismembered be-cause it could not keep people of the same faith, who were linguistically distinct, within its fold. With hat, the two-nation theory was consigned to the dustbin of history. A geno

a historic surrender of over 90,000 officers and soldiers. This event sent shockwaves in influential capitals around the world that believed that only they had the monopoly to shape the global order.

The world then was divided into two power bloss – the West, led by the US, and the Eastern Bloc, led by the Soviet Union. India was "officially" non-aligned but with a perceived tilt towards the Eastern bloc. However, within the Eastern bloc. However, within the Eastern bloc.

India was "officially" non-aligned but was a perceived if it towards the Eastern bloc. However, within the Eastern bloc, there were deep cleavages, with China trying to outcompete the Soviet Union for ideological leadership. The seven-month-long Sino-Soviet border war had ended just two years earlier, to the detriment of China. Two things happened in the monsoon of 1971. In July, Henry Kissinger visited Peking, as it was then known — a trip arranged by the then Pakistani dictator, Field Marshal Yahya Khan. A month later, India signed a treaty of peace, friendship and conperation with the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the situation in East Pakistan continued to deteriorate, and millions of refugees crossed the border into India.

Archer Blood, the US consul general in Dhaka, sent a series of telegrams and memos to the State Department in Washington documenting the genocide and urging Washington to act. However, such entreaties fell on deaf ears as the Richard Nison-Kissinger duo, grateful for Pakistani help in opening the doors to China, erfused to intervene to stop the atrocities in East Pakistan.

Things came to a head in mid-December 1971 when the US government dispatched Task Force 74, comprising ships from the Seventh Fleet and led by the aircraft carrier Seventh Fleet and led by the aircraft carrier USE Stietripse, to sail at battle speed to the Bay of Bengal from the Gulf of Tonkin, where it was deployed for operations in the Vietnam War. The British navy also dis-patched a naval group led by the aircraft car-rier HMS Eagle towards india's west coast. The objective was to stop Dhaka from falling into Indian hands.

rier HMS Eagle towards India's west coast. The objective was to stop Dhaka from falling into Indian hands.
Invoking Article Nine of the Indo-Soviet Treaty, India requested the Soviet Union's help. The Soviets responded with alacrity. The 10th Operative Battle Group (Pacific Pieer) reached the Bay of Bengal and state down the Anglo-American Bottla.

By the time the war ended in December 1971, India was facing a hostile and dismembered Pakistan, a humiliated US and a burgeoning US-Pakistan-China alliance in-imical to both the Soviet Union and India. Around the world, CIA-KBG tovert wars were raging. The CIA's complicity in the overthrow of Chilean president Salvador Allende is now well documented. The Indian success in creating Bangladesh animated anti-neo-imperialist soliidarity around the world, especially the struggle of the Vietnamese against the US. India didtwomore things It audicates on May 18, 1974. Though classified as a peaceful nuclear explosion (PRS), the implications of Smiling Buddha were lost on no-body. On May 16, 1975. Delhi again redrew the political map of South Asia by merging Skidmi into India, taking advantage of Mas Cadong's weakening giry on China. Meanwhile, the cost of war had state impacting the Indian economy. Inflation and food shortages were creating disaffection among people. It gaw the Opposition a chance to mobilise public opinion against Mrs Gandhil. Every successful wartime leader hasto pay a price for leading a nation uning a crisis. Winston Chunchil also lost a general election within two months of wining World Wall in Europe.

Was there a ubiquitious "foreign hand" in the internal disturbances that India experienced in 1974-1975, as Mrs Gandhil repeatedly emphassised? There has been no in-depth scholarship that has examined the

peatedly emphasised? There has been no n-depth scholarship that has examined the

in-depth scholarship that has examined the three-and-a-halfyears between December 1971 and June 1975.

Mrs Gandhi referred to Bangladesh in the Yavatmal speech. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated on August 15, 1975. Could the Emergency have been avoided, and was there a smarter way of handling things? Only a cold, dispassionate and clinical analysis of the global and domestic events leading up to it can perhaps provide an answer.

The writer is a lawyer, third-term MP and former minister



# Proving its mettle

Unlike UPA, Modi government's national security approach has been decisive

There are different standards for different countries. The needs of some countries are

more important than others, while some lead a charmed life. If Iran is indicted for

pursuing a nuclear weapons programme through deceit and theft, born of sin and cloaked in opacity, and of practicing terrorism as a tool

of deterrence, surely there is a

far more egregious actor that

deserves similar, if not harsher, treatment. It is impossible for a common Indian not to be aghast at the

contend with Pakistan

BHASWATI MUKHERJEE

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VIVEK KATJU'S JIBE at Union minister Hardeep S Puri ("Mapping continuity and a shift," IE, June 21) is unbecoming of a seasoned diplomat and gratuitously seeks mischief Katju wisted and misinterpreted Puri's use of the phrase "theatre of the absurd". Puri, when asked about Operation Sindoor and India's bid to diplomatically isolate Pakistan in the aftermath of Pahalgam, said: "It is a different ballgame now... Earlier, you allowed Pakistan to use terror as an instrument of state polity..." You would take whatever they said af face value and have negotiations with them.... The pire-Modil era of dealing with Pakistan was a theatre of the absurd. After the £91'11 (Mumbal attacks), did you retailate? What did you do? The language used then was 'thoda's an her pursuit ho gogyd. This time, it was not Balakot and just one strike. We went hundreds of kilometres in-side and hit terror infrastructure... The beauty of the current situation lies in the message. In 22 minutes, we gave a befitting response." It is clarifform context that Puri was referring to the widely held view that the UPA government's response to terrorist attacks in the 2000s, particularly 26/11, was weak to the point of being farciac Matju Kajudin that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's earlier outreach to Pakistan was also a "heatre of the absurd' is disingenuous and superficial. The political contexts are too far apart. It is also disingenuous to suggest that efforts to build bridges with Pakistan in the past, irrespect-kee of the political party in power, can be treated alike.

It was in poor taste to suggest that an ac-complished diplomat's remarks are careless merely because he is now a pollitician. To pro-vide some much-needed context, "Pur the politician" — to borrow Katju's words — has publicly stated that he joined the BJP because he agreed with its national security views. Pur, before he was a minister, served in the IFS from 1974 to 2013, mostly under Congress-led governments. It is no secret that India's response to terrorism during that period was inadequate. Many civil servants, including myself, felt that India's handling of terrorism in the 1990s and 2000s — culmi-nating in the horror of 26/11 — was at best insufficient, at worst an abdication of duty. The arguments for 'strategic restraint' were difficult to digest, not only for Puri but for many of us.

ifficult to digest, not only for Puri but for many of us.

"Puri the politician" has emerged from the experiences of "Puri the diplomar", who witnessed firshand India's fallure to pevent terror attacks or deter asymmetric warfare. A stellar professional, Puri defended India's interests and extracted what space he could for a strategically restrained India. But that does not mean he must endorse the defensive postures that defined that era. Until 26/11, under the UPI, India faced at least seven major terror attacks: Delhi (October 2005 and September 2008), Mumbai (July 2006), Samjhauta Express (February 2007), Hyderabad (August 2007), Jajpur (May 2008), and Ahmedabad (July 2008), These were linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba,

Jaish-e-Mohammed, and ISI-backed groups, striking at the heart of our cities. More than 2,000 citizens were killed between 2005 and 2008 due to cross-border terrorism.

The 26/11 attacks shattered India's image as a secure nation. The response — widely documented—was incoherent. The then cabinet securitary aparatus that failed to respond co-berently. The then foreign secretary and later national security aparatus that failed to respond co-berently. The then foreign secretary and later national security adviser concluded after "sober reflection" that" more was to be gained from not attacking Palsitan than from attacking it. 'Yet, it is hard to see what was gained, or to credibly argue that any favourable developments were contingent on it.

To those on the outside, India appeared to be a soft state. Let us also not forget that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's foolhardy joint statement with then Pakistan prime minister Yusuf Raza Gilani at Sharm el-Sheikh in 2009 effectively shifted the Balochistan issue from a problem of Pakistan's own making to one allegedly fuelled by India in international eyes. It was against this litany of missteps that the minister undersocred the Modi governmen's contrasting approach.

ister underscored the Modi government's contrasting approach.

PM Modi came to office in 2014 with a vi-sion of integrating South Asia into a coopera-tive space where trade was enhanced and re-gional problems were resolved collectively. This aligned with the "Neighbourhood First" policy introduced by the UPA in 2008, demon-strating foreign policy continuity — a notable

tradition in Indian statecraft. The aim was peace through reduced cross-border terror. The attempts to build ties with Pakistan stemmed from this logic. However, the Pathankot attackin January 2016 Wast Beffall straw, hardening the PM's stance on Pakistan. (It is also worth noting that the attack was planned before Modi's surprise trip to Pakistan – thus undermining the ironic significance that Katju wishes to confer on the trip.)

Since then, PM Modi's shift from conciliation to decisive action has been clear. The scale and publicity of the 2016 Surgical striles, the 2019 Baladox ainstrike after Pahalgam all underline this transformation. Each action was measured, non-escalabory, and focused on terrorist infrastructure, while signalling growing costs to Pakistan's establishment, India has evolved from a nation fearful of unattended bags in public places to one where susceptible youth think twice before aligning with externist ouffits.

National security crises are ultimately a test of political mettle. Prime Minister Modi's actions show a leader making rational, resolute decisions in critical national security moments—unlike the UPA-era, marked by weakness and incoherence. Puri's interview, in my view, was candid, engaging, and characteristically direct. To attempt to generate controversylver is to exaggerate beyond reason.

The writer is a former diplomat

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## A SECOND CHANCE

THIS REFERS TO the article. 'Dictatorship of, by & for Congress' (IE, June 26). There is no doubt that the declaration Emergency by Indira Candhin 1975 is a darkchapter in the history of independent India. Arroctices committed by those in power can never be condoned. However, realising the blunder committed by her, Mrs Candhi had the decency had accorded by the missing the blunder committed by the Mrs Candhi had the decency had considered by the Mrs Candhi had the decency had considered by the missing the blunder and according to the missing the Mrs. ted by her, Mrs Gandhi had the decont to aclrow/deel, her mistakes and accept responsibility for the excesses commit-ted during the Emergency, She also apol-ogised to the people of the nation. Finding her apology genuine, the people of India not only partioned her but also voted Congress back to power with a thumping majority. Tharclus S Fernando, Chennal

## JUDICIAL FREEDOM

JUDICIAL FREEDOM

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'With fear and favour' (IE, June 26), Indeed, the zenith of the independence of the judiciary is reflected in the political history of the Emergency imposed by Indiray and Sandhi. If the 1975 ruling of the Allahabad High Court was peoof of judicial independence, then the Supreme Court's verdict in ADM Jabalpur vs Shiwant Shakh, legalking the suspension of the right to life and liberty during the Emergency, was its darkest hour. the Emergency, was its darkest hou Soon after the lifting of the Emergence

the judiciary made amends. The Basic Structure Doctrine of the Constitution has prevailed again. Y G Chouksey, Pune

## MOMENT OF PRIDE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Second Voyager' (IE, June 26). The voyage by Shubhanshu Shukla to the International Shubhanshu Shudda to the International Space Station (ISS) by SpaceXs Falcon 9 rocket marks a major milestone in space exploration and reinvigorates the per-petual quest of human civilisation in har-nessing space. This exploration will pro-vide critical information which will be valuable for India's first human space mission, Gaganyaan. Indraject Shudda, Lucknow

Indrajeet Shulda, Jucknow
THIS REFERS TO the editorial, Second
Voyager (IE, June 26). Mission Axiom-4
is a historical step towards human space
missions in the future. Group Captain
Shubhanshu Shukla has an important
role in docking the Dragon spacecraft
with the International Space Sation and
carrying out experiments along with the
astronauts of Hungary, the US and
Poland. Their study of in-orbit science,
technology and engineering will be useful for Gagaryaan mission. We will
Shulda and other astronauts a successful mission, which will ultimately be
very useful to manishod in space research.
Subhash Vald, New Dethi

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OUR TAKE !

# High growth, low inflation cushion

Positive domestic factors should help India manage a bearish external environment

e world has seen so much economic chaos of late that crises have become the norm rather than the exception. The most recent, involving Israel, Iran and the US, seems to have subsided, for now. Even if one were to assume that things will not escalate in this theatre — which would disrupt India's trade and energy supplies — another conflagration could well be on its way. US President Donald Trump's pause on reciprocal tariffs ends on July 8 and only he knows what will follow. Then there are smaller, but far from insignificant, problems such as China holding back rare earth supplies from large parts of the world, including India. In short, the global economic climate will continue to remain uncertain going forward. It is in this bearish external environment that the

Indian economy is drawing a lot of comfort from domestic factors. The benchmark inflation rate has been below the 4% target for four months now. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) expects it to remain below 4% until the December quarter. It is this confidence that allowed RBI to frontload its monetary easing and administer a rate cut of 50 basis points earlier this month. While the growth rate has seen a significant slowdown in the past couple of years, it is still expected to be a healthy 6.5% for the ongoing fiscal year which will keep India as the fastest growing major economy in the world. RBI's monthly bulletin, released on June 25, underlines precisely this message. RBI's latest commentary will soothe sentiment both inside and outside the economy on India's short-term economic

Having said this, it is important to note that policy challenges for medium-term and long-term economic prospects will need careful handling. These challenges will include negotiating trade deals, most importantly with the US, finding a way to pivot even more towards domestic factors for economic growth even though India's export book never really regained its pre-global financial crisis mojo, and bracing for capital market disruption that could arise from the precarious fiscal position of advanced economies. But none of these take away from the immediate economic comfort of low inflation and decent growth.

## The unexpected rise of Zohran Mamdani

he unexpected arrival of Zohran Mamdani to the centrestage of American politics is remarkable. Born to parents of Indian origin — academic Mahmood Mamdani and filmmaker Mira Nair — the 33-year-old self-declared democratic socialist is the antithesis of all that Donald Trump's America represents. President Trump's response on social media to Mamdani clinching the Democratic party's nomination for the New York mayoral poll, scheduled for later this year, was: "A 100% communist lunatic, has just won the Dem Primary, and is on his way to becoming mayor." becoming mayor."

New York is not America, surely. However, Mamdani's rise in the Democratic ranks may not be merely a reflection of the Big Apple's melting pot society, but also a pushback from young Democrats who prefer to rally around a young radical willing to confront the Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement directly on sensitive issues such as migration and faith. Mamdani is assertive about his Asian roots and Muslim identity and vocal about his support for the rights of Palestinians. Interestingly, he built his following by borrowing a leaf from the Trump presidential campaign playbook, which sought to reduce the cost of living for Americans. Mamdani's clitzen-centric urban politics wants to "freeze the rent", provide "free buses", and "a city you can afford", These are agendas that transcend ethnic and faith fault lines and unite New Yorkers under the umbrella

of what may be deemed as class concerns. That said, Mamdani may be deemed a divisive figure even within the Democrat establishment for his radical views, which will make it easy for the MAGA bloc to caricature. On the contrary, just as President Trump and MAGA rewrite the rules of politics and policy-making in America, Mamdani may turn out to be that figure who can mobilise a young America in favour of the Democratic Party in a polarised polity. One thing is for sure: Mamdani as NY mayor will not be business as usual

# Changing the colour of India's economy

India has a chance to avoid multiple global disruptions and shape an inclusive growth story by transitioning to a green economy

he world is experiencing massive disruptions across geopolitical, technological, economic, and climate fromts. In the midst of it all, there is an opportunity to future-proof India's economy and ensure lives and livellinoods are protected while our developmental goals are met. because the elimate crisis will india's economy and ensure lives and livellinoods are protected while our developmental goals are met. because the elimate crisis will only accelerate these uncertainties. As global demand for green products and services secretaries, India has a chance to shape an inclusive growth story that beneficis every layer of India's economy — farmers, small and medium enterprises, startups, and large industries alide. Investing now in meritain enterprise of the experience of the booming international green economy.

To be sure, the green economy; is not bout renewable energy alone. It is about setzing India's comparative advantage in resource efficiency, circustrices of the experience of the

lar production, bioconomy and cli-mate resilience to unlock new jobs, drive technological innovation, and reclefine India's global competitiveness in emerging value chains. The numbers speak plainly. India's bioconomy— using biological resources beyond from next for materials, energy and beyond next for materials, energy and beyond in 204 to 3600 billion in 2024 a 3600 billion in in 204 to 3600 billion in 2024. The min-sity of science and technology project the sector will reach \$300 billion by 2000 Similarly, be divealer comonty— from wastewater reuse to recycling of buttery, flastics, and construction waste—could add millions of jobs to the Indian economy.

waste – could add millions of jobs to the Indian economy.
Consider Oddish, or example, a resource-fish state known for its mines and coal. A recent study by the Council on Energy, Emistronment and Water (CEBW) reveals that 28 green value challed a recomment and the council of the council of

the state's GDP while creating one million jobs and attract-ing over \$42 billion in invest-ments by 2030. At Invest Odi-sha 2025 alone, over 35% of the ₹13 lakh crore commit-ments targeted green sectors— marking the first time non-mineral sectors claimed the realestic while.

minenal sectors claimed the majority share. If this is the potential of one state alone, imagine India's green economy at scale. Our leapfrog advantage lists in unique strengthis of million MSMEs contributing 30% of GOP, 7500-len of coustline for thue economy enterprises, and a thriving startup ecosystem already delivering pres isolations. The early gains from this structural shift are visible on the ground as well. Table Gowshalt-based Bamboostan, a startup

transforming 80,000 MT of local barn-boa annually into construction material while raising farmer incomes. Or Eccl Recycling Limited's Malarushives and the construction of the construction of the con-son of e-waste with its cutting-edge technology. These are among the thou-sands of entrepreneurs and businesses that point to a slently emerging revolu-tion, where micro-transformations aggregate into macro-opportunities. Like the IT revolution of the 1990s, the green economy can propel India to a new en of industrial leadership. India needs a whole-of-economy push, brigging together government, industry, investors, and communities to act in concert.





isriaging together government, industry, investors, and communities to act in concert.

First, the Union government should spearhead a green economy active plant to provide policy certainty and market direction. This requires four decisive interventions: time-bound fiscal incentives (including tax holidays) to boost adoption of cleaner technologies, single-window clearances for green industries, mandatony green procurement across public infrastructure, and sarriedge reorientation of existing schemes towards green priorieties. Specifying engineered bamboo in furniture contracts, recycled plastics in road projects, bio-based construction materials, and energy-efficient appliances in all government facilities would create immediate market signals. Nif Alayog, with its experience sterring cross-ministerial missions like the approted by a digital data platform for tracking investments, stills, and performance. Second, Indian industry must be at the heart of the green economy, While micro-enterprises remain vital for inclusive industrialisation, large indus-



Agreen economy is about rewriting to 
SUITIBATION.

tries need to move beyond adopting 
green practices within plants to actively 
shaping markets and supply chains 
through ownership and investment. 
With support, MSME clusters can leapfreg into clean production systems, like 
excitle units adopting solar-powered 
effluent treatment, food processors 
shifting to blokegradable peckaging or 
solar cold chains. Meanwhile, our starting 
must commercialise the underlying the starting of the starting 
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minimized 
must be form to enable this transition through shared green infrastruc
ture like zero-waste hubs, tech transfer 
programmes beliping suppliers decar
bonise, and collaborative research and 
development (R&D) hubs co-funded by 
anchor firms.

Third, financial institutions and 
philanthropies must unlock green 
capital across risk spectrums. Many 
high-impact green sectors—from EV 
manufacturing to plastic waste recy
cling to sustainable tourism—need 
catalytic capital to scale, Philanthropy 
can provide the risk-taking first ruped 
oliar, while public finance can share 
some of the risks faced by private 
investment. Civil sockety organisations 
can bridge this ecosystem by prepar
ing portfolios of community-linked 
projects for financing. The goal is not 
must capital allocation but building 
pipelines that convert India's green 
Fourth, India's research and innova
Fourth, India's research and innova
Fourth, India's research and innova-

China's 2.4%, a critical gap when build-ing self-reliance in green tech. India's private sector, in particular, must look over the horizon and boost its R&D

private sector. in particular, must look over the horizon and boost its R&D spending to institutionalise innovation as an economic multiplier. The government can incentivise private sector innovation spending in critical areas through matching grants. Academia-industry partnerships and tech turnslation consistency and the consistency of the consistency

# Gentleman cadet 14, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw

t was a decade ago and more that we were invited to a passing out parade at the Indian Military Academy in Dehradun. Balt Irecall it as if were yesterday. From the moment we arrived, exerything was precision and structure. A very very proper but suitably handsome young liaison officer attached himself firmly to our little party of four and shepherded us policely but unswervingly through a welcome cup of tex quick bathe and change, and down to drinks. Well in time for the grand entrance of the chief guest. Dinner in the darley handsome wood panelled hall had us all behind nameplates in correct pecking order with the high table at right angles to our own three benches. Liveried hearers entered, served, and cleared in unison. Dinner ended with toasts to the President, the Academy and the chief guest. Bandy and cigars done we retired early in readiness for the big day when the new batch of 600 gentlemen cades would be passing out. Next morning, true to some invisible master clock, our military companion took us in hand, cast a gimlet eye over our attire, checked we were warmly clad, and settled us into carefully marked out seats. Before us the parade unfolded.

The first dignatery drove himself up in a single horse bugge; the next arrived in a carriage and pair; and finally, the chief guest stepped out of a four horse carriage to take his place under the canopy to review the parade.

Fanfare, trumpets, the clip-clop of horse



attention on the tower bloc behind, the Present Arms for the colour, the swords flashing in the sun, the dark green lines of cadest, the short inspirational speech and the march past all spoke of long honoured traditions and carefully preserved standards that the bardy-gurdy of the outside world has been unable to sully. For the new gentlemen cades, life was just beginning, for the parents, who had watched the parade with awe, the best was yet to come. The pipping commony is spieced to the parade with a wet, the best was yet to come. The pipping commony is spieced to the comparent with the pipping commony is spieced to an outside the parade with a wet, the best was yet to come. The pipping commony is spieced to the comparent with the pipping common the pipping comparent with the pipping compar

Salutos and respectful mamastes punctuated their progress.

Rivasart long before a oursagous few health was a district their progress.

Rivasart long before a oursagous few health was a district their progress.

Rivasart long before a oursagous few health was a district long to the salutos. The salutos was a district long to the salutos was a district long to the salutos and between the salutos and before the salutos was a district long to the salutos and a lightheast da polog for having only a swood on hand rather than a pen, the old gent melted the reverence that had kept the crowd at bay.

A different energy began to stir, transforming the mood into one of warmth and case yoo connection. The crowd now drew closer, a thousand questions, comments, and hand-shakes competed for attention. He drew a shaky breath, looked around and sought a moment's liberty to reminisce. So much had happened, he sald, in the decadus shine he himself had received his pips on this very ground. Worm close the sald, in the decadus shine he himself had received his pips on this very ground. Worm shows the sald, in the decadus shine he himself had received his pips on this very ground. Worm shows the sald, him the sald shine the first salute Now, seven decades later, another Field Marshal, taking that same salute, had once been gentleman cade rumber 14. For him, life had truly come full circle. It was, he said, kismet.

Majo Daruwala is chief elitor, India heatie

[ RAJNATH SINGH ] MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF INDIA

The biggest challenges that we are facing in our region are related to peace, security and trust deficit



# Pilgrims' progress & the railways' look-east policy

Vaishnaw

The holy city, the abode of Mahaprabhu, Jagannath Puri, Is ready for the Bath Yatra. It is a Journey of faith for the militons of devotees coming from across the globe. And Bharthy Rail is at the service of these playins, Iscillating their overall experience in the Struckshetra Puri.

The last Il years have been bisloric for odditional to the across the development. The last Il years have been bisloric for odditional to the control of the property of the pro

quale arrangements have been made to provide relef from the hot weather. Sufficient food salls and water booths and coolers have been arranged. An estimated 2.5 lish free meals will sall as a support of the support o

e Yatra. Bhartiya Rail is fondly called as the lifeline of the nation. It remains committed to the service of all Indians including the pilgrims who con-sider Rath Yatra as their lifeline.

m for and on behalf of NT Media Ind. Its-20, Kashaba Gaedhi-Mary, New Delhi-19001 and printed at HT Media Ind. Process at Plot No. 4, Udyog Vilay, Greater Noide, Dott, Gaetam Budh Nagar, (UP), Fris Beaser, 1917, 2012-10.

# A déjà vu moment for Indian space odyssey

all it providence or pure coincidence but June 25 seems to be a day of destiny as regards India from even before it achieved independence. Many spectacular events have unfolded on this very day over the years. On June 25, 1932, India became the sixth team to be granted Test cricket status when it played its first match at Lord's on that historic day. Close to midnight of June 25, 1975, the then President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed proclaimed national Emergency citing "internal disturbance. It was to mark a watershed event as India's political land-scape underwent a dramatic transformation and gave a new democratic dimension.

On June 25, 1983, India rewrote cricketing history by emerging as world champions, when Kapills Devils uppest all calculations and put an end to the hat-trick quest of West Indies by winning the ODI World Cup in a stunning manner. Now 42 years to the day, June 25, 2025, to be precise, an

Indian with the tricolour on his shoulders has put the country's name in a league of extraordinary achievers.

A distinguished IAF pilot and astronaut, Lucknow's 39-year-old Shubhanshu Shukla scripted history by embarking on a space odyssey along with three others on Wednesday as part of an ISRO-NASA supported commercial spacellight by Axiom Space that blasted off for a 14-day sojourn to the International Space Station (ISS) from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida.

Incidentally, Shukla is one of four astronauts picked for ISRO's historic Gaganyaan mission, which marks India's inaugural human space flight endeavour. The lift-off at 12.01 pm on Wednesday (after several eleventh hour heart-breaking postponements) took the clock back by 41 years when Hyderabad's very own Rakesh Sharma became India's first man in space. He spent eight days in orbit as part of the then Soviet Un-

ion's Salyut-7 space station in 1984.

A day after the take-off, Shukla went a notch higher than Sharma when he achieved the distinction of being the first Indian astronaut to have travelled to ISS. Along with three other astronauts, he reached the ISS when the Dragon spacecraft, named Grace, docked with the orbital laboratory at 4:01 pm (IST) on Thursday over the North Atlantic Ocean, marking the climax of a 28 hours flight.

lantic Ocean, marking the climax of a 28 hours flight. Incidentally, Axiom 4 mission heralds the return to space not just for India, but Poland and Hungary as well. Also onboard is the mission commander Peggy Whitson, and mission specialists Polands Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski and Hungary's Tibor Kapu. If Shukla stirred the emotions of the countrymen with Sare Jahan se Achhcha... while speaking to Indira Gandhi, Shukla's first message from space was equally patriotic.

"The Tiranga embossed on my shoulders tells me that I am with all of you. This journey of mine is not a beginning to the ISS but to India's Human Space Programme. I want all of you to be part of this journey. Your chest, too, should swell with pride... Jai Hind! Jai Bharat!" The Cytober 10, 1985-born history-maker was commissioned into the IAF fighter wing in June 2006. He has an excellent track-record as a combat leader and seasoned test pilot having a mindlog-gling 2,000 hours of flight experience across aircraft like the Su-50 MKI, MiG-21, MiG-29, Jaguar, Hawk, Dornier and An-32.

aircraft like the Su-30 MKI, MiG-21, MiG-29, Jaguar, Hawk, Dornier and An-32. It is time Indians took a break from wars and conflicts and celebrated the glorious achievements of Shukla, Sharma and Su-nita Williams, who set new benchmarks in spacewalk, which redefined 'resilience' during her nine-month stay aboard the ISS. Bravo, India's torchbearers of the extraordi-nary kind.

# One Nation - One Election



Dve been closely watching India's democratic journey for decades. As someone deeply immersed in politics, public policy, and the larger strategy of nation-building, I say this with absolute conviction, India is long overdue for a massive course correct or the course course course correct or the course or the course correct or the course or the course correct or the course or the course or the course or the cou tion, India is long overdue for a massive course correc-tion in the way it conducts elections. And that correc-tion must come in the form of 'One Nation - One Elec-tion'

of One Nation - One Nation of One Nation of

Let me take you through why I believe this change is not only essential but also inevitable. This isn't theory. This is the voice of experience, observation, experience, observation, and reflection over years of engaging with India's elec-toral, political and govern-

The electoral rot we refuse to address
Let me begin with a fundamental truth, our current electoral system is broken. It may appear to function, but like an old clock that ticks without accuracy, it's out of sync with the aspirations of a New India. We've carried, foregrad, a extend

tions of a New India. We've carried forward a system from our post-colonial past and continued it without questioning its relevance. Why? Because we got used to it. Repetition over generations gave it the illusion of permanence.

But ask yourself, has the system evolved with the times? Has it adapted to India's burgeoning population, our expanding economy, the complexity of governance, and the evergrowing expectations of our citizens? The answer is a re-

sounding 'No.'

In a country of 1.4 billion people, we have elections happening almost every few months, somewhere or the other. This constant or the other. This constant electoral churn paralyses governance, distorts policy priorities, and fuels corruption like no other democratic exercise in the world. Why do we accept this chaos as normal? Why do we not challenge the logic behind this endless cycle?

Let's be brutally honest In India, elections are no in India, elections are not a celebration of democracy anymore, they're a trigger-ing event for mass-scale corruption. Not just in poli-tics, but in the ecosystem

increasingly based not on competence or integrity, but on one simple qualifier, how much money can you

how much money can you spend?

From village panchayats to parliamentary constitu-encies, there's an invisible auction happening before every election. Tickets go to those with the deepest pockets, not the cleanest hands. Honest, capable, service-minded individuals don't even stand a chance in most political parties. They're told to wait, to prove their spending ca-pability, to raise money, to 'invest' in their political careers.

to 'invest' in their political carea.

There is no reward for ideological loyalty in political parties anymore, the electoral ticket winners' are who jumps the most parties. As long as you have total immunity from not possessing party or ideological loyalty.

And what happens if they win? That 'investment is recovered, with interest. Public office becomes a tool for personal ROI. Corruption becomes institutionalized, expected, even celebrated. And then, we wonder why governance fails!

If we want to attack corruption at its root, we must begin by reforming the electoral process itself. And that's precisely where 'One Nation'. One Election' comes in.

The corrupt voter, a new tragedy of democracy
Here's another uncomfortable truth. The rot has spread to the voter too. Especially in rural and semi-urban India, a disturbing trend is emerging, and I've personally encountered it across several states, marticulated. several states, particularly

There's a new kind of vot-There's a new kind or vor-er, not someone demanding better roads, healthcare, or clean water, but someone demanding cash for their vote. And not discreetly. This is open, audacious, and shockingly being normal-ized.

shockingly being normalized.

Note for Vote' has become a reality. Entire caste groups, social clubs, community associations, and apartment welfare bodies negotiate 'rates' per vote. I've heard credible accounts of 81,500 to 83,000 being naid ner voter in some compaid ner voter in some compaid ner voter in some compaid per voter in some compaid ner voter

of 81,500 to 82,000 being paid per voter in some constituencies. A by-election in Chennal was abuzz with rumours of an independent candidate 'winning' at 826,000 per vote. Just think about that.

What does it say about a democracy when even the vote is for sale? When votes are auctioned, only the highest bidder wins, not the most deserving candidate. And naturally, the highest bidder enters office not to serve, but to loot. The cycle continues.

Now imagine this hap-

Now imagine this hap-pening five to six times in a span of just five years, state assembly elections, local body elections, by-elec-



intermittent elections take on governance.

Think of a central government elected with a clear five-year mandate. But within that term, every year or so, there's a state election, somewhere in the country. That becomes a 'referendum' on the Centre. even if it shouldn't be. Media hypes it up. Opposition builds narratives. And suddenly, governance takes a back seat to campaigning.

tions, Lok Sabha elections The frequency itself breeds corruption. Reduce the fre-

corruption. Reduce the re-quency, and you reduce the opportunity for corruption. With 'One Nation - One Election', we can clean up the system, perhaps not en-tirely, but enough to begin a new culture of integrity.

constant distraction from development
I'm baffled by how little we realise the toll intermittent elections take on governance. Think of a central government elected with a clear five-year mandate. But within that term, every year or so, there's a state election, somewhere in the country. That becomes a 'referendum' on the Centre, even if it shouldn't be. Media hypes it up. Opposition builds narratives. And suddenly.

it shouldn't be. Media hypes it up. Opposition builds narratives. And suddenly, governance takes a back seat to campaigning.

Bureaucrats go into a freeze. Politicians start strategizing, nor for public policy, but for vote swings, implementation stalls. Governance momentum dies. Why should any elected government, be it at the Centre or in a state, be in a perpetual election modef? a perpetual election mode? Let's realign our electoral calendar. Let governance breathe. Let policymaking take centre stage for once

The astronomical cost of dysfunction Conducting elections is not cheap. It's a massive longistical exercise involving thousands of crores of taxpayer money, deployment of government staff, law enforcement, and public in-frastructure. And when we do this every few months somewhere in India, the cumulative cost becomes mind-numbing. mind-numbing.

Do we have any idea how

many man-hours of gov-ernment work are lost? Do we calculate the policy stag

nation caused by the model code of conduct? Do we ac-

nation caused by the model code of conduct? Do we account for the opportunity cost of lost reforms?

On the flip side, electoral costs for candidates have ballooned beyond comprehension. In many constituencies, an MP candidate may end up spending 815 to 20 crores unofficially. An MLA might shell out 85 to 8 crores. These are not exaggerated numbers, they're 'market reallities'.

Tell me, how can an honest schoolteacher, a passionate social worker, an inspired professional or an idealistic youth ever hope to contest under such circumstances? They're priced out of democracy. And that right they is the days

out of democracy. And that, right there, is the slow death of real representation.

## A crisis of political

A crisis of political quality
quality
I often say this at public forums, the destiny of a democratic nation is directly linked to its 'quality of its politics'. And sadly, in India, that quality has degraded severely. We've created an unwritten rule, to enter politics, you must either be rich or willing to become corrupt. Neither should be a requirement for public service.

public service.

Every time I see a bright young citizen hesitate to enyoung citizen hesitate to en-ter politics because of 'dirry money,' I know we've lost a potential reformer. The cost of that loss is immense. We don't just lose a candidate, we lose new blood, ideolog-ical loyal, valuable ideas, ro-bust energy, and a reformed political future. 'One Nation - One Elec-tion' can reverse this trend. It reduces the financial bur-den on candidates, stream-lines their campaien ef-

den on candidates, stream-lines their campaign ef-forts, and levels the playing field for those with limited means but limitless integ-

rity.
Let's make politics about

on without a single substan-tial electoral reform, except moving from paper ballots to electronic voting. Have our voters not changed? Has our economy not evolved? Has the complex-ity of governance remained

evolved? Has the complex-ity of governance remained the same? Of course not. And yet, the electoral machinery remains stuck in the 1950s mindset. We've spent decades building air-ports, expressways, digital governance platforms, but we still elect governments with a system designed for another centure.

another century. It took the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to finally break the Modi to finally break the silence and challenge the status quo. While there's no formal policy declara-tion yet, the groundwork is being laid. The intellectual churn has begun. And I, for one, welcome it. Because this is no tjust about synchronizing elec-tion dates. This is about transforming the way India governs itself.

Now, let me be clear. 'One Nation - One Election' will not magically solve every problem. Corruption will not vanish overnight. Voter awareness will not rise instantly. Political funding will still need reform. But this single structural change can create the conditions necessary for deeper transformations.

Fewer elections mean fewer disruptions mean better governance.

Better governance means stronger institutions not magically solve every

- tions And stronger institu-tions lead to a stronger

tions lead to a stronger democracy It's a domino effect, start with electoral reform, and watch the ripple effects across policy, politics, and public life.

The social transformation
What we often fail to acknowledge is that political reform is the foundation of social transformation. And in a democracy as large and layered as India's, every structural improvement in the political process has and layered as India's, every structural improvement in the political process has ripple effects far beyond Parliament and Assemblies. 'One Nation - One Elec-tion' is about reschaige the tion' is about reshaping the moral, cultural, and civic consciousness of over a bil-

consciousness of over a bil-lion people. When corruption be-comes the norm in elections, society begins to accept it in every other sphere of life. When political tickets are distributed to those with muscle and money, it signals to youth that ideals, values are irrelevant, and that in-fluence is everything. When voters openly trade their vote for cash, it validates transactional thinking over transactional thinking over

principles.

This is the psychological cost of our broken electoral

system. It feeds cynicis normalizes the unethi and desensitizes the public

and desensitizes the public to wrongdoing. Now, imagine what can change if we overhaul this structure. If elections are fewer, cleaner, and more accountable, it sets a new benchmark for integrity in public life. It elevates the expectations of the voter. It forces political parties to shift their pitch from populism to performance, from manipulation to merit.

One synchronized election cycles every five years will reset the rhythm of civic engagement. It gives people

engagement. It gives people time to judge governance not in fragmented spurts but over meaningful periods.

over meaningful periods. It encourages long-term thinking. It gives the voter the time and space to reflect, deliberate, and decide, rather than being constantly whipped into emotion by nonstop campaigns. Most importantly, the reform has the potential to decentralize public awareness. When elections happen simultaneously, there is a convergence of national dialogue. Issues like education, health, employment, infrastructure, and national security get discussed across the board, irrespective of security get discussed across the board, irrespective of whether the voter lives in Bihar or Telangana. There is less room for parochial identity politics and more scope for development-driv-en discourse.

scope for development-driv-end discourse.

Over time, this creates a more aware citizenry, a more responsible media, and a more performance-focused polity. It creates pressure on politicans to be seen work-ing, not just campaigning. It elevates the very quality of democracy we practice. So yes, 'One Nation - One Election' is also a social re-

So yes, One Nation - One Election' is also a social re-form. It may begin with bal-lots and booths, but its real victory will be written in the minds and behaviours of our people.

A call to rise above
partisan politics
This is my appeal, not as a
spokesperson of a political
party, but as a citizen who
believes deeply in India's
potential. Let us rise above
partisan lines. Let us stop
viewing every proposal
through the lens of political
gain or loss. Let us instead. gain or loss. Let us instead ask, is this good for India? And if the answer is yes, and I believe it unequivocally is, then we must support it Our children deserve a better democratic framework than the one we inherited. Our nation deserves an elec-toral system that empowers

toral system that empowers governance, not hampers it. The time to tact is now. The time to transform is now.

One Nation - One Election can be the single most impactful reform of our time. Because, if we fix the foundation, we can finally build the future India de-

serves.
(Author is the Chief Spokesperson of BJP, Chair-man for Nation Building Foundation and a Harvard Business School certified

# **LETTERS**

### Seems a fixed match

Seems a fixed match

I ran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei claimed Victory over Israel and said his country had 'delivered a hand slap to America's face' on Thursday, 26 June, in his first public comments. Khamenei spoke in a video broadcast on Iranian state television, his first appearance since 19 June. He said, the US despite intervening 'achieved no gains from this war.'

The 86-year-old Khamenei hadn't been seen in public since the outbreak of the war on 13 June, when Israel attacked Iranian nuclear facilities and targeted top military commanders and scientists. He had reportedly taken shelter at a secret location one which POTUS Donald Trump claimed that the US was privy to, but that they would not try to kill him "yet".

He said we are winning this war as long as we do not bow before dictations, before power and greed, as long as we uphold the ideals of Imam Hussain. Khamenei warned US "The fact that the Islamic Republic has access to key US centres in the region and can take action menerer it deems necessary is a significant matter. Such an action can be repeated in the future too. Should any aggression occur, the enemy will definitely pay a heavy price." The US military action was never about nuclear susues or nuclear enrichment, but about Iran's "surrender".

Blazewan Thadadan: Mumbai

## Curb unfair academic practices

REFERENCE to your report on the ED raids over the engineering seat blocking scam, it is deeply disturbing to see how some private colleges, along with agents, manipulate government quota seats for profit. Over 2,000 seats were allegedly blocked, denying genuine students a dir chance. This is not just corruption it is a betrayal of meritocracy & trust.

The government must take stringent action against institutions involved & strengthen the Karnataka Examinations Authority's oversight. Aadhaar linked verification, real-time public seat tracking & a crackdown on education consultancies are the need of the hour. Education must not be commercialized to this extent. Lefts restore fairness to our academic system before more futures are compromised.

Dr H K Vijaykumar, Raichur

### Cybersecurity measures need boost

Cybersecurity measures need boost

THE Indian Computer Emergency Response Team
(CERT-In) has issued an advisory for citizens, urging
everyone to change their online passwords immediately.
This is being termed the biggest online credential theft in
the history of the internet. A massive database on the dark
web has revealed that the data was stolen from 30 different sources. Cybersecurity experts have warned that this
stolen data poses a heightened risk of cybercrimes and
fraud. Reports indicate that 16 billion online passwords
and identity data have been compromised/The government advisory recommends that all passwords related to
online usage should be changed immediately.
To secure user accounts, citizens are advised to enable
Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) wherever possible.
Additionally, using passkeys is also recommended. Common and easy-to-guees passwords like admin 1234, guest,
and qwerry should be strictly avoided, as cybercriminals
can crack such passwords in just two seconds. To prevent
cyberattacks or losses, it is essential to keep both passwords and antivirus software strong and updated in the
current scenario.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar, Mumbai

## Property matters in India

Property matters in India

THERE is a strong emotional bond between Indians
and property. Instead of treating it like any other asset class which can be bought and sold, Indians treat it as
an inseparable part of one's life. The first thing that any
married couple thinks of is buying and owning a house.
With the rate of land and apartments going through the
roof, not even the rich can afford them in the metros and
therefore have to live somewhere in the distant suburbs.
A property other than the house one lives is a luxury
few can afford. There are so many legalities and loopholes in law that lawyers can purchase their own properties on what they earn on disputes of properties. Land
has also been the cause of breaking families and bitter
enmity between the siblings or other close relations.
Like the writer says at the end we only need a hole in
the ground; so why this constant disputes over property?

Anthony Henriques, Mumbai

thehansreader@gmail.com

# BENGALURU ONLINE

### No tax on minimum electricity charges; Only usage-based tax allowed: HC

BENGALURU: In a significant judgment, the High Court has ruled that tax cannot be levied on minimum electricity charges. The court stated that consumers should only pay tax on the actual electricity consumed, and not on unused

Dower.

The verdict came from the bench of Justice Ananth Ramanath Hegde, which declared as unconstitutional the amendments made to Section 3(1) of the Karnataka Elec-

manual regote, winter occurred as unconstantial unamendments made to Section 3(1) of the Karnataka Electricity (Taxation on Consumption or Sale) Act, 1939, which had been altered by the state government in 2003 and 2004 to impose tax on minimum charges.

The court was hearing petitions filed by the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry and M/s Sona Synthetics, who challenged the legality of imposing tax on minimum electricity bills, even when power was not consumed. While the High Court refused to order a refund of taxes already collected, it struck down the amendment as it was contrary to the legal framework. Going forward, the ruling ensures that tax is applicable only on electricity usage, not on fixed or minimum charges.

The "minimum electricity charge" refers to the fixed amount billed monthly by the electricity supplier, irrespective of usage. This ruling offers relief to consumers and industries burdened by unnecessary tax on unused power.

Read more at https://epaper.thehansindia.com

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## CONTRAPUNTO

A man builds a fine house; and now he has a...task for life: furnish, watch, show it, and keep it in repair, the rest of his days RALPH WALDO EMERSON

# Citizen Kaun

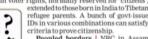
In the khichdi that's India, a multiplicity of documents to prove citizenship makes sound sense

itish Kumar was the first NDA CM to talk down a national register of citizens (NRC) for Blhar back in 2019. His three magic words - "Kahe ka NRC" (whatever for, an NRC") - set the tone for a quiet demise of a nationwide record of citzens. Census 2027's headcount won't include a 'national population register', the parent body for an NRC, the theme itself dropped from NDA/BJP's 2024 Lok Sabba poll manifesto. 2024 Lok Sabha poll manifesto

2024 Lok Sabha poll manifesto.

Diverse & fluid | India by design does not mandate citizenship proof, and by extension has no single document as proof of citizenship. Instead, given the nation's plurality, caste networks and marriage ties, waves of refugee influx, pockets of intense poverty and patchy access to state institutions, New Delhi framed the citizenship law in terms of conditions met, not documentary evidence. An example of this fluidity is in voter rights, normally reserved for 'citizens', extended tot hose born in India to Tibetan refugee parents. A bunch of govt-issue IDs in various combinations can satisfy criteria to prove citizenship. Peopled borders | NRC in Assam showed the challenge it is for many to show they're Indian. Alleged 'immigrants' had legitimate documents, many locals never felt the need to have any. CAA in fact confused NRC in operation. Given India's layered multitudes away. CAA in fact confused NRC in operation. Given India's layered multitudes away. CAA in fact confused NRC in operation. Given India's layered multitudes the company of the company of the constructs — ask kith-kin-caste groups at the UP-Bihar-Bengal/Nepal border, villagers at Punjab/Pak border, communities in northeast-Myanmar and Bengal-Bangladesh border.

Proofs & polls | Amid drives to harden citizenship, it is its shadow, the grainy gray of 'illegal immigrants', the non-citizen, that crops up like clockwork ahead of every state election — Assamt o Diverse & fluid | India by design does not mandate citizenship



Proofs & polls | Amid drives to harden citizenship, it is its shadow, the grainy gray of 'illegai liminigrants', the non-citizen, that crops up like clockwork ahead of every state election – Assamto Bengal to Jharkhand to even Maharashtra – only to curl back post polls. This hardening is newly evident in Manipur. Delimitation in 2008 was put off in Manipur after it raised doubts over 2001 census data. The deferment lapsed in 2020. Now, Meitei groups want an NRC – after two years of conflict – before delimitation, which decides electoral representation. Citizenship serves political purposes that a single documentary proof can weaponise. It is one reason why techinterface Aadhaar went from being designed as proof of identity for welfare measures, to attempts to make it proof of citizenship, only to return as proof of identity. Nitish Rumar wouldn't allow lack of certain documents to disenfranchise the Bihari. There's no harm in rules that accept a multiplicity of documents.

## House That?

Home prices are rising steeply, even as unsold homes pile up. A strange & worrying disconnect

verage life expectancy in India was 71 years before the pandemic Long enough to be a grandparent, but not a homewowner in Mumbai, as TOI reported earlier this week. Even the top5%-financial outliers—would need 109 years' sawings to fund a 1,184sq-ft, 2-bedroom purchase in the financial capital. A Delhi home seems hardly "affordable" with a commitment of 35 years' savings. Point is, few can buy a house in India today. Yet, houses are being built at ever higher price points. In the Mumbai region, builders announced projects with over IL houses last fiscal, although more than 5L remain unsold. In Pune, 2.4L, houses are unsold, 1.1L in Hyderabad, 68,500 in Delhi-NCR. Housing must be the only industry where sellers aren't bothered by inventory. It's also the only one immune to the laws of demand and supply. Consider how prices in Hyderabad have jumped 43% in five years despite 177% growth in unsold inventory. Peculiarities of the Indian housing market don't end there. Houses are expensive not just by Indian price of a 4-bedroom Manhattan apartment is \$3.7mn or ₹32cr. Plenty of World apartments are now in that ballpark.

Housing is a primary need, so govt must figure out what is pushing prices beyond buyers' reach. Families stake their future to buy a house somehow, and their steep monthly commitments squeeze demand for other things—cars, refrigerators. TVs, etc. That 1,184sq-ft Mumbai apartment costs ₹3.5cr, on average. A 15-year loan of this size means an EMI of ₹3.6L. But an equivalent loan in US costs only ₹2.8L. per month. Costly homes, costlier loans—govt has its task cut out. verage life expectancy in India was 71 years before the



# Sound effect

Thanks to a scientific phenomenon, distance reduces the noise of the news

## Jug Suraiya



Distance is said to lend enchantment to the view, blurring the sight of warts and other eyesores. Distance also lends the sight of warts and other eyesores. Distance also lends the property of the property

ws, and some of the fury out of its sound. For this relief much thanks, Herr Doppler.

# ILD, WILD WEST ASIA

Is the region safer after the bombing of Iran's nuclear facilities? No. Because Palestine, Shia-Sunni tension on streets and distrust between Gulf Sheikhs & Ayatollahs won't go away anytime soon



In a matter of 12 days, several long-held red lines in West Asia were crossed—direct and intense military exchanges between Iran and Israel; the biggest US military assaulton Iran since the foundation of the Islamic Republic; and on Iranian nuclear facilities. However, revelooking hairy, Trump announced a

fire.

ut the big question is: Will the truce
? Is West Asia any safer after the latest
t of conflict? Here's the breakdown of
urrent regional dynamics.

Israeli-American bombardment, the Iranian regime is still intact. Plus, there are reports that Iran moved out much of its equipment from its key nuclear facilities before Israel and US struck them. This means Tehran could have managed to salvage key parts of its nuclear programme. Tehran is also deflant that it will continue to pursue its nuclear programme, which means Trump's demand of a complete halt to Iranian nuclear enrichment is a non-starter. Also, Iran's parliament has just agreed to suspend all cooperation with IAEA, which will make it harder to with IAEA, which will make it harder to

Regional tensions | The one thing that Israel's military operations since Oct 2023 have done is battered Iran's proxies in the region. Both Hamas and Hezbollah are nowhere near their previous strength. Houthis in Yemen too have taken a beating. Assad in Syria is gone. And Iran has been given a good jolt. So, for the time being Tehran's regional tentacles have been subdued. The Gulf Arab monarchies will be happy about this. After all, the growing Shia Crescent has been their main security concern for years.

However, none of them want to see the Iranian

regime collapse. For, that would mean Tehran will be forced to lash out region wide and once again open up sectarian fissures. This is a big security concern for Arab states with mixed sectarian demographics. Bahrain, for example, is a Sunni monarchy with a significant shia population, which is possibly susceptible to instigation. If too much pressure is put on Iran, hat is how things may go.

Plus, Iran will work to recover its weakened strategic space in the region. It will continue to support proxies like Hezbollah and Hamas to help them recoup their

There are two possibilities. First, since

There are two possibilities. First, since



perhaps. But the basic equations are set: Tehran v continue to seek strategic depth through prox while Arab states will look for security intervent by US and Israel as a counter. This makes regio uncertainty a surety.

Palestine—the mother conflict | Palestine remains at the heart of West Asia's tensions. Without resolving the Palestinian question, stability will remain elusive Sure, Arab states are increasingly flirting with the idea of a détente with Jareal à la Darbaham Accords But the Arab street is still emotionally attached to the Palestinian cause, no matter what position their govts take on the matter. In fact, the Arab govts' perceived distancing

beginner in such emaissine, it will allow regional players to make political-military moves around it.

Unpredictable Trump | At this point, US's exact plans for the region are a mystery. Trump says he wants a deal over Iran's nuclear programme. But Tehran and Washington were already talking before the conflict the region are a mystery. Trump says he wants a feed over Iran's nuclear programme. But Tehran and Washington were already talking before the conflict the region are a two possibilities. First, since the fall of the Assad regime in Syrial ast Decthanks in large part to Israel's relentless the fall of the Assad regime in Syrial ast Decthanks in large part to Israel's relentless the strategic ambit, attacking Iran and its proxies in the region serves dual purposes strategic ambit, attacking Iran and its proxies in the region serves dual purposes strategic and the thing and the strategic ambit, attacking Iran and its proxies in the region serves dual purposes and North Korea that has ecolesced around the Ukraine war. This particularly puts pressure on Moscow. And If Moscow and the Ukraine war. This particularly puts pressure on Moscow. And If Moscow and Puttin and Xi have resisted this, despite voicing support for Tehran.

The other possibility is that Trump and Puttin may have worked out something akin to the World War II Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact that Trump's efforts on the Ukraine war appear to be leading nowhere, he may have decided to de-prioritise that war and strengthen America's hand in West Asia. By this logic, Moscow could pain an upper hand in Eastern Europe, but will have to give up its strategic hold in West Asia. The war of the Strait of Hormuz and Hengam offshore oil field with Tehran.

Instability, therefore, is the name of the game in West Asia.

# Can India Defence Spend Its Way Out Of Slowdown?

It's not just Trump's Nato allies who are having to up the military spend. For India, such upping could counteract slowing growth. As long as the spending is domestic...and actual war doesn't hit us

### Somnath Mukherjee



India's economic slowdown is visible and now biting. Cyclical growth evilunders—elite consumption and govt capex—show fatigue. Earnings growth in Q4 of P12252 was flat for India Inc. White the Consumption and government of the Consumption of the Q4 of P12252 was flat for India Inc. At the same time, risks to global growth have gone per exponentially. RRI's recent MPC had a mix of upfronted policy rate cuts and greater liquidity injection via CRR cuts—unexpectedly deeper interventions than anything market participants expected. In part, RRI's hand was enabled by sold macro-stability fundamentals. But in a large part, such bazookas reflect an iaggling uneasiness about impending slowdown.

Structurally, IT services (the fundamental ballast for jobs, consumption and growth for the last 35 years) are slowing in terms of employment-intensity, as AI threatens swathes of IT jobs across the world. India remains in search of a next big idea.

An economically unsure world is also seeing a spike in geopolitical risks. The world's predominant power, US, is being reddiby challenged by a near peer power, China. As is usually the wont with incumbents, US is battening down its hatches, even as it reminds the world of its mighty arsenal with B2 bombers streaking into Iran undetected to take out nuclear facilities deep inside the earth.

But generally, in a massive pivot away from its post-W2 expansiveness in global engagement, it is seedingement.

But generally, in a massive pivot away from its post-WZ expansiveness in global engagement, it is seeking consolidation. Quid pro quos in economic engagement and a wholesale withdrawal of its security umbrellas in Europe and Asia are the key markers. In lockstep, conflicts are blowing up across the world. Russia-Ukraine, Israel Gazu/Iran, India-Pak, allaround China's land and sea borders – different grades of knife-fights are underwax.

world spent 82.72tn on defence in 2024, an increase of 9.4% over 2023, the steepest growth since the end of Cold War. Existing hi-spenders—US, China, Russia and India—were joined by Europe, which has embarked on the largest military recapitalisation programme since WW2. The latest is that under Trump's pressure, his Nato alless have agreed to raise their military spending WZ. The into the control of the cont

to5's of GIP '09 2000.
Worryingly for India, Annus Horribilis, the spectre of a two-front threat, with China and Pakistan acting in unison, is brutally real. A preview was seen in Op Sindoor, when Chinese satellite, planning and electronic warfare supported Pat milliary ope. Thanks to benign geopolitics of the "end of history" era. Indian policy-maintain defence expenient the property of the control of the c

but to accelerate minimary recognitions and an additional many to be all bad news. Ramping up defence expenditure, within macro-prudential boundaries, is likely a silver bullet-not only to deter counter political aggression but also kickstart a new cylinder of economic growth. Military spending as a facilitator of economic growth is a contested axiom (for moral reasons), but one with w strong empirical evidence. Post-Vers Germany transformed from a demoral bankrupt country to the leading powe Europe within a decade on the back of m "cambinary Ry the start of WWZ, Ger

Europe within a decade on the back of massive rebuild of its military. By the start of WW2, Germany's military machine was underwritten by probably the most dynamic economy in post Great Depression Europe. US truly broke out of its own Great Depression funk once it started supplying Allies in WW2 and then joined the war itself. Japan's spectacular economic rise in the early 20th century had a lot to do with a fast growing

military expenditure programme. first to support the war against Russia and then in preparation for WW2.

There are two conswats to the causality, One, it works. There are two conswats to the causality, One, it works. The constitution of the causality of the ca

and the sum of the sum

multipliers in India could be even in the property of the prop

## Calvin & Hobbes











## Sacredspace



When everyone is trying to be something, be nothing, Range with emptiness Human should

be like a pot. As the pot is hold by its emptiness inside, human is hold by the awareness of his nothingness.

Shams Tabrizi

# **Unabashedly Romancing The Monsoon**

The monsoon brings with it the promise of flirations and romance, restive imagination, poetry and misc, mustings and reflection. The caretive interests of the control of the control of the caretive interests of the control of the caretive interests of

read while listening to music, and generally let one's imagination run w with passion. And Kalidas provides the perfect atmospherics, as he narrates story of an exiled man pining for his bride, who is at home in the Himalay eight months pass, the lower emacliar finds his gold bracelet slip down his wrist onto the floor. He asks the cloud to carry his heartfelt message to his wife, saying: "Though thou be pieteged to ease my darling's pain.

Yet I foreseed-delay on

ere the peacock-train Cries forth with joyful tears a

Thy sacrifice is great, but haste thy rney still."

In religious traditions, Chaturus-between July and Oct, has special significance. Vishnu is said to rest for four months on his serpent bed in yog nidra on the milky ocean, for the cost nidra on the milky ocean, for the cos order to reboot itself. This is also believed to be when during samudra

manthan, churning of the ocean, Shiv swallowed and held the poison in his throat and came to be called Neelkanth, During Chaturnas many Hindu festivals are celebrated, including Janmashtami, Navratri and Deepavali.

Jain monks don't travel during Varsh Yog, the rainy season, to avoid hurting insects that may not be visible to the naked eye. The season is utilised for prayer and reflection, studying and discourse and they also observe the Paryushan festival.

My favourite account is that of Alexander Frater, who, in his Chasing the Monsoon, says. "As a romantic ideal, and the way is the study of the study of the colours, the moods, the scents, the subtle, mysterious light, the poetry, the heightende expectations, the kind of beauty that made your heart miss a best-well, that remained the monsoon."

## SHORT TAKES

## **ORBITAL PATH MAKES DOCKING** A TOUGH JOB

Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla and three other astro-nauts docked the Internati-onal Space Station (185) after travelling for over 28 hours in the orbit after the launch. Though the 185 is located earth, experts said the space-craft took 28 hours because of the complicated orbital mech-anics involved in rendezvous-ing with a fast-moving space station.

After launch, the space-craft

ing with a fast-moving space station.

After launch, the spacecraft entered an orbit, which is lower than the ISS. From the lower orbit, the spacecraft must execute a series of carefully-timed manoeuvres such as incremental altitude boosts and trajectory adjustments to and trajectory adjustments to another the interest of the ISS, which orbits Earth at about 28,000 km an hour. As the ISS completes one orbit roughly every 90 minutes, the spacecraft must "phase" its trajectory to synchronise with the station's location, which could be far from the launch site at the time of littorf. This process requires the spacecraft to requires the spacecraft to gradually adjusting its flight requires the spacecraft to orbit Earth at least twice, gradually adjusting its flight path and speed to achieve a safe and accurate docking

safe and accurate docking with ISS.

If the spacecraft doesn't align its speed and path, it cannot dock with the space station properly or end up damaging itself and the ISS.

## COSMONAUTS OF **OLD TIME ARE NOW ASTRONAUTS**

time India, Poland, or Hungary sent people to space, their current crop of astronauts had not yet been born—and back then, they were called cosmonauts, as they all flew on Soviet missions before the fall of the Iron Curtain. Shukla is the first Indian to reach space since Rakesh Sharma, who flew to the of an Indo-Soviet mission part of an Indo-Soviet mission part.

Sayut 7 station in lives as part of an Indo-Soviet mission. India's space agency, ISRO. India's space agency and a space agency and a special space and a space an

# **RISING INDIA TAKES BIG LE**A

**FOR GAGANYAAN** 

SECOND INDIAN CITIZEN ENTERS **ORBIT AFTER 41 YEARS** 

In a monumental moment for human spaceflight, Nasa, in collaboration with Axiom Space and SpaceX, successfully facilitated the docking

SpaceX, successfully facilitated the docking of the Axiom Mission 4 with the International Space Station (4.15 pm IST.

The crew, which includes India's Group Captain Subhanshu Shukla, Poland's Slawosz Wojnarski. Wisniewski, Hungary's Tibor Kapu, and mission commander Peggy Whitson, reached the ISS after a 28-hour Journey aboard SpaceX's Dragon space—
The mission lifted off from Nasa's Kennedy Space Center in Florida at 1

criati.

The mission lifted off from Nasa's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida at L201 pm 15t on Wed-Space Centre in Florida at L201 pm 15t on Wed-Space Centre in Florida at L201 pm 15t on Wed-Space Centre in Flacon 9 rocket.

Docking began Thursday afternoon and was executed as scheduled. The Dragon capsule attached to the Harmony module of the ISS on the Space Centre in Space Cent

technological experi-ments. I mission is particular the majoritant for India as it would give Shukla a hands-on experience in operating the spacecraft. Shukla is the commander-in-waiting of Gaganyaan-1, which is expected to be launched in December 2027, and would play a crucial role would play a crucial role space and the space and the

in India's space ambi-tions.
Shukla is the first Indian astronaut to dock at the International Space Station (ISS) over 40 years after Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma travelled to the Soviet Union's Salyut space station.

Apart from Rakesh Sharma, there were at least four persons with Indian roots, who reached the Earth's orbit or sub-orbit.

the Earth's orbit or subtribit.

Three of them are persons of Indian origin,
such as Kalpana
Chawla (1997 and
2000) and Sunita
Willia ms
(2006, 2012,
2024), and
Gopi-chand
Thotakura
(2024), who
inspired many more
Indians to take up space
for their study.

**Mission Glory** 

SURHANSHU 0 SHUKLA becomes first Indian on ISS. 28-hour SMOOTH DOCKING via soft and hard capture at Harmony Port.

AXIOM SPACE broadcasted docking live.

PEGGY WHITSON leads the mission; Subhanshu piloted

NO TECHNICAL issues; thrusters worked fine.

Crew to stay

14 DAYS

LAUNCHED FROM KENNEDY SPACE CENTER AT 12:01 PM IST WEDNESDAY.

Mission Axiom-4 includes astronauts from India, USA, Poland, Hungary.

HISTORIC ENTRY INTO SPACE

Shukia with his fellow astronaut reacts after their Space-X Dragon spacecraft docked to the International Space Station. — PTI

Space Journey Spent 30 days in quarantine before launch.

DESCRIBES the ride as "amazing" and surreal.

Peggy Whitson,

SAYS he's been sleeping a lot since launch. CHALLENGE WITH FELLOW CREW





Ax-4's

zero-gravity indicator. FIRST swan used in space missions. FLOATS to signal

cultures

microgravity in orbit. SYMBOLISES



REPRESENTS shared values and collaboration. CALLED the "emotional heartbeat" of Ax-4.



LEARNING like a baby, enjoying this experience' - ASTRONAUT

## Ax-4 faces hurdles before success

Washington: After a series of delays due to weather and technical issues, Axiom Mission 4 (cessfully a board pacex's fifth and final Crew Dragon spacecraft, now officially named Grace', on June 24.

The mission marks a major milestone in printernational scientific collaboration. Originally targeted for late May, the launch was rescheduled multiple times — first to early June, and then postudio oxygen leak in the Falcon's booster. Just as the issue was being addressed, Nasa paused the countdown again. Though the repairs initially seemed repairs initially seemed to ensure no leak remained in a nearby hatch seal.

The space agency approved the mission for launch on June 23, tion of the hatch issue was not publicly disclosed.

This mission is particularly significant as it carries the most scientific experiments ever conducted on an Atom in the space agency approved the mission for launch on June 23, tion of the hatch issue was not publicly disclosed.

This mission is particularly significant as it carries the most scientific experiments ever conducted on an Atom in the space agency approved the mission for launch on June 23. The research at the ISS will span life sciences, technology demonstrations, and educational outreach.

technology demonstrations, and educational outreach.

Among the standout collaborations is a joint law of the collaboration is a joint law of the collaboration in the collaboration of the collabor

# Earth belongs to everyone: Rakesh

New Delhi, Jun 26: Ast-ronaut Rakesh Sharma

New Delhi, Jun 28: Astronaut Rakesh Sharma, the first Indian to journey into space in 1984, said space travel alters the mindset of humans and makes them see the world from a perspective that "this planet belongs to sole preserve of anyone. He shared his thoughts in a recorded podcast shared by the Ministry of Defence on the day India returned to space after 41 years, as Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla from India and three



landmark space odyssey on Wednesday. Sharma had spent eight days in Soviet Union's Salyut-7 space station in 1984. Shukia scripted history by embarking on space travet, along with three others from the US, Poland and Hungary, to the Interest of the Soviet of the Indo-Soviet spaceflight in 1984, "he said.

# 'Joy' inside 'Dragon' wins hearts with Ax-4 members

New Delhi, June 28: A plush swan named 'Joy' is winning hearts aboard the Axiom Mission 4 spacecraft, not just as a zero-gravity indicator, but as a powerful symbol of unity.

Chosen by the international Ax-4 crew, 'Joy' floats freely inside the Dragon spacecraft to signal the moment the vehicle enters orbit - a charming yet functional tradition carried on in space missions.

As the plush swan began to drift in microgravity, it marked the official entry of the spacecraft into zero gravity.

FOR GROUP Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, the first Indian to reach the ISS, the swan connects deeply with his roots.

But "Joy" carries more than just visual purpose-it represents the cultural harmony of the Ax-4 team, which includes astronauts from India, stronauts from India, Hungary, and the ISAA. For Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, the first Indian to reach the International Space Station, the swan connects deeply with his roots.

In Indian tradition, the swan is associated with Goddess Sarawatt, the deity of visidom, learning of visidom, lear

INSPIRING | JOURNEY | Shukla's humble beginnings, his journey and achievements are model for youth to emulate

A simple, shy, perseverant boy who reached stars space in a gap of 41 y after veteran Rakesh Sharma's journe INDIA LEAPT again into

HYOGRABAD, JUNE 26
Simplicity and dedicated efforts to reach his dreams with a perseverant mind were the specialty of Shubhanshu Shukla from his younger days, recalls his classmate and friend from the 108th batch of the National Defence Academy (KDA), L. E. Ol. Hemand Raj McGhal, L. Gol. Hemand Raj as simple student, who was never competitive for a first rank but believed in consistency and discipline to reach his goals. "Shubhanshu was my classmate at the NDA in our faces where the same statement of the same statement of

108th batch when I joined in 2002. He was one of the calmest cadets in the batch, which is normally rare among those pursuing a career in the defence. Shubhanshu's name was not among the high achievers of any section during our time at the academy our time at the academy out the action during to the control of the contr

41 years after veteran Rakesh Sharma's journey, through the 39-year-old Shukla. Soon after his mili-tary training, he joined the



Indian Air Force as a flying officer in the fighter stream. "Shubhanshu is proof that it's not the marks or certifi-cates that we gain during

academic period that has kept the Tricolour close us in the future, but a to his heart at the start of plined lifestyle and his historic journey into moded to the roots. He becoming a military officer

the 39-year-old Shukla.

for the country, he has made all Indians prout dody, I am sure the disciplined training at the NiDA has helped in moulding the fighter he is today," says I. Col Hemand.

Showing the photographs from the training period at from the training period at mount of the country in his boat Shubhanshu, but the whole batch. We love him and are very proud of his achievements as one of us. I hope he will bring more laurels to the country in his next missions as well," added the officer. ıkla with his batchmates at the National Defence Academy during their training period in 2002. — BY ARRANGEMENT

Sharma's journey, through the 39-year-old Shukla.

## Editorial



## Strategic misfire

Israel must be reined in for peace and stability in West Asia

he 12-day war between Iran and Israel he 12-day war between Iran and Israel ended with a tense ceasefire. Israel claims that it has set back Iran's nuclear programme by years in a "historic victory". But the reality appears to be more complex. Iran has suffered enormous damage – its key nuclear facilities were attacked, much of its top chain command was eliminated, and its air defences proved virtually ineffective. More than 600 people mostly civillans, were killed. It will take years, if not decades, for Iran to rebuild what it has lost, Yet, victories and defeats in wars are not measured by material losses alone. Despite the losses and a clear power imbalance, Tehran has refused to capitulate. Its government recovered swiftly

Yet, victories and deteats in wars are not measured by material losses alone. Despite the losses and a clear power imbalance, Tehran has refused to capitulate. Its government recovered swiftly from the initial shock of June 13, and its sustained retaliatory campaign of ballistic missile and drone attacks exposed vulnerabilities in Israel's vaunted multilayered air defence system; there were deaths. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who claimed early that his campaign could lead to regime change in Iran, was eventually forced to accept a ceasefire, after the U.S. struck Iran's nuclear plants. U.S. President Donald Trump, who had demanded Tehran's "unconditional surrender", announced de-escalation after Iran carried out a symbolic strike on American bases in Qatar and Iraq on Monday night.

The war could have far-reaching implications for the regional order. Iran has reasserted itself as a counterbalance to Israel in an otherwise unipolar West Asia. Tehran is likely to rebuild its conventional arsenal, bolster relationships with Russia and China and reset ties in the region. On the other side, Israel's over-reliance on the U.S. was again laid bare when faced with major conventional asserticipating in the defence of Israel by intercepting Iranian projectiles, joined in, giving Tel Aviv an exit strategy. But the U.S., which has burnt its fingers in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, did not want to get entangled in another forever war. This left Mr. Netanyahu with no other option but to accept a ceasefire with the regime he wanted to overthrow. U.S. intelligence agencies assess that the Iranian nuclear programme has been set back by only a few months. In effect, the war failed to deliver its objective and has brought the discussion of the control of the c back by only a few months. In effect, the war failed to deliver its objective and has brought the situation full circle: the urgent need for a diplo-matic solution. For diplomacy to succeed, the U.S. must engage in serious talks with credible promises of economic benefits for Iran in return for accepting long-term, verifiable limits on its nuclear programme. Second, Washington must rein in Israel. As long as its closest ally continues to bomb its enemies with impunity, order and stability will remain out of reach for West Asia.

## Vaccinating India

The prevalence of zero-dose children remains high among the poor

remains high among the poor

and the bright side, vaccine coverage globally, between 1980 and 2023, doubled for six diseases including measles, polio and tuberculosis. Also, at 75% globally, there has been a sharp fall in the number of zero-dose children—those who have not received the first dose of the diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (OTP) vaccine—during the same time period. The number of zero-dose children is a crucial performance marker and an indicator of vaccination coverage over the decades, in 2023, at 1.44 million, India, according to The Lancet, still had the second largest number of zero-dose children, and is among the eight countries with over 50% of the nearly 16 million zero-dose children globally. Most of the zero-dose children globally. Most of the zero-dose children globally. Most of the zero-dose children globally. ed resources for vaccination programmes – India has neither of the two problems. However, about 23 million babies were born in 2023 in India, the highest in the world; in 2024, China, which has

23 million babies were born in 2023 in India, the highest in the world, in 2024, china, which has the second highest number of newborns globally, reported just 9.5 million newborns. Though the number of zero-dose children is staggering, when seen in the context of the number of newborns in 2023, the percentage of zero-dose children in India is 6.2%. A study in 2021 found that India had sharply reduced the percentage of zero-dose children, from 33.4% in 1992 to 10.1% in 2016. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of zero-dose children mas 1.4 million in 2021 and then dropped to 1.1 million in 2022 before increasing to 1.44 million in 2023. As in the 2021 study, a large percentage of zero-dose children are in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat. There is also a relatively high proportion of them in Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Over the years, the difference in zero-dose children based on gender, caste, and rural-urban status has reduced substantially. However, prevalence remains high among the poor, mothers with low education, Scheduled Tribes and Muslims. Focus is needed to immunise children in hard-to-reach tribal areas, urban slums where there is a huge migrant population, and in reducing vaccine hestancy among Muslim households with newborn children. India has much work to do to meet WHO'S Immunization Agenda 2030 (Ja2030) – halving zero-dose children relative to 2019. With the number of zero-dose children in 2023 (Ja4 million) only about nearly reaching the 2019 level of 101 nol 101 nil nil na needs greater and sustained ef lion) only about nearly reaching the 2019 level of 1.4 million, India needs greater and sustained ef-forts to halve this number in the next five years.

# The Israel-Iran ceasefire — managing the blowback

he cessation of Israel-Iran hostilities, announced by United States President Donald Trump, sets the stage for the donouement of the horror drama that began on October 7, 2023, with Hamas launching its Operation Toofan al-Aqsa. While the fog of war and rounds of one-upmanship make the immediate foreground inexact, unless the choreographers take due care, the finale is choreographers take due care, the finale is certain to be as disruptive as the main act has

Over the past 21 months, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), backed by the U.S., has scored a set of spectacular though pyrrhic military victories. In Gaza, the IDF has decimated Hamas, even as some Israeli hostages remain in Hamas captivity. Lebanon's Hezbollah, considered the world's most formidable non-state actor with an estimated 1,00,000 missiles, has been neutered most formidable non-state actor with an estimated J.O.O.OO missiles, has been neutered with its leadership in disarray and its arsenal gone. Syria's al-Assad regime, Israel's rejectionist foe for 54 years, has been replaced by a weak Islamist government that poses no threat to Israel. Yemen's al-Houthis did manage to disrupt maritime traffic and lob missiles at Israel, but have been cowed down by the disproportionate IDF and U.S. military responses. Lastly, after 12 days of high-intensity acrial exchanges, Israel and the US claimed to have "obliterated" the nuclear option that Iran doggedly pursued for over two decades. Tehran has also suffered strategic losses of its missile force and has had targeted assassinations of its top military personnel and nuclear scientists. While single-mindedly pursuing its military options, Israel's ultra-right government has ridden roughshod over the domestic opposition and brushed aside foreign criticism and attempts at the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice to put it on a legal mat.

The course for Iran

The course for Iran 'Where does West Asia go from here?' It is a difficult question to answer for several reasons. The situation, to quote Churchill, "is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma..." The dramatic and unprecedented turn of events notwithstanding, the resultant geopolitical entropy would unfold only glacially. With the ain stakeholders all claiming victories and jostling for influence over the outcome, controlling the blowback and avoiding revanchism would be a challenge. The putative military victors, namely Israel and the U.S., would aim for a permanently favourable geopolitical architecture, while the countervailing forces, including Iran, try to turn their military stalemate

including fran, try to turn their military statemat into a political victory. Setting the future course of Iran would be the biggest challenge for two reasons: First, as the most populous country in the region, it is intrinsically important. Second, as Israel's most implacable foe, it has been the region's biggest disruptor and political determinant. Despite its



specialising in West Asia and oil affairs

economy hobbled by "maximum pressure" sanctions and a devastating war, Tehran remains a regional geo-strategic pivot. While the victors may have publicly avowed their disinterest in regime change in Tehran, an unrepentant Mullah regime would signify their "unfinished agenda". The necessity of keeping Tehran in check on its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) ambitions by continued sanctions and strict and intrusive supervision by international inspections would proccupy the U.S., Israel and the pro-West regimes in this region. This would create an unsteady political dynamic similar to Iraq during 1991-2003 after Saddam's forces were evicted from Kuwait. Further, Tehran may Iraq during 1991-2003 after Sadoam's force evicted from Kuwait, Further, Tehran may become a countervailing pole to the Pax Americana in the region – a prospect anathematic to "the winner takes it all" absolutists in power in Washington and legardom.

On the other hand, having a West-leanin On the other hand, having a West-leaning regime in Tehran would be a profound gain. It would create a comprehensive Pax Americana in West Asia, allowing the U.S. to control the strategic region's hydrocarbon resources. Moreover, the huge pent-up Iranian demand for projects, merchandise and services can then be cornered by the American multinationals. Lastly, a friendly government would put a firm lid on the regional proxies created by Iran in the past.

The goal of a friendly regime
Therefore, installing a friendly regime in Tehran
is of primordial importance for Israel and the U.S.
But this mission presents a huge dilemma.
Although large sections of its population are
politically alienated due to corruption and the
high-handedness of authorities, as well as high
inflation, they would stand up against any foreign
occupation and imposed government. So,
boots-on-ground to effect a regime change would
be counterproductive and can be ruled out.
Moreover, attempts by the U.S. in the past at
forced regime changes in Afghanistan and Iraq
were costly and messy failures.
Iran is a large country with a deeply

Iran is a large country with a deeply entrenched current government structure. Though some exiled Iranian groups, such as Pahlavi Royalists and Mujahedin al-Khalq exist, their local support is highly uncertain, making a externally sponsored takeover unlikely. There is also a danger that destabilisation of the current regime could unleash centrifugal forces among various ethnic minorities such as Kurds, Azeris Arabs and Sunnis, who constitute nearly 40% of the population. This would create a Libya, Sudan and Somalia type of anarchy, which is in no one's

Hence, the best possible scenario for the Hence, the best possible scenario for the Americans is to glacially reorient the current regime. This would be a challenge as the radicals supported by the Republic Guards currently control the parliament and clergy, with the Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, favouring them.

incentivising them to hedge against U.S. actions. Consequently, U.S. allies had reasons to invest in alternatives to the U.S. ecosystem, pursuing their own strategic autonomy and technological

Therefore, pressure to being applied to get the 86-year-old Khamenei, at the helm for 36 years, to either discreetly abandon WMD ambitions or relinquish power and be replaced by a pro-West moderate. While the hardliners in power may resist a change at the top at this critical juncture, their policies have not worked.

The two front-runners in the contest – to be decided by the Guardian Council – are likely to be the Supreme Leader's son, Mojtaba Khamenei and the grandson Hassan Khomeini of Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic. They are both in their fifties. While Khamenei junior has continuity of lineage and policies, Hassan Khomeini is bereft of any such baggage. As the only transition at the Supreme Leader level was 35 years ago, this is largely uncharted territory, but with serious implications for the country and the region.

### The Gaza situation

The Gaza situation
The second issue awaiting resolution is the Israel-Palestine dispute, which the recent events have made even more convoluted. The just concluded war with Iran would allow the IDF to refocus on the Gaza situation, where mass starvation competes with the high death toll orivilians every day due to Israeli fire. It is a desperate situation. The occupied West Bank is desperate situation. The occupied West Bank is facing a deteriorating situation due to Jewish settlers on the rampage and the long-suspended transition of the Palestine Authority under President Mohammed Abbas, who is close to 90. A post-conflict euphoria may allow Mr. Trump to refloat his bizarre idea of mass deportation of Gazans to build an "international riviera." While the war-numbed Gazans are desperate for survival, it is still difficult to see this as a part of the solution.

The end of the war would finally allow Israeli

resolution. The end of the war would finally allow Israeli The end of the war would maily allow israeli society greater normaley, permitting an objective and rational analysis of its recent extraordinary experiences. The clamour for the early release of remaining hostages is likely to intensity, and the governance and intelligence failings of the current regime may come under harsh spotlight. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's suspended trial to constitute a benefit may a market. on corruption charges may resume. The economic and social costs of the war may haunt Israel for a long time, giving it a reality check. Israel's post-war recovery and political reset towards moderation would be pivotal for the

expansion of the Abraham Accords.

After this apocalyptic conflict, the West Asian region yearns for peace and stability. If the three main actors, viz., Iran, Israel and the U.S. avoid triumphalism and transit instead to moderation and nation-building, this aspiration can be realised. The region and the world would benefit from lower oil prices, smoother logistics and reduced radicalisation and terrorism. Otherwise, reduced radicalisation and terrorism. Otherwist the region would go back to business as usual: cyclicity of the conflicts punctuated by an interregnum of tense peace.

# Fathoming America's plan to manage AI proliferation

he announcement by the United States of the rescission of its Framework for AI Diffusion, a set of export controls for Artificial Intelligence (A) bethonlogy announced earlier this year, has been viewed as a good thing. The Framework was considered counterproductive to AI technology development and diplomatic relations. However, recent developments suggest that controls on AI are likely to persist, albeit in different forms.

A flawed blueprint
Earlier this year, during the final week of its
tenure, the Joe Biden administration announced
the Al Diffusion Framework. Combining export
controls and export licences for Al chips and
model weights, it effectively viewed Al like
nuclear weapons. Under the proposed
framework, countries such as China and Russia
were embryoned trusted allies were favoured. were embargoed, trusted allies were favoured, and others restricted in their access to advanced and others restricted in their access to advanced At technology. The rationale for these rules was that computational power dictates At capabilities, the greater the compute, the better the Al. In the last decade, the compute used in advanced AI models has nearly doubled every 10 months. Following this logic, for the U.S. to preserve its lead, it needed to prevent adversaries from acquiring powerful compute while ensuring that AI development stays within the U.S. and its close allies.

Alles.

While export controls on Al hardware predated the framework, they were not sweeping. The Framework aimed to tighten these controls and establish a predictable system to streamline regulatory processes and standardise conditions. However, imposing such sweeping restrictions, affecting adversaries and partners alike, brought many unintended effects, proving counterproductive.

The framework set a concerning precedent for echnology cooperation with the U.S., especially for its allies. It signalled U.S. willingness to dictate how other nations conducted their affairs,

## Rijesh Panicker

is a Fellow at the

Unless the choreographers Iran, Israel and

the U.S. take

care, the finale is certain to be

as disruptive as the main act

## **Bharath Reddy**

is an Associate Fellow at the Takshashila

## **Ashwin Prasad**

is a Research Analyst at the Takshashila

The rescission

of the Al Diffusion Framework appears to be more a change in tactics than a fundamental shift in strategy

awm strategic autonomy and technological sovereignty. Additionally, the framework would treat AI, a civilian technology with military applications, as if were a military technology with civilian uses. Unlike nuclear technology, AI innovation is inherently civilian in its origins and international in scope. Confining the development geographically within the U.S. could prove counterproductive.

Finally, the system created an enduring incentive for the global scientific ecosystem to develop pathways to circumvent the need for powerful compute to make powerful AI, thereby undermining the very lever that the U.S. sought to employ. China's DeepSeek RI exemplifies this. Years of export controls spurred algorithmic and architectural breakthroughs, enabling DeepSeek to rival the best AI models from the U.S. with a fraction of the compute. Such trends can make fraction of the compute. Such trends can make export controls on Al chips an ineffective policy instrument.

strument. It is for these reasons that the Trump It is for these reasons that the Trump administration revoked the AI Diffusion Framework. This is welcome news for India, which was not favourably placed under the framework. However, the underlying U.S. thinking and approach towards AI diffusion will likely persist, manifesting in other forms. The AI technology race is still on, and the U.S. intent to restrict Chinese access to AI chips still endures.

The possible replacement

Notwithstanding the rescinded Framework, the current U.S. administration has taken firm steps toward further preventing Chinese access to Al chips. For instance, in March 2025, the administration expanded the scope of the existing export controls and added several companies to its entity list (blacklist). It has also released several new guidelines to strengthen the

enforcement of these controls.

New provisions are reportedly under consideration, such as on-chip features to monitor and restrict the usage of Al chips. These could include rules at the hardware level limiting chip functionality or restricting certain use cases. Recently, U.S. lawmakers introduced new legislation mandating built-in location tracking for Al chips to prevent their illicit diversion into China, Russia and other countries of concern. In effect, these measures seek to enforce the goals of the Al diffusion framework technologically rather than through trade restrictions.

The related concerns
Such measures are problematic in their own way.
New concerns related to ownership, privacy and
surveillance will proliferate. While malicious surveillance will proliferate. While malicious actors might be sufficiently motivated to circumvent these controls, legitimate and beneficial use by others could be inadvertently discouraged. Such developments undermine user autonomy and lead to trust deficits, Just like the old framework, this will lead to concerns about losing strategic autonomy for any nation buying Al chips. Yet again, both adversaries and allies will feel compelled to hedge against their reliance on the U.S. Al ecosystem and invest in alternatives.

on the U.S. Al ecosystem and invest in alternatives. The rescission of the Al Diffusion Framework represents a notable policy reversal. Yet, it appears to be more a change in tactics than a fundamental shift in the U.S. strategy to manage Al proliferation. Should these technologically-driven control measures gain traction in U.S. policy discourse and be implemented, they risk replicating the negative consequences of the original Al Diffusion Framework. Ultimately, should this path be pursued, it would indicate that the crucial lessons from the Framework and its eventual withdrawal have not been fully assimilated, potentially jeopardising the very U.S. leadership in Al it ostensibly seeks to protect.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Conflict and aftermath
The Iran-Israel conflict has
virtually left the nuclear
non-proliferation treaty in
tatters. Meanwhile, a
well-scripted agenda of
genocide continues in Gaza.
It is another matter that the
likraine war — which U.S. raine war - which U.S. Preisident Trump had

famously promised to end in "24 hours" upon taking office — has been relegated to the background.

C.G. Kuriakose, Kothamangalam, Kerala

The direct involvement of the U.S. in the conflict is an indication that the U.S. is

## trying to reassert its supremacy through intimidation. Iran cannot be underestimated, as it too has friends. U.S. President Donald Trump should concentrate more on the state of America's economy. Govardhana Myneedu, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

# Software testing I wish to highlight a critical shift in software testing in the IT industry. As demand for efficient, scalable solutions grows, automation testing is becoming essential. The future of software quality

assurance lies in

automation, which offers faster, error-free testing, especially for tasks such as validating chatbots with numerous queries. Firms must invest in upskilling staff in automation tools and coding to drive productivity and innovation. By embracing this shift, businesses can improve testing efficiency and empower staff to meet the challenges of the tech

Vivek M. Jain, Chennai

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

CM CM

# At Bangkok event, a commitment to count every birth and death

in the region still do not have their births registered by their first birthday and every year, an approximate 6.9 million deaths go unrecorded

overnments across Asia and the Pacific, on Thursday, signed off on a landmark decision to ensure that all births are registered and all deaths are recorded by 2030, at the third Ministerial conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics for Asia and the Pacific, in Bangkok,

for Asia and the Pacific, in Bangkok, Thailand. This is expected to bring the vison of universal, inclusive and resilient CRVS systems a step closer to reality. The United Nations defines civil registration and vital statistics as the "continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events of the population in accordance with the law".

What are the vital events?
These vital events include births, deaths and marriages, divorces, besides causes of death. The focus of the nations is on registering births and deaths as a registering births and deaths as a fundamental aspect of a person's legal identity, and besides, grant access to a whole range of life-cycle benefits/functions for any one living in a benefits/functions for any one living in a society. Birth registration grants individuals formal legal recognition, enabling access to essential rights and services, including health services. Death certificates serve as legal proof of death, supporting families with matters such as inheritance, insurance and other administrative processes. In 2014, the United Nations' Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), launched the "CRVS Decade" to Get every one in the picture. The decadal progress was measured in a review that was then launched as a publication last week. In her preface to the publication, Armida Salsiah Alisjabhana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, wrote: "Importantly, civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems help protect populations in subscrable situations. society. Birth registration grants

systems help protect populations is vulnerable situations, as birth and marriage registration can serve as safeguards against child marriage trafficking and modern slavery by

safeguards against child marriage, trafficking and modern slawery by verifying age and identity."

Acknowledging legal identity in good governance and justice, is also target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Birth registration has an intergenerational impact, empowering registered mothers to secure legal identity and rights for their children, breaking cycles of invisibility and exclusion.

Earlier, speaking to presspersons, Ms. Alisjahbana said the ID card is the most important part of every one's wallet, and as such it goes beyond a mere document. There have been accelerated actions by many countries that have led to better registration rates in these nations, and the successes have come as a result of collaborative work in the region and learning from each other's work.

As a result, over the past decade, in the countries in the Asia Pacific region, the number of children under five who are

number of children under five who are unregistered had dropped from 135 million in 2012 to 51 million, a reduction of more than 60%. 29 countries currently have reported over 90% registration of births in a year, and 30 countries have achieved this for death registration. The quality of cause of death reporting has



also significantly improved, the ESCAP acknowledged

However, despite this progress, an estimated 14 million children across the region still do not have their births registered by their first birthday. Every year, an approximate 6.9 million deaths also go unrecorded.

### Extension of deadline

Extension of deadline Responding to a question on the future of the programme, Ms. Alisjahbana said: "We have been very fortunate in seeing significant progress, and political will and investments in this decade. They have paid off. But there is a lot of work to be done yet, and there is in place a very good momentum to accelerate operations and digitalisation to ensure registration. So the digitalisation to ensure registration. So the consensus among member nations is to extend it to 2030."

With the chosen decade complete, but 100% registration still not achieved, the Declaration has decided to extend the roadmap to 2030, the end of the decade, with people at the centre. It calls for inclusive and accessible service delivery, harnessing the power of digital transformation, strengthening legal foundations and building inter-operable data systems. The governments also provided commitments to ensuring gender equity in registration, safeguarding personal data and privacy.

Indian scenario
In India, the Registrar-General and
Census Commissioner is responsible for
civil registration as well as the production
of vital statistics. The Ministry of Health
supports the civil registration system
providing incentives for registration,
manpower and logistics support under
the National Health Mission. There is no
fee for birth registration within the
prescribed period of 21 days, although
fees for birth certificates may vary
according to State/local body.

according to State/local body. The Indian national CRVS coordination mechanism was established in August 2015, while a national CRVS strategy and a comprehensive assessment are still in 2015, White a hadvast comprehensive assessment are still in progress. In 2011, the Office of the Registrar-General identified challenges such as lack of awareness regarding the

Civil registration and vital statistics systems help protect populations in vulnerable situations, as birth and marriage registration can serve as safeguards against child marriage. trafficking and modern slavery by verifying age and identity

ARMIDA SALSIAH ALISJAHBANA

need and importance of registration, low priority accorded to the system of civil registration by the States, lack of coordination among the concerned departments and low level of reporting by

aepartments and low level of reporting registration units.

To tackle these issues, several initiatives were launched. Among these measures were developing a software application for online and offline registration of birth and death covering the entire gamut of the civil registration system: registration of events, generation of certificates, and generation of statistical of certificates, and generation of statistical tables and reports. In addition, a new project on data digitisation is being implemented, with the support of UNICEF, to keep old records in easy to retrieve digital form has started. This will help in storage of registers in electronic format and allow easy access to the records.

Digital transformation
Ms. Alisjahbana earlier acknowledged
this, in response to a question from The
Hindu, that India with its strength and
leadership in digital transformation has
helped a lot with rolling out a CRVS
system that can be implemented digital. system that can be implemented digitally. Tanja Sejersen, Statistician, ESCAP, who ranja sejersen, satasucan, eszer, who spoke to presspersons, along with Ms. Alishjahbana, said, the use of technology has been super helpful in certain countries in advancing the principle of registration, but in other countries, could be a stumbling block. There has been, since the launch of the decade of CRVS, a broader push for linking digital transformation. India's representative at the Ministerial conference, Nityanand Rai,

Minister of State, Ministry of Hom Affairs, said the country has embarked an citizen-centric activities that will make Affairs, said the country has embarked an citizen-centric activities that will make universal registration possible across the country. The registration of births and deaths is mandatory under the Registration of Births and Deaths (RBD) Act, 1969, and amendments to it, have made possible digital registration of births and deaths and the recognition of electronic documents that can be stored safely and securely in the Digilocker by all, obviating the need for presenting hard copies of documents.

In India, legal provisions now cover the registration of adopted, orphaned, abandoned, surrendered, and surrogate children, along with children of single parents or unmarried mothers. It has been made mandatory for medical institutions to provide cause of death certificates to the Registrar. He added that a new central CRVS portal had been launched too. As a result of these properties registeration of

a new central CRVS portal had been launched too. As a result of these proactive policies, the registration of births had increased from just over 86% at the beginning of the CRVS decade to over 96% in India, he said.

the beginning of the CRVS decade to over 96% in India, he said.

Children participants at the Ministerial conference made a strong pitch for ensuring registration for all children irrespective of the many variables that may make it difficult for their parents to register their births. "Bureaucracy shouldn't be the reason we remain invisible," they said.

As the conference wound to a conclusion, the nations' commitments seemed solid. If commitments count, then strident steps had already been made towards achieving universal registration in the Asia and Pacific region. The words of Stromi Turaga, Minister for Justice and Acting Attorney General, Fiji, during his address at the Ministerial event, must go home though, to every nation: "The progress of the decade was only possible because of shared commitment in the region. As we look beaut to 2007. I regulate uncape services on the strong and provided to 2007. I regulate uncape services are extended to 2007. I regulate uncape services are extended to 2007. I regulate uncape services are extended to 2007. I regulate uncape extended and the services are restricted. commitment in the region. As we look ahead to 2030...together we can ensure that every person in our region is seen heard and counted."

(This reporter was at Bangkok at the invitation of UN-ESCAP) (ramya.kannan@thehindu.co.in)



# Study finds link between night shifts and asthma in women

R. Sujatha

recent study has found a correlation between working night shifts and asthma, especially in

Maints and usumat, especially women.

The study, Increased risk of asthma in female night shift workers' published in ERI Open Research, based its findings on cross-sectional data from over 2,80,000 U.K. Biobank participants.

The study builds on previous research that had found a higher risk of moderate or severe asthma in night shift employees. Researchers found that 5.3% of the workers had asthma, with 1.9% suffering from moderate or severe asthma (taking an asthma-preventer inhaler and at least one other asthma treatment, such as an oral steroid).

The findings
Led by Robert Maidstone of the University of Manchester, U.K., the study found that women who worked night shifts were more prone to moderate to severe asthma. Women who only worked night shifts were found to be around 50% more likely to suffer from moderate or severe asthma compared to women who only worked in the daytime. Although it has been established that more adult women than men are prone to asthma the reason for this has been elusive.

The researchers believe the testosterone, the male sex hormone, has a

testosterone, the male sex hormone, has a protective effect that prevents asthma triggers in men, and suggested that post-menopausal women could opt for hormone replacement therapy as it appears to have a protective effect. R. Sridharan, a Chennai-based

R. Sridharan, a Chennai-based specialist in treating allergies, concurs with the findings of the study. He explains that our body is regulated by the circadian rhythm (the internal clock managing the sleep-wake process). When a person's circadian rhythm changes as in the case of those working night shifts, they end up suffering from a number of health issues which could include acid reflux, gastro-esosphageal reflux disease (GERD), obesity, obstructive sleep apnoea, besides hormonal changes. This can have number of effects including increasing the chances of getting asthma, Dr. Sridharan said.

number of effects including increasing the chances of getting asthma, Dr. Sridharan said.

While asthma can be triggered by allergies and pollution, obesity too, is linked with an increased risk of developing for asthma according to the United States National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. "Obesity is common due to loss of normal sleep patterns," said Dr. Sridharan, adding: "What I am seeing is night duty people have more asthma and less controlled asthma and are prone for many asthma triggers," he adds.

Pulmonologist M. Koushik Muthu Raja said he had treated a few persons who work night shifts and presented with severe asthma. "We have not understood the correlation in India because we don't have that many cases presented to our clinic so far," he says.

"We need to wait for larger studies from India in order to establish such a link. We need in-depth, robust randomised studies to find a direct correlation between asthma and night shifts," he says.

According to the World Health Organization, asthma cannot be cured but there are several treatments available. Inhalers can help control the disease and

there are several treatments available.
Inhalers can help control the disease and enable people with asthma to enjoy a normal, active life, it says.
(sujatha.r@thehindu.co.in)



For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to science@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Daily page'

## THE SCIENCE QUIZ

## Here is a quiz on migraines and headaches

## Athira Elssa Johnson

## QUESTION 1

migraine and a tension headache?

## QUESTION 2

on trigger that can lead to migraine attacks

## **QUESTION 3**

in the 1990s colutionised the treatn nigraines by specifically targeting erotonin receptors

ligraines can sometimes occur vithout any head pain. True or False ?

QUESTION 5





Can strong smells like perfumes or cleaning products trigger migraines

n some people? QUESTION 7

What is photophobia, a symptom often seen during migraines? **QUESTION 8** 

## QUESTION 9



British physician studied the brain and was one of the first to say that migraines come from the brain and not the stomach, as people used to think. Who is he? WIKIMEDIA

## Questions and Answers to the previous edition's daily quiz: question: This 17th-century

1. Allergies are caused by an overreact une system to substances that are usually harmless. Ans: true 2. The hormone

Please send in your an

\_\_\_\_ is used as emergency treatment for anaphylaxis. Ans: Epinephrine 3. Which responses? Ans: Immunoglobulin E (IgE) 4. What type of medication is commonly used to relieve mild allergy? Ans: Antihistamines 5.

Name one common environmental allergen.

Ans: pollen, dust mites 6. Which is a symptom of allergic rhinitis? Ans: Runny nose 7. What is the severe symptom of allergy 7 Ans: anaphyasis 8. Can allergies be cured permanently? Ans: No 9. What does "Hypoallergenic products" mean 7 Ans: Products designed to minimiser risk 10. Name any three allergy tests. Ans: skin prick tests, intradermal tests, and patch tests Visual: Who introduced the term "allergy" in 1906. Ans: Clemens von Pirquet

:::

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Friday, June 27, 2025 CHENNAI

THE HINDU

# **Opinion**

# Is voter registration being subject to fraud?



partial programment of the company o

Assembly elections extensively. What are your major concerns?

Pravener Chalkravarty; The main issue that the Congress and the Leader of the Opposition, Bahul Candhi, have raised about the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly elections is that three was an abnormal, sudden, and almost electron; It was a statistical outlier, and only the clectors, It was a statistical outlier, and only the clectors, It was a statistical outlier, and only the clectors is the clear of t



their oxete during the 2024 Habitanthia Assembly elections, concerned, I agree that there may be some issues. But to any that the entire vote registration process could be fudged and could be manipulated to a large extent is streetching it a beautiful and the manipulated to a large extent is streetching it as about this sudden spurt after the Lok Sabba elections and before the Assembly electricians in 2024. They found that during 2004, there were about this sudden spurt after the Lok Sabba elections and before added may perfor of free 2024. They found that during 2004, there were 2024 had they seem added in a period of the 2024 he was seen and an extended that they are such as the sudden and October, 27 labb wores were added. In 2014, between April and October, 27 labb wores were added. Between April and November 2024, 40 labb vores were added. The sudden and the sudden spuriod to the sudden sudden spuriod to the sudden spuriod to the sudden sudden spuriod to the sudden spuriod to the sudden spuriod to the sudden su



To clean up the electoral rolls of wrongful nelusions and exclusions and ensure utm correctness, a detailed physical exercise st is the one planned by the ECI for Bihar is equired

RR: First, to give due credit to The Hindu data team's article does mention these in that Mr. Chakravarry talked about. Howe agree that if there is indeed an anomaly, t

failure of a party's organisational wing to cross-check, and file appeals cannot abso constitutional authority of their responsil

Mr. Chakravarty, you have been asking for electoral rolls to be given in machine-readable format for both the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls. You have also been demanding CCTV footage after 5 p.m claiming that there is a surge in voter turn after that. Could you explain these demand

after that, Could you explain these demands?

PC: We are asking for it to be in digital or
machine readable format because they (ECI) can
give you these scanned images or papers and
up to these scanned images or papers and
we have shown using the ECI's summary
and we have shown using the ECI's summary
data—that there is an abnormal surpe. We also
know that there was some abnormal increase in
ording happened after 5 pan. Now, is to re is it
to
preserve the trust and confidence of the
institution by coming out and styping here is the
footage? Every time we raise a question, BJP
leaders are the ones responding. We never asked
the BJP to respond. We're only asking the ECI.

The ECI has said that beginning with the Bihar Assembly elections later this year, there will be a SIR of electoral rolls acros country. What do you think about this?

PC: This is a tacit admission by the ECI that all not well with the electoral rolls. Also, is this this right way to clean up the rolls? This is a good, going back and saying we are almost rendering the last 20 years of voter roll revisions defunct and we're just going to start afresh.

and we're just gauge to start affects. BER To deaun put be electroal rolls of wrongful inclusions and exclusions and ensure utmost correctness, a detailed physical exercise such as the one planned by the EXI for Blark is required, and the control of the EXI for Blark is required in manipulation and biss in flower of the rulling party. To overcome such accusations, it must be one in a fair and transparent manner by giving wide publicity to the public at large. With it is all political parties are very important stakeholders in this exercise, representing the citizense. The such as a superior of the public at large citizense in this exercise as much as possible to ensure a robust exercise as much as possible to ensure a robust exercise as



NOTEBOOK

## Power, perception, precision: notes from covering a plane crash

As national and international reporters landed in Ahmedabad to cover the plane crash, volunteers swung into action

Abhinav Deshpande

Some assignments outlast desdilines. The recent Alr India crash is one such incident. It will remain existed in my memory not only because pares anyone to see an accident site of his many princip families – but for other reasons as well. As a suppose to see an accident site of milles – but for other reasons as well. As India flight bound for London crashed into a medical coilege shortly after indee in flight bound for London crashed into a medical coilege shortly after indee in flight bound for London crashed into a medical coilege shortly after indee in the longer of the control of the longer of the lon

initi-inerviers. Our phones are our federace initi-inerviers. Our phones are our federace.

I went to the accident site prepared, with a lay full of devices. Yet during the long bours at the crash site and at Almei-abade Cell inepuls, where bodies were abade. The standard Cell inepuls, where bodies were always, didn't use my power bask.

This warn't because there wasn't soon, but phone battery desinded in syne with my energy reserve. Yet somebow, I managed. This is because help came into both the control of the came in the came

There were people everywhere offering help in different ways. Volunteers from various Hindu organisations, in-from various Hindu organisations, in-from various Hindu organisations, in-from various Hindu organisations, in-from the control of the c

## PICTURE OF THE WEEK

A busy monsoon night



FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 27, 1975

### President proclaims national Emergency

New Delhi, June 26: A national Emergency was proclaimed to-day in the face of what the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, described in a broadcast to the nation as a "deep and widespread conspiracy" that had been brewing for a long time, leading to violence and disruption of normal life.

FROM THE ARCHIVES The Man Findu.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 27, 1925

## Anglo-Indians' grievances

Bombay, June 26: Lt. Col H.A.J. Gidney, leader of the Anglo-Indian deputation, which is proceeding to England to morrow, addressed a well-attended meeting of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled Community of Bombay, this evening, at the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Falls, when he explained the grievances of the community and the objects of the deputation.

CHENNAI • www.thehindu.com • Friday, June 27, 2025

THEMORHINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

registration

Number of donkeys annually slaughtered for Chinese medicine

unrecognised parties to be delisted by EC

Number of registered

4-5 months in Delhi 1,100 More than a thousand p

Percentage drop in Amarnath Yatra

Arrests in drug-related

offences in the last

Mule

by cyl

# Nato's new targets

Higher spending pledge masks discrepancies

American President Donald Trump's claims of securing a "monumental win" at the annual North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Nato) summit, which concluded at The Hague on June 25, marks a significant shift from his combative stance during his first term. The broad agreement by members to spend 5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) annually on defence by 2025 addresses the American President's contention — insistently raised in his first term (2017-21) — that the United States Contention — instancemy tassed in its instruction (US) was doing the heavy lifting in the alliance. This pledge and the overflattery adroitly heaped on Mr Trump by Nato General Secretary Mark Rutte, who chaired the meeting for the first time, appear to have done the trick. In contrast to his threat to quit Nato during his first term, Mr Trump reaffirmed America's pledge to uphold Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, the all-important commitment to collective Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, the all-important commitment to collective defence. Given that US defence expenditure accounts for approximately two-thirds of defence spending of the alliance as a whole, Mr Trump's buy-in was critical for the future of Nato in the face of Russia's expansionary threats in central Europe.

Though Wednesday's agreement marks a substantial increase over the current goal of 2 per cent, which was approved at the Nato summit in Wales in 2014, the

goai of 2 per cent, which was approved at the Nato summit in wates in 2014, the method of measuring this expenditure offers a slightly alterdereality. Target spending on "core defence requirements" — that is, troops and weapons that are covered under the old 2 per cent target — has been increased to 3.5 per cent by 2035. To meet the US President's demands for a 5 per cent target, Nato has committed itself to spending a further 1.5 per cent of GDP on security-related investment — such as adapting critical infrastructure (roads, bridges, and ports) for military use, cyber security, and protecting energy pipelines. Importantly, the European Union will allow members to raise defence spending by 1.5 per cent of GDP each year for the next four years without invoking the disciplinary steps against deficits crossing 3 percent of GDP.

Even these differentiated targets, however, would require major spending increases within Nato. Collectively, the alliance spent 26 per cent, or about \$1.3 trillion, of GDP on troops and weapons but this big number masks considerable spending disparities among individual members. For instance, Poland (4,12 per cent), Estonia (3.43), and Latvia (3.15), countries on the Russian frontline, are among the three largest spenders as a proportion of their GDP. At the bottom of the list comes Spain, Europe's fifth-largest country by GDP, which spends 1.28 per each of GDP. These disproportions point to tensions within the alliance. Spain, the sole dissenter, These disproportions point to tensions within the aliance, Spain, the sole dissenter, has stated that it can meet its military capability targets by spending less than 3 per cent of GDP. To be sure, Nato still outspends Russia, where military spending rose to \$4.9 million in 2024, 7 per cent of GDP. But critics have suggested that the 2035 target date may be too far out in the horizon to be effective. For one, Ukraine President Vol-odymyr Zelenskyy, who met Mr Trump on the sidelines and received a reaffirmation of support in the Hague Summit Declaration as a "partner country", does not see it as a major deterrent to Vladimir Putin's imperial irredentism. Indeed, the outcome of the Ukraine-Russia war could be the real test of Nato's spending commitments.

# The income question

A household survey to gauge earnings is welcome but challenging

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has announced a com-The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has announced a com-prehensive household income survey, tentatively scheduled to kick off next year. The findings of an all-India income distribution survey could reveal critical struc-tural shifts in the spending capacities of the economy's most vital actors, and help derive critical metrics like poverty incidence, the extent of income inequality, and urban/rural households' general well-being. Debates about whether economic growth is lifting all boats, or whether the trickle-down effect is evident, tend to be sharp and contentious but seldom based on credible data. Instead, proxies such as Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) numbers, or the data on tax filings, are relied on. The World Inequality Lab, which uses the latter along with nings, are relied on. The world includanty Lalo, which uses the latter along with national income and other surveys, has estimated inequality declined in India between 1947 and the early 1980s, before reversing course and widening dramatically over the last 25 years. By 2022-23, the Lab's researchers reckoned, India's top 10 per cent earners got close to 60 per cent of national income, while the bottom 50 per cent received only 15 per cent. However, they noted that the data quality was poor or simply absent, like the shelved results of the 2017-18 HCES.

poor or simply absent, like the shelved results of the 2017-18 HCES.

To be sure, this is not the first attempt at income surveys — with a handful of pilots since 1925 failing to take off. Receipts and disbursement numbers were sought in two household surveys between 1964 and 1970, only for that component to be subsequently scrapped. The reason was that it threw up income estimates that were lower than households' combined consumption and savings estimates. The underlying challenge remains pertinent even today — individuals are not comfortable sharing their exact income details even with those they are acquainted with, leave alone a government enumerator. Most high-income earners tend to understate incomes, not in the least for fear of attracting tax sleuths. Surmounting this reluctance will be fundamental for the survey's credibility and hence the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) must address this foremost. In South Africa, which carries out a combined fincome and Expenditure Survey, he response rate is lower carries out a combined income and Expenditure Survey, the response rate is lower for queries about living conditions, including income, than it is for spending-pattern posers, despite a legal compulsion for sampled households to participate. India's surveyors would also need to ensure that the sample size and universe of selected households are representative of its 1.40 billion-plus population. Individselected households are representative of its 1.40 billion-plus population. Individuals with multiple-income sources, with some yielding seasonal inflows or "in kind" payments, could be difficult to canvas accurately, particularly in rural India. The evolving urban landscape poses a more serious obstacle—gated communities and rarefied urban enclaves are simply shutting the door on enumerators and refusing to respond to surveys such as the HCES. This compels surveyors to substiretusing to respond to surveys such as the H.C.E. Inscompess surveyors to substitute them with other households, which changes the intended sample composition, distorts survey findings, and skews the insights that inform policymaking. Overcoming this blockade is, therefore, critical for all surveys.

Apart from income levels, the ministry expects the survey to gauge the impact of technology adoption on household incomes. Such quantification may prove

of technology adoption on nousenoid incomes, such quantification may prove tricky even if not as tenuous as getting people to reveal their incomes. Yet, any insights gleaned on this aspect could guide policy intervention to balance the needs of a large young workforce with the broader industry tilt towards greater deploy-ment of robotics and artificial intelligence. Policy could be repurposed to facilitate skilling transitions and welfare measures where reskilling options are limited.

# Tax collections moderating?

The rise in personal income tax collections is encouraging, but sustaining it may be challenging



A recent press release on direct tax collections up to A recent press release on direct tax collections up to June 19 suggests a moderation in collections. Net col-lections are reported to be 1,39 per cent lower than those in the previous financial year, attributed to a decline in corporation tax collections. Is this a short-

gains. The annual incomes reported in income-tax returns for assessment year 2023-24.— pertaining to financial year 2022-23.— suggest that salary incomes account for \$2.9 per cent of total reported income, while business income accounts for \$2.9 per cent. Although data for subsequent years is not available, it is important to understand possible trends in these two categories of income.

Available information on trends in wages and salaries from the WTW Salary Budget Planning Peport suggests that salaries gree by 8.5 per cent in 2021, and 9.5 per cent in 2021, to per cent 2023, and 9.5 per cent in 2024. The survey for 2025 suggests an average increase of 9.5 per cent. The increase in salaries as reported could partly account for the observed upward trends in PTI. If the expectations for growth in salaries for 2025 are realised, any risk to tax revuence for the performance would arise from moderation in growth of employment, which, in turn, would relate to growth in businesses.

Turning to business income, one medium-term

which, in turn, would relate to growth in turn, would relate to growth in states in some, one medium-term factor that needs to be considered is the impact of the introduction of GST. Two possible effects can be conceived of. First, the introduction of GST could have led to the formalisation of economic activity, resulting in improved revenue collections in income tax — this could be considered a level correction, as hitherto informal incomes now transition into the formal economy. Once the process is complete, the stimulus for high growth in revenue would taper off. Alternatively, higher growth in the economy could be a result of higher efficiency following the rationalisa-

tion of the tax structure. This should be reflected in in PIT, even though the ratios of GST and PIT to GDF might not change much. Business income reported in

in PTF, even though the ratios of GST and PTF to GDP might not change much. Business income reported in income-tax returns by individuals and firms taken longether has been increasing at about 12-13 per cent from AY 2021-22 to AY 2023-24, suggesting that trends in GST revenues and trends in business income are line with each other and moderately higher than the nominal growth of GDP. In contrast, the tax-to-GDP ratio for CTF has shown a slight decline.

Given these observations, sustained growth in PTF would depend on sustained expansion in taxable economic activity, one that generates employment to support salary income and contributes to business income as well. A few emerging challenges on this front are worth highlighting.

1. Uncertainties in the global economic environment persist, and even ratchet up periodically. American tariff conversations have created uncertainties in both the level of global demand and the potential restructuring of supply chains. In the short term, these changes can be disruptive, even if opportunities might emerge in the medium term. The recent conflict between Israel and Iran adds a fresh new dimension of uncertainty, Within the last week, we have moved from a state of heightened uncertainty to an uneasy lull. It is not clear whether the ceasefire will lold. Such a conflict, too, would have a significant impact on the Indian economy — the direct impact would play out through an increase in crude oil prices and a spillover into inflation.

2. The Reserve Bank of India reduced the reportate by

and a spillover into inflation. 2. The Reserve Bank of India reduced the reporate by

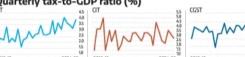
2. The Reserve Bank of India reduced the reporate by So basis points and the cash reserve ratio by 100 basis points. It is hoped that these changes would encourage investment in the economy. Any change in the inflation prospects might mudge a ethink.
3. A significant number of policy initiatives have been put into place by both the Union and state governments. These include free food, health care, free electricity and free bus passes in some states. Purther, a range of cash transfer schemes have been operationalised. With such initiatives, it is expected that available income could be used for other purposes stimulating demand for a range of traxable goods and services. The steady pace of growth in GST revenues, however, does not provide evidence of such a stimulus. Further, Ifsome of the schemes are reviewed and withdrawn in a few years, it can have a negative withdrawn in a few years, it can have a negative withdrawn in a few years, it can have a negative impact on revenues from GST—and, by implication,

impact on revenues from GST—and, by implication, on income taxes through business incomes, 4. Finally, for the current financial year, the exemption threshold for individuals has been raised. Individuals with incomes between ₹7 lakh and ₹12 lakh would have no liability to pay income tax. Purther, the diver-gence between liabilities under the old regime and the new regime has increased, implying a likely shift from the old to the new regime, resulting in a further reduc-tion in income-tax collections from individuals. In other words, a moderation in the erowth of PIT

In other words, a moderation in the growth of PIT appears imminent.

those in the previous financial year, attributed to a decline in corporation tax collections. Is this a short manner than the composition of the property of the construction of the const Quarterly tax-to-GDP ratio (%)

R KAVITA RAO



The author is director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi, The views are personal

# India's mutual fund paradox

OCCASIONAL

The mutual tund industry is experiencing an exuberant phase, with assets under management (AUM) surging to 665.7trillion by March 2025 from ₹12.3trillion in April 20.4. This decade of strong growth has pushed AUMsto 33 per cent of bankdeposits, bringing he industry closer to the financial sector's high table. Yet, the asset management industry is a classic case where strong macroeconomic talifwinds have not necessarily translated into robust financials. Why is the industry's glass appearing half full? First, companies find it hard — but not impossible, to make money. An educated guess optimistically puts the industry profits at ₹25,000 crore, with the 10 largest players taking in 60 per cent of this pool.

The reasons are well documented. First, asset management companies

The reasons are well documented.
First, asset management companies (AMCs) come under strict regulatory oversight from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebh), which enforces transparency and stringent compliance norms. The regulator also caps management fees through the total expense ratio, which follows a sliding scale and has seen periodic downward revisions over the years, with deleterious consequences for the industry.

While these measures protect investors, they also increase operational costs and limit the ability of AMCs to charge higher fees, squeezing profit margins. For global entities, a higher minimum capitalisation requirement further locks up capital and lowers returns. Second, the industry suffers from limited product differentiation. Seek's car-

capital and lowers returns. Second, the industry suffers from limited product differentiation. Seeb's cat-egorisation framework—segregating funds into large-cap, midcap, and smallcap segments—aimed to ensure "truth in labelling" so investors clearly under-stand what they're buying. However, an unintended consequence has been a similarity in product offerings across AMCs. Larger funds, with greater economies of scale, are better positioned to manage costs and earn

higher relative returns — further widening the gap between large and small players.

Three, fund performance has been mixed. Over the past one, three, and five years, many Indian equity mutual funds have underperformed their benchmark indices. As of March 2025, only about 38.6 per cent of equity mutual funds managed to beat their respective benchmarks, with largecap funds showing the highest rate of outperformance at 71.9 per cent for that month, while smallcap funds significantly lagged at just 10 per cent. Over longer periods, such as three and five years, consistent outperformance has been limited to a select group of funds. For example, only around 31 equity mutual funds consistently outperformed their benchmarks across three. Inve., and seven-year periods,

three-, five-, and seven-year periods, with just a handful of largecap, contra, focused, large & midcap, and midcap funds achieving this feat. This has accel-erated the investor shift towards passive products like index funds and exchange-traded funds, further driving

exchange-traded funds, further driving compression. The two reasons cited above have led to an excessive reliance on distributors, who have benefitted enormously from the industry's growth. What has kept fund flows strong so far is the high absolute returns delivered over the last few years — especially when compared to traditional banking products. What stands out in this landscape is the changing profile of market participants. As several global financial giants exit the Indian asset management ince. tecipans. As several space, a new generation of domestic fund management space, a new generation of domestic fund managers is stepping in to fill the gap. While firms like JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs, Principal Group, Zurich Insurance, Deutsche, Allianz, and Fidelity have exited or sold their Indian businesses, homegrown names such as Old Bridge, Unifi Capital, WhiteOak, Marcellus, Alpha Altersties, State Control of the Contr es, AngelOne, CapitalMind, Pantomath, ASK,

and Zerodha are entering or expanding their pres-ence — while some, like BlackRock, are re-entering partnership with Jio. Unlike their global counterparts — many of whom

Unlike their global counterparts — many of whom were deterred by India's fee caps and regulatory constraints — these domestic players are taking a long-term view, seeing the glass as half full. They have focused on the burgeoning AUM: Over the past decade, the industry's AUM has grown at a robust compound annual growth rate of around 20 per cent, largely driven by strong retail investor participation. Monthly SIP inflows have surged from around 78,000 crore in FY21 to over ₹24,000 crore in FY25. To put this in perspective, domestic retail investors contributed over \$72.billion (76.1 trillion) in met inflows during this period, even as foreign institutional investors pulled ut \$14.6 billion. These savers need to be serviced.

out \$14.6 billion. These savers need to be serviced.

The new domestic players in the asset manage
ment industry are willing to expand beyond metre
cities, capturing growth from India's smaller town
and cities (B30 locations), where financial penetration continues to deepen. Unencumbered by legacy sys tems and outdated technologies, these fund house tems and outdated technologies, these fund houses are leveraging finten shoultons to roll out investorfriendly products such as direct plans, index funds, and thematic schemes. Their digital-first approach is particularly effective in attracting younger, techsavey investors. Additionally, the relatively low returns offered by traditional banking products have further driven retail investors towards mutual funds. 
Much like the new India they operate in, this showing growing confidence in the Indian asset when the product of the production of

management industry — broadening their reach, embracing innovation, and playing a pivotal role in driving the long-awaited equitisation of the Indian financial sector.

The author is with Institutional Investor Advisory Services India Limited. The views are personal. X: @AmitTandon\_In

# Tibet at one remove



### CHINTAN CIRISH MODI

Tibetans living under Chinese occupa-tion and in various other parts of the world are waiting with bated breath for July 6, the 90th birthday of their leader Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama. As China shows no indication of relinquish ing its control over Tibetan territory, the monk's advancing age is a cause for con-cern for his people who have been yearn-ing to return to a free Tibet. The question of succession is a critical one, and a public statement clarifying his plans for

public statement clarifying his plans for the future is expected to put to rest all the anxiety and speculation in this regard. Gaden Phodrang, the office that provides him with secretarial assistance, is located in Dharamsais. Thering Namyais Khortsa, author of Little I hasa: Reflections in Exiled Tibet, describes this once picturesque town in the Kangar Valley of Himachal Pradesh, now saddy scarred by over-tourism, as 'the beating heart of exiled Tibet'. The book is a must-read for Indians who are curious about the lives Indians who are curious about the lives of Tibetan refugees, their culture, their freedom struggle, and their relationship

The book is shaped by the Dehra-dun-based author's personal connection with the subject. After his father was "elected as a member of the Tibetan parliament-in-exile" in 2001 and moved to Dharamsala, he began to develop "a deeper connection" with the town where the Dalai Lama moved six and half dec-ades ago with support from Pandit Jawa-harlai Nehru. The author's mother died in 2003, and the grief that engulfed him during this time pushed him to explore his "heritage" and "its complex layers of displacement and resilience". With an MA in jurnalism from the

unspacement and resilience". With an MA in journalism from the University of Jowa, the author has written on the subject in an engaging manner that combines interview-based and archival research with heartfelt storytelling. He provides the big picture without compromising on emotion. The town comes allow as a dependent without compromising on emotion. The town comes alive as a place where Tibetan refugees have rebuilt their lives from scratch, and where their descendants — who have never been to Tibet—are tying to find their place in the world, piecing together their personal answers to the eternally baffling question "Who am I?"

The book offers a mile introduction.

This book offers a quick introduction to a number of Tibetan poets, artists, novelists, musicians, journalists, film-makers, playwrights, activists, intellec-tuals, publishers, and institutions in this town that has become a cul-tural, spiritual and political hub for the Tibetan diaspora. They are all attempting to do the best that they can to hold China accountable. The author also looks at

The author also looks at Dharamsala as a tourist attrac-tion and a pilgrimage centre that draws people keen to have an audience with the Dalai Lama or listen to Buddhist teachings. "The arcane rituals of Tibetan Buddhism may have captured the world's imagination but that is not maganatori out ratis not who, or all, that we are, "he declares, while also acknowl-edging fronically that the time "has certainly come for us Tibetans to take classes on our own relig-ious tradition from foreigners."

He is candid in his admission of how he felt "almost ashamed to be a Tibetan" when he met people who had travelled long distances to learn about beliefs and practices that he had taken



Little Lhasa: Reflections on Exiled Tibet by Tsering Namgyal Khortsa iblished by Speaking

much about the Israelis who throng Dharamsala after throng Dharamsua after completing their mandatory military service, and the impact of their presence on the local economy. It also stays silent about the Gaddis—the Indigenous pas-fDharamsula—and the occa-flicts between them and

for granted. His perspective is humbling because he does not try to cover up his own lack of knowledge by blaming these non-Tibetans

for cultural appropriation. He appreciates them for the

genuine interest, attentive ness, discipline and joy in their seeking. It is surprising, however that the book does not say

Tibeta "By dint of historical accident, India, for all her own poverty and exploding population, has become a perfect home for the exiled Tibetans. For many of us,

Readers who are not tamhar with Buddhist teachings on dealing with adversity might write off this approach as toxic positivity but it is completely aligned with the Dalai Lama's own reframing of exile as an opportunity for Tibetans to build and nurture democratic institutions

eration Army". Readers who are not familiar with

India is like our collective mother," he writes, perhaps with rose-tinted glasses given the complex and sometimes frac-tious relationship between Indians and Tibetans, who are sometimes seen by

locals as interlopers. He recalls hearing some elderly Tibetans say that exile has

some electery i Dectains say that exize has been "a blessling in disquise" for them because living in India has given them a chance to visit "the most sacred of Bud-dhist temples and pilgrimage sites, which the average Tibetan would not have ever dramed of visiting lift was not for the invasion by the People's Lib-eration Arm."

The reviewer is a journalist, educator and literary critic. Instagram/X: @chintanwriting

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# Text& Context

THEMANHINDU

### **NEWS IN NUMBERS**

Percentage drop in Amarnath Yatra registration

Number of donkeys annually slaughtered for Chinese medicine

In million. Almost six million donkeys are slaughtered annually for Chinese medicine, with severe effects for African villagers, a U.K.-based charity said. China, whose donkey population has plummeted from 11 million in 1992 to 1.5 million in 2023, has turned to Africa to meet its demand. ##

Number of registered unrecognised parties to be delisted by EC

Arrests in drug-related offences in the last 4-5 months in Delhi

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1,100 More than a thousand pe

Mule accounts used by cyber criminals in India

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# What sparked the Keeladi controversy?

What was the dispute between the archaeologist and the ASP Why did the ASI ask for a rewrite of the Keeladi report? Why did political parties react strongly to the decision? How did the public and historians respond to the findings?

EXPLAINER

D. Suresh Kumar

D. Surseh Kumar

The story so fare:

A june 17 archaeologist K.

A june 17 archaeologist K.

A june 18 archaeologist K.

whose excusation at Keedal human and the mature of the mature o

speakest a postnical cishs between the Centre and Traill Nadu.

How did Keeladd excavation begin?

Keeladi has become a symbol of pride for many in Traill Nadu. Over a decade ago, Amarranth Traillashiraha, then the ASI's initiated excavations at a sile known as the Pallichanthal Tidal in Keeladi, originally a occount growe spanning 100 acres. He had deutified over 100 sites for Asia and the pallichanthal gal Bert, but Keeladi stood out.

It was in Keeladi that they unearthed over 1500 ancient artifacts, including which revealed that they demention which revealed that they demention one compelling was the carbon dating, which revealed that these dements are one compelling was the carbon dating, which revealed that these dements are and century BCE, which is the time of the Sangam period in Tamil history.



to an awanteed uncert. In anni exvassion, but a some after, things took a sharp turn. What did political critics accuse the Centre of doing: The training and the state of the

previously discovered.

Did State's findings resolve the issue? The Madras High Court stepped in, with court stepped in, with the Madras High Court stepped in, with court then directed the ASI to continue the excavations and allowed the Tamil Nada State Department of Archaeology to published a roper asserting that Rebaldi was an urban settlement dating back to published a rope nutban test demand the Sangam era between the 6th century BCE and the 1st century CE. Archaeology Department has continued the project, but these findings have not helped resolve the issue; instead, the drama has escalated. In Jamary 2025, Marchaeology Department has continued the project, but these findings have not before the size is size, instead, the drama has escalated. In Jamary 2025, Marchaeology Department has continued to Tamil Nada, submitted his report on the first two phases of excavation.

What did the ASI ask Ramakrishna to do with the report? For about two and a-half years, this report remained with the ASI, and just last month, the ASI sent Mr. Ramakrishna a letter to revise the report. The ASI questioned the dating and depth of certain findings, suggesting the evidence for the earliest period, as it appeared to

strangi-pint sequences, material cuture and even Accelerator Mass Spectrometry. Why did the AST's decision spark political outrage of the AST's decision. They have termed it a blatant attempt to suppress Tamil heritage. They arough did that the Centre's behaving, and the proposed outrage of the politics. Amid the backlash, the Union Minister for Culture, logislical, with the backlash, the Union Minister for Culture, logislical sainglish Sheshawat, said Mr. calculated the Minister of the Culture, logislical sainglish Sheshawat and Mr. calculated the Minister of the Culture, logislical sainglish Sheshawat said Mr. calculated the Minister of the Minist

single inding cannot change the entire discourse.

Why did ALADMK stay silent initially interestingly, the ALADMK, which was in power when the Reddid report was not the current controvers. However, on June 18, senior leader R.B. Uthayakumar contended that the Centre had sought more information by way of ensuring, "if the Keedel report is rejected, the ALADMK will be the first party to express its volice of protest in solice for the Control of the Contr

# What are the most commonly used cancer drugs?

What severe side effects do these cancer drugs carry?

Meriem Mahdi

The story so far:

Bureau investigation by the Bureau investigation by the Bureau investigative Journalism, published by The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, published by The Control of the State of the State

What is cisplatin?

Cophain is a platimum based drug that
Cophain is a platimum based drug that
Cophain is a platimum on an unexpected
Govery. Researchers found that a
platimum-containing compound blocked
the growth of bacteria, leading to the
tensibly be
used to combat cancer.
Cisplatim works by binding to the DNA
of cancer cells, preventing them from
growing and dividing. It is particularly
growing and dividing, It is particularly
introduction has improved survival rates
for many patients, whether used alone or
combination with other therapies,
ciaplatin comes with side effects,
including sichness, kidney damage, and
hearing issues. Cisplatin alon suppresses
the function of the bone marrow, where
resulting reduction in white blood cells
has severe effects on patients' immeestates
infection.

What is oxaliplatin?
Oxaliplatin, like cisplatin, is a platinum-based frug. It also works by binding to and damaging the DNA of cancer cells. It is used mainly to reart the more advanced stages of colorectal removal of colon cancer, to when our emaining malignant cells.
Oxaliplatin comes with broadly similar side effects to cisplatin.

what is cycloposphamide?
Cyclophosphamide?
Cyclophosphamide is another key
chemotheray of mag, often used to tackle
discuss including breast cancer, some
cancer), saroma cancer of the
connective dissues and advanced selb,
suphoma (cancer of the ymph most incurpart of the ymph most incurce of the ymph most incurte of the ymph most incurce of the ymph most incurte of the ymph most incurte of the ymph most incurte of the ymph most incur
te of the

What is doxorubicin?
Often referred to as the "red devil" due to its striking colour and severe side effects, its striking colour and severe side effects, so the severe side effects, so the severe side effects of the severe side effects

help protect healthy cells from damage
What is leucovorin?
Leucovorin, also known as folinic acid
(not to be confused with folic acid), is:
form of Varaini 18; to differs from the
that it is not technically considered a
chemotherapy of law, that a companion
chemotherapy. It was first introduced it
the 1950s and was designed to manage
the side effects of methorresate, for wit
is still used today.
Meriom Maddi is with The Bureau of
Immertigative Journalism ...

THE GIST

THE HINDU

Text&Context

Friday, June 27, 2025 CHENNAI

CM CM

"How do you pronounce E..d..i..b "The 'e' in the first syllable sou the 'e' in the words 'met', 'bet' an The 'i' in the second syllable soun

IN THE LIMELICAT

