

Article 35A Constitutionally vulnerable: Jaitley

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Thursday said Article 35A, which restricts non-permanent residents and those outside the Jammu & Kashmir to buy property in the State, was "surreptitiously" included by a presidential notification in the Constitution in 1954 and is "constitutionally vulnerable".

The BJP leader who is also chairman of party's campaign committee said the article was also hampering economic development of the State.

The Jammu & Kashmir is currently under President's rule after BJP pulled the plug on the coalition Government in the militancy infected border State.

In a blog, Jaitley said the seven-decade history of the State of Jammu & Kashmir

confronts changing India with several questions. "Was the Nehruvian course, which the State had embarked, a historical blunder or was it the correct course to follow? Most Indians today believe that it is the former. "Does our policy today have to be guided by that erroneous vision or an out of box thinking which is in consonance with ground reality?" Jaitley wondered.

The senior BJP leader and in-charge of the party's campaign committee for general elections said Article 35A was "surreptitiously" included by a presidential notification in the Constitution in 1954.

Article 35A, he said, was neither a part of the original Constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly, nor did



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- Article 35A, he said, was neither a part of the original Constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly, nor did it come as a Constitutional Amendment under Article 368 of the Constitution which requires an approval by two-third majority of both Houses of Parliament. "It came as a presidential notification and is a surreptitious executive insertion in the Constitution."
- Article 35A, which is constitutionally vulnerable, is used as a political shield by many but it hurt the citizen of the State the most. It denied them a booming economy, economic activity and jobs," Jaitley said

the others. It also discriminates between permanent residents of the State and all other Indian citizens living elsewhere, he added.

"Lakhs of Indian citizens in Jammu & Kashmir vote in Lok Sabha elections but not in Assembly, municipal or Panchayat polls. Their children cannot get Government jobs. They cannot own property and their children cannot get admitted to Governmental institutions. "The same applies to those who live elsewhere in the country. The heirs of ladies married outside the state are disinherited from owing or inheriting property," the Minister added.

He said the State does not have adequate financial resources and its ability to raise more has been crippled by Article 35A.

No investor is willing to set up an industry, hotel, private educational institutions or private hospitals since he can neither buy land or property nor can his executives do so, he said.

"Article 35A, which is constitutionally vulnerable, is used as a political shield by many but it hurt the common citizen of the State the most. It denied them a booming economy, economic activity and jobs," Jaitley said.

The Minister added that the present Government has decided that the rule of law in the interest of the people of Kashmir valley and the larger interest of India must equally apply to Jammu & Kashmir.

Modi biopic: Vivek, Sandeep appear before election panel

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bollywood actor Vivek Oberoi and producer of film "PM Narendra Modi", Sandeep Singh on Thursday met the Election Commission (EC) after complaints were filed over the release of the upcoming movie "Prime Minister Narendra Modi" the biopic on the life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and ban of its trailer in light of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) being in force ahead of the Lok Sabha election. The duo had discussions with the poll officials on the release date of the Modi's biopic which is set to release on April 5, merely a week before the first phase of Lok Sabha elections on April 11.



The Model Code of Conduct came into effect from March 10 across the State on the day when the Election Commission announced the dates for elections which are scheduled to begin from April 11, while the results are to be announced on May 23

biopic on PM Modi starring Vivek Oberoi and produced by Sandip Ssingh — alleging that the film violates the model code of conduct ahead of the Lok Sabha 2019 elections.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting with the Election Commission officers in New Delhi, senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal not only targeted the BJP party, but also the makers (Producer Sandip Ssingh) and actors (Vivek Oberoi) of the PM Modi biopic saying that the film is a "corrupt practice" and "launch of the film is motivated" ahead of the General Elections.

A delegation of the CPI and the CPI(M) on Tuesday met Election Commission officials and demanded that release of the film based on the life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi be deferred, claiming it to be a "propaganda material".

CPI's D Raja and CPI(M) Polit Bureau member Nilotpal Basu met the poll panel officials on March 25 and also pointed out serious law and order situations in Tripura and West Bengal.

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Directed by Omung Kumar, the biopic on India's incumbent Prime Minister - Narendra Modi - features Vivek Oberoi and Boman Irani in pivotal roles. Prior, it was expected to release on April 12, but given the elections were due to begin a day earlier, the release was preponed to April 5.

notice to the makers of the biopic after it felt that the film was allegedly violating the Model Code of Conduct. On 20 March, East Delhi Returning Officer K Mahesh, suo motu, issued notices to the production house and music company behind the film, and two leading newspapers for publishing advertisements of the biopic.

Congress and the CPM had complained to the commission about the film's release, saying it's being done with political intent. Senior Congress leaders including Kapil Sibal had held a meeting with the Election Commission on Monday demanding to postpone the release of the film "PM Narendra Modi" — the

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Shatrughan meets Rahul, likely to join Cong on April 6

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha MP Shatrughan Sinha on Thursday ended speculation over his joining the Congress after meeting party president Rahul Gandhi and both sides announced that the BJP rebel will induct himself in Congress next week. Sources said that the joining which was to happen on Thursday itself had to be delayed due to revival of the tension within the RJD and Congress in the Bihar mahagathbandhan.

After meeting Rahul Gandhi, Sinha announced he will join the Congress. "Joining will happen soon, we will give you a positive news during Navaratri. I will join Congress now," Sinha said talking to media later. AICC incharge of Bihar Shaktisinh Gohil tweeted that Sinha will join the party on April 6.

Sources said that Sinha's joining was marred by the immediate friction between the two major grand alliance partners while RJD complaining that Sinha could have been even RJD's bet. Sinha, Congress and RJD finally decided to abort the move to join and buy peace for sometime.

"RJD was said to be keen on having Sinha as its candidate from Patna Sahib constituency. Sinha and RJD supreme Lalu Prasad share a cordial relation. But the Congress has always contested the Patna Sahib seat whenever it allied with the RJD in Bihar.

So, the party wanted to field Sinha on its own symbol. This tug-of-war had apparently caused the delay in decision of Sinha joining the grand old party," said a senior Congress leader.

Sinha is a two-time sitting BJP MP from Patna Lok Sabha



Rahul Gandhi meets BJP MP Shatrughan Sinha in New Delhi on Thursday PTI

seat and has been critical of the Narendra Modi Government for past couple of years. He has been sidelined in the BJP, which replaced him with Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad as the Lok Sabha candidate from Patna Sahib constituency.

On Wednesday, Bihar Congress election campaign committee chairman Akhilesh Prasad Singh had said that

SC to hear on April 8 pleas challenging 10% quota to EWS

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday said it would hear on April 8 a batch of petitions challenging the Centre's decision to grant 10 per cent reservation in jobs as well as admissions to educational institutions to economically weaker sections across all classes.

A Bench comprising Justices SA Bobde and SA Nazeer said it would also deal with the contentions raised by some of the petitioners who have said that the matter was required to be adjudicated upon by a Constitution Bench.

At the outset, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, sought an adjournment saying he and Attorney General KK Venugopal were appearing in a matter on Thursday before a Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi.

"I am on my legs before the Constitution Bench. Please accommodate me," he told the Bench.

Senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan, appearing for one of the petitioners, referred to the apex court's last order passed in the matter on March 11 and said the issue of whether these pleas should be referred to a Constitution Bench should be considered. PTI

After giving clearance wildlife board rejects railway line through Melghat Tiger Reserve

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two years after giving nod to the conversion of the Akola-Khandawa railway line, passing through the heart of Maharashtra's Melghat Tiger Reserve, from metre gauge to broad gauge, the Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) has recently asked the railways to look for alternate route.

The move follows after the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) as well as the Dehradun based Wildlife Institute of India (WII) in a meeting in February 2019 of the high-level wildlife panel headed by Union Environment Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan which is responsible for framing India's policy and strategy for wildlife conservation, opposed the proposal.

They asserted that the upgradation of the track will fragment the tiger habitat given that of the 35 km long railway lines which falls inside the Tiger Reserve and proposed to be upgraded, 18 km pass through the core area, thus having serious impact on the rich flora and fauna of the region.

The NTCA recommended that the only feasible mitigation is 'avoidance' of the broadening of gauge through the



area of tiger reserve and options for the alternate routes/alignments bypassing the tiger reserve should be taken up by the railway authorities.

As per the minutes of the Standing Committee of the NBWL, NTCA Member Secretary Anup Nayak pointed out that "alternate alignment surveyed by the railways which bypasses the tiger reserve can facilitate greater economic development of the region by connecting the near-by 29 villages and large population living in the area.

"After discussions, the Standing Committee recommended to return the proposal to the Maharashtra Government with request to review the proposal in the light of the recommendations of the NTCA and WII," said the minutes of the meeting.

The members also noted that two applications were filed before the Central Empowered Committee against the approval of the upgradation of the track.

Spread over an area of 1,673 sq km, the Melghat Tiger Reserve, which is home to about 50 tigers is connected northwards to Satpada forests.

In 2017, the Standing committee of the NBWL had approved the proposal subject to the mitigation measures recommended by the NTCA and WII.

However, wildlife activists had slammed the move with some of them even approaching the Supreme Court led Centrally Empowered committee (CEC) against the railway plan arguing that it should be shot down as it will endanger the tigers besides other wildlife in the region.

83% MPs crorepatitis, says ADR report

33 per cent of sitting MPs have criminal cases against them

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

At least 83 per cent of 521 sitting MPs are "crorepatitis" and 33 per cent of them have criminal cases against them. The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), has compiled the report after analysing self-sworn affidavits of the 521 MPs out of 543 members elected to the Lok Sabha in the 2014 elections. "Out of the 521 Sitting MPs analysed, 430 (83 pc) are

crorepatitis. While 227 of them are from BJP, 37 are from Congress, 29 from AIADMK, among others," the report said. The average assets per sitting MP for Lok Sabha 2014 elections are ₹14.72 crore.

While 32 sitting MPs have declared more than ₹50 crore worth of assets, only two sitting MPs have declared assets less than worth ₹5 lakh. At least 33 per cent sitting MPs have declared criminal cases against them in the affidavits.

"While 106 of them have declared serious criminal cases including cases related to murder, attempt to murder, communal disharmony, kidnap-

ing and crimes against women, 10 sitting MPs have declared cases related to murder. Out of these, 4 sitting MPs are from BJP, 1 MP from INC, NCP, LJP, RJD, Swabhimani Paksha each and one MP is an Independent," the report said.

"14 sitting MPs have declared cases of attempt to murder. Out of these, eight sitting MPs are from BJP and one MP each from INC, AITC, NCP, RJD, Shiv Sena and Swabhimani Paksha. 14 sitting MPs declared cases related to causing communal disharmony. Out of them, 10 sitting MPs are from BJP and 1 MP from TRS, PMK, All

India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimin and AIUDF each," it added.

In another report on performances of the MPs, the ADR said that seven MPs from Delhi had the highest average attendance and on an average, they attended 289 out of the 312 sittings. On an average, MPs asked 251 questions and attended 221 out of the 312 sittings. Two MPs from Nagaland attended 88 sittings on an average, the lowest in the last five years. Among political parties, the maximum number of questions were asked by 18 Shiv Sena MPs, each of them on an average asking 639 questions.

Probe panel reveals irregularities at Safdarjung Hospital's Sports Injury centre

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Central Health Ministry probe panel set up to audit the country's top Sports Injury Centre at Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi has found huge irregularities in its functioning — ranging from violation in procurement of equipments and facilities, financial mismanagement to serious discrepancies in appointments of health-care professionals.

The panel after submitting an interim report to the Union Health Ministry on October 2018 which said that "available records and evidence, prima-facie, indicate collusion of SIC with some suppliers thereby

causing loss to the patients and public exchequer," has recently submitted yet another extensive 62 pages report in the matter.

The Ministry in September last year had set up a seven-member panel, headed by Joint Secretary Rajeev Manjhi, to take up the special audit of SIC's functioning in various areas ranging from equipments and facilities for operation theatres to their procurement and maintenance.

Both the reports have recommended a detailed probe into the matter in view of "blatant violation of CVCs instructions and has sought immediate action against those respon-

sible for irregularities." The matter is now under the scanner of Union Health Minister JP Nadda. When contacted, Union Health Secretary Preeti Sudan said appropriate action will be taken in the matter.

The huge gross irregularities have also pointed needle of suspicion towards the then director of the SIC, Dr Deepak Chaudhary.

Intriguingly, the Ministry in December 2018 had issued a notice to Dr Chaudhary too for "taking up a commercial assignment with a private hospital without prior permission from the Government". Sources said that pending reply, the Ministry has put on hold his

request for voluntary retirement from Dr RML Hospital which he had joined after serving several years in the SIC. The probe panel in its interim report said "On scrutiny of the files pertaining to procurement of equipments and facilities for operation theatre and physiotherapy units of the SIC, it has been observed that there are blatant violations of general financial rules (GFRs) and the procedures adopted are repugnant to CVC instructions.

"With regard to usefulness and usability of the equipment with almost similar functions have been proposed to be procured twice by furnishing a cer-

tificate that the said equipments are being procured not as replacement or additional but as a first-time procurement. Frequent purchases have been resorted to for certain equipments such as arthroscope 30 and 70 degrees, and camera etc.

"It is surprising that these equipments have been condemned even during the manufacturer's warranty period. ...many equipments are not in working conditions. There is no clarity with regard to CAMC/AMC.... It has also been observed that Director, SIC indent some expensive equipments for procurement projecting quite high usability, whereas the same are being uti-

lized much below the projected usability of the equipment ie even less than 10 per cent, thus suggesting intractuous expenditure for extraneous considerations," further said the report.

The panel has also suspected nexus between SIC, SFH and M/S Mahajan Imaging, a private diagnostic player. "The centre (SIC) made recommendations by concealing some vital information which resulted in extending favour to M/Mahajan Imaging by relaxing the terms of agreement and to neutralize substantial amount of penalty accruing to the Government, which could have been

imposed because of violation of the terms of the contract and the decision in this regard has been taken at the level of Director (SIC) and MS Safdarjung Hospital. Besides there is no system in place to monitor the free cases as agreed..." notes the report.

Also, "...there is no rationalized purchase procedure followed by procurement of implants in SIC. Documents made available to the panel evidently indicate of a nexus between SIC and a particular supplier who has been supplying almost 90 per cent of implants at exorbitant rates.

"The records suggests that the provisions of the GFRs have

been twisted ...while a close scrutiny of the operation theatre records reveal that disproportionately large number of surgeries were performed by using implants of certain makes (Deputy and Arthrex).

The final 62 pages report too has recommended further detailed investigation in view of "blatant violations of GFRs/CVCs instructions" and large scale irregularities.

"The Indenting officer (HOD) may be made personally accountable for submitting false indents," said the report even as it has sought annual audit of the high-value equipments and devices among others.

SP declares 5 more candidates

MLA Puja Pal to contest from Unnao

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party on Thursday declared five more candidates for Lok Sabha polls in Uttar Pradesh...

Madhya Pradesh. Beside Pal, former SP Minister Bhagwat Sharan Gangwar was given ticket from Bareilly...

Assembly election. This time, Puja has been pitted against Sakshi Maharaj, the sitting MP of Bharatiya Janata Party from Unnao...



to its sitting MP Rajesh Pandey from Kushinagar this time and has replaced him with Vijay Dubey.

The SP is contesting the general election in alliance with BSP and would contest on 37 seats, while the BSP would field candidates from 38 seats...

SP manifesto is likely to be out in April 1st week

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party is likely to release its manifesto for the Lok Sabha polls, promising jobs and setting up of a youth commission...

post-poll scenario. A senior SP leader said in Lucknow on Thursday that at a time when rising unemployment was a big issue...

Shah slams Cong over illegal immigration in Assam, lauds Modi for avenging soldiers

Kaliabor/Teok: BJP chief Amit Shah on Thursday accused the previous Congress Government in Assam of settling illegal immigrants in the State...

a second term at the Centre. He said only Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP can ensure security of the country...

BSP, SP strike seat-sharing deal for Maharashtra

BSP TO CONTEST 44, SP TO FIELD 4 CANDIDATES

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Having decided to fight all the 48 Lok Sabha polls in Maharashtra as a third front, the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Samajwadi Party will contest 44 seats and four seats respectively in the State.

Of the 44 seats that it is contesting in the State, the BSP will release its first list of 19 seats. The seats for which the BSP it has named candidates include: Bhandara-Gondia, Chandrapur, Ramtek, Nagpur, Washim, Amravati, Buldhana, Hingoli, Akolam, Parbhani, Osmanabad, Latur and Solapur.

Jitin Prasada hints at contesting poll from Lucknow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Even as suspense continues over the name of Congress candidate from Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency, former Union Minister and party candidate from Dhaurahra parliamentary seat, Jitin Prasada, has hinted at contesting from Lucknow instead of Dhaurahra.



My body may be present in Lucknow but my soul will always be in Dhaurahra. Give me some time, I am standing at a political cross-roads. I am going to Lucknow and will decide what I have to do

Prasada, who was on his way to the state capital via Sitapur on Thursday, was stopped by Congress workers who wanted him to contest from Dhaurahra.

Prasada is a Brahmin, hails from a prominent political family of Shahjahanpur. His father, late Jitendra Prasada, was a Congress stalwart and had even contested the party presidential election against Sonia Gandhi.

'Sidelined' Tej quits RJD student wing

Patna: Upset over being sidelined in the party and the family, Tej Pratap Yadav, elder son of RJD chief Lalu Prasad, on Thursday resigned as patron of the RJD student wing ahead of the Lok Sabha polls...



"I am resigning as patron of RJD student wing. Those who think I am naive are mistaken," tweeted Tej Pratap Yadav, a former Bihar Health Minister who has been having simmering disputes with his younger brother and the more active Tejashwi Yadav.

Tej Pratap Yadav added that he knew who wields what kind of influence in party affairs. The resignation comes in the absence of Lalu Prasad, who is undergoing treatment at a Government hospital in Ranchi after being convicted in fodder scam cases.

RJD leaders close to him say he is not happy the way Tejashwi Yadav has been given command of the party and with the latter's style of functioning. Tejashwi Yadav is the Leader of Opposition in the Bihar Assembly.



BJP president Amit Shah being felicitated during an election rally ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, in Nagaon, on Thursday

CPMMANIFESTO Proposes curbing of mass surveillance

New Delhi: The CPI(M) on Thursday proposed curbing of mass surveillance, statutory minimum wage of not less than ₹18,000 per month and checking monopolies over telecom and internet service platforms in its manifesto for the coming Lok Sabha elections.



CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury with party leaders Prakash Karat, Brinda Karat release party's manifesto in on Thursday

tion/misuse of users private data for commercial use," said CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury while releasing the manifesto along with Polit Bureau members Brinda Karat, Prakash Karat and Nitlopal Basu.

measures, repeal/amend the National Security Act, section 499 of IPC (relating to defamation) and Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA). In the declaration, the party also proposed alternative policy platform under which it called for protection of the secular principle and democratic rights enshrined in the Constitution and enforcement of farmers' right to sell their produce at minimum support price.

Huge cash seized before polls: EC removes special police observer

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A day after Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee questioned propriety of appointing a Special Police Observer for Bengal who had earlier been seen attending an RSS programme in uniform, the Election Commission of India on Wednesday replaced the senior IPS officer with a new one.

cific reason had been offered for the new move. Banerjee had on Wednesday cited photographs showing how in 2018 Sharma had joined an RSS-sponsored programme in police uniform.

It's bullock cart of BJP vs e-ricks of Trinamool

Kolkata: Lok Sabha candidates in West Bengal's Birbhum district are seeking to exploit all modes of transport to attract attention. While one candidate chose bullock cart, another decided to drive an e-rickshaw.

Rampurhaat locality. Roy, clad in a pink saree and donning sunglasses, also participated in a tribal dance with the women folk of the locality. Not to be outdone, her BJP rival Dutt Kumar Mondal rode a bullock cart to interact with the people of another Panchayat area.



SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that one girl Namely: Manisha Kumari, D/o: Subedar Pranjapati, R/o: H. No. 02, Gali No. 4, D-Block, Jai Vihar, Near Fauji Farm House, Baprola, Delhi, Age: 15 Years, Height: 4'10", Complexion: Fair, Face: Long, Wearing: Linedar Chackdar Shirt-Grey Salwar and Black Chappal in feet (School Uniform) has been missing/kidnapped since 11.03.2019 from the area of P.S. Ranhola, Delhi.

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that one girl Namely: Ruby, D/o Rampahal, R/o: H. No. B-235, Gautam Colony, Narela, Delhi, Age: 19 Years, Height: 5'4", Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Wearing: Yellow Colour Kurta & Cream Colour Lower and Red Colour Chappal in feet has been missing from the area of P.S. Narela, Delhi since 12.09.2018.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person About 42 years of age whose name, residence and family is unknown, was found dead at Bus Stand of 910, Paschim Vihar, Delhi, on 21.03.19 at 09:57 a.m. In this regard a vide has been registered with DD No: 21-A, dated 21.03.19 at P.S. Paschim Vihar West, Delhi.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unknown dead body was found behind the wall of Azadpur Railway Flyover, Delhi, dated 01.06.2015. In this regard a FIR/DD No. 691/15 dated 01.06.2015, has been lodged at P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General Public is hereby informed that one girl Namely: Arti, D/o: Netram, R/o: H. No. D-34, J.J. Colony, Bawana, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 02.01.2019 from the area of P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi. In this regard a case DD No. 42-A dated 05.01.2019 has been registered at P.S. Narela Industrial Area Delhi.

PAPER WITH PASSION

US move on Azhar

By introducing a resolution in the UN to designate Jaish chief as a global terrorist, it is forcing China's hand



The United States is in no mood to let up on global terrorism, particularly miffed by China's intransigence in the UN in proscribing Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar, who has attacked many of its strategic interests in the region, India included, particularly after the Pulwama massacre. So disregarding a Chinese hold on a similar move earlier, the US has moved a new resolution that would designate Azhar a global terrorist, subjecting him to an arms embargo, travel ban and an asset freeze.

In short, choke his operations. France and the UK are backing it too. This persistent US-led determination at the UN has clearly pushed Beijing to the wall, which has to either live with global isolation as a tacit backer of terrorism or be ready to sign off on a sanction blacklisting Azhar.

Through the US has the tricky issue of aligning its strategic objectives with the compulsions of Pakistan, it has always taken a muscular approach to the latter's hosting a terror network, plucking out Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden no less for attacks on its own soil. But then Pulwama was not only the worst terrorist attack in Kashmir, it also topped a series of destabilising attacks by the Jaish in the region, particularly in Afghanistan. And though India did smash Jaish bases deep inside Pakistan through surgical strikes, the latter's use of American F-16s for counterstrikes in violation of agreed doctrines clearly upset the US further. Now that its demarches have yielded only a token response from Pakistan, which has been emboldened in no small measure by China, the US is on the offensive. In fact, soon after the Chinese "no", it has been rallying support from other countries to buttonhole Pakistan on Jaish. Privately, it did try to work out a middle ground with China, on the language designating Azhar, to a version more acceptable to the latter. China was seemingly more willing this time round to work out a compromise. This despite its quid pro quo with Pakistan with the singular aim of insuring itself from the Islamic State spreading to its Muslim majority provinces and attacks on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). But this resolution means the US is now breathing down on China, even indicating the possibility of an open vote. Instead of consensus, that resolution only needs nine votes in favour and no vetoes by China, Russia, the US, France or Britain to pass.

The need for reform

Electoral bonds are slightly better than hazy ways of campaign fund-raising but more transparency is needed



One of the most contentious issues across most democratic nations is one of "Campaign Finance Reform." Elections cost money to win, there are huge teams of volunteers and workers, who need to be paid and fed at the cost of running advertisements. Even paying for small nitty-gritties such as food and water add up.

parties that wish to stay relevant even if they are in power, particularly if they are part of the Opposition and aspire to a comeback. In 2017, claiming that they wished to improve the method of political funding in India, the Narendra Modi Government introduced the electoral bond system that allowed almost anyone to buy bonds of varying amounts that would be transferred directly to a party's account. The buyer could remain anonymous. The Election Commission (EC) had expressed reservations back then as had smaller political parties. They claimed that this could lead to unchecked foreign funding of Indian political parties, is a no-no for the Representation of People's Act and the concept of anonymity would lead to unchecked corporate funding of elections.

The main purpose for which electoral bonds were introduced — the need to remove ambiguous sources of money coming into the electoral process as well as hordes of cash — has really not been achieved. In raids across the country on the eve of elections, massive cash treasure troves were found. This coupled with the EC's frankly ridiculous limits of electoral spending — the sum allowed in the 2019 General Elections is just ₹70 lakh per candidate, which as anyone, who has fought an election, will tell you is a sum that would have fallen short in the 1999 General Election, let alone 2019 — has led to this situation. More realistic spending limits of around ₹5 crore per Lok Sabha constituency coupled with full disclosure of corporate donations should be the way forward.

Contextualising terror

The deft statesmanship of New Zealand is in sharp contrast to India's response on Pulwama that failed to unite the populace and instead deflected the issue to political positions



PRAFULL GORADIA

The Indian sub-continent is a wounded region that has been subjected to dangerous contextualising of terror that is ultimately tantamount to "justification of terrorism." The adage, "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" has been used and abused by both terror groups and roguish states, whose stated policy distinguishes between "good" and "bad" terrorists. Repeated warnings to desist from such categorisation — as the same inevitably backfires — is personified by Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's routine posting of the figure of 75,000 Pakistani casualties and an economic cost of \$123 billion to the state, owing to its ostensible fight against terrorism.

Obviously, the Pakistani state has not come clean on its own track record of duplicity and insincerity on terror, with the then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's prophetic warning that "snakes in the backyard would not just bite the neighbours." The tact of selectively legitimising and deliberately contextualising some terror organisations as "freedom fighters" or "defenders of the faith" comes with accompanying risks of these morphing and mutating into Frankenstein monsters and turning upon its progenitors. The fact is that Pakistan is witnessing a breakdown in its social structures, economic health and political future by pandering to regressive "contexts" to justify its interferences across the Durand Line in the Afghan region, across the Line of Control in India as also across its Iranian border.

An unwarranted and insensitive contextualising of a terror act was recently made by an Australian Senator, Fraser Anning, following the horrific massacre of at least 50 lives at Christchurch in New Zealand, which literally resulted with an egg on his face. The Senator had incredulously stated, "The real cause of bloodshed on New Zealand streets today is the immigration programme, which allowed Muslim fanatics to migrate to the country in the first place." While his statement was squarely lambasted by the political leadership in specific and society in general, in both his native Australia and New Zealand — the age-old practice of "contextualising" terror, that further divides and polarises societies, was in full display. In stark contrast was the deft statesmanship, empathy and sensitivity shown by New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in handling the post-attack narrative by unambiguously designating the incident as a "terrorist attack", resulting in a more corrective and reformative step as opposed to the vacuous "contextualising", as was done by the Australian Senator.

In India, too, expected apologists of terror across the border and some within, lend immediate "context" and "credence" to any terror attack by willy-nilly justifying the same on the pretext of the need to "introspect why it happened?" Terrorism is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that breeds and survives



on popular legitimacy of its actions among the aggrieved communities and the other stakeholders — this psychosocial "oxygen" is the key determinant for its sustenance. It is this spirit of unequivocal delegitimation that was invoked by Ardern when she spoke about the terrorist in a deliberately nameless way by stating, "He may have sought notoriety but we in New Zealand will give him nothing. Not even his name." This handling was very different from the terror attack in Pulwama in India, where spotlight on the "perpetrator" was ensured by the cynical political manipulation of the same, a 24-hour media blitzkrieg covering the sublime-to-the-ridiculous theories and the unashamed "sharing" of true and manufactured content on the social media. Somehow, under the garb of various "contexts", the Pulwama terror act did not unite the entirety of populace for its sheer brutality and inhumanity but deflected the issue into unnecessary divides of political positions, pro-and-anti-nationalism and ended up polarising the masses even more.

FRINGE SUPPORT, BE IT AS APPLAUSE OR 'CONTEXT', IS SUFFICIENT FOR THE TERROR INDUSTRY TO CLAIM LEGITIMACY — IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT NO PLATFORM FOR CONTEXTUALISATION OF TERROR IS ALLOWED IN THE AFTERMATH OF ANY TERROR ATTACK

A similar frenzy was instrumental in elevating Burhan Wani into a cult-like phenomenon with a complex process of cognitive accommodation,

claims-and-counter-claims and societal assimilations. It is important to recognise that the maximum "context-setting" of terrorism is done by foreign powers who have vested interest in the disruption of normalcy, national politicians with a hovering electoral calculator and finally the TRP-driven media (mainstream and social) that ignites popular passions to ensure that the requisite "fuel" for terror justifications persists. China's patent realpolitik approach in defending Pakistan, and by that extent, JeM chief Masood Azhar on the floor of the United Nations, is a classic case of a foreign power affording a context of "technicality" in vetoing the symbolic step that could have named and shamed Islamabad, which brazenly chooses to side with those who use violence in the name of faith. Even fringe support, applause or "context" is sufficient for the terror industry — it is imperative that no platform for contextualising of terror is allowed in the aftermath of any terror attack. Speaking about Pakistan's support for terrorism, UN Secretary-General António Guterres had specifically said that "no political reason...no cause, no grievance" could justify it. Former US President George Bush in his address to the joint session of Congress on September 20,

2001, had famously exhorted on the double-speak on terrorism, "Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists." This nudge had led to some temporary course-correction in Islamabad — with Pakistan purportedly joining the global "war on terror" — but the subsequent reversal to its patent contextual support to the terror industry led to its coming under the international scanner — take for example the ongoing Financial Action Task Force (FATF) proceedings — and reached its pinnacle of opprobrium when Osama bin Laden was "taken out" from the military garrison town of Abbottabad. Similarly, Pakistan refuses to abandon its basic instinct of contextualising and interfering in the affairs of its neighbours, much to the chagrin of Kabul, Tehran and Delhi. Proverbial chickens are coming home to roost as the Pakistani establishment now plays the "martyr card" on terrorism after years of contextual support based on a flawed interpretation of history, co-religionist and "freedom struggle" as it expectedly backfired, giving an invaluable lesson to all apologists of terror-contextualising. (The writer is a well-known columnist and an author)

SOUNDBITE

Are you (party workers) preparing for the elections? I am not talking about 2019, but 2022.



Congress general secretary —Prynanka Gandhi Vadra

Sanjay Bhansali gave me a brief narration of Padmaavat and offered the film to me. He offered me a song in Ram-Leela.



Actor —Kangana Ranaut

The US must act cautiously and avoid forcefully moving forward a draft resolution in the UN to blacklist Masood Azhar.



Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman —Geng Shuang

Modiji you have crossed all limits of indecency by calling political parties in a democratic system as 'sarab' (alcohol). No statesman has ever fallen so low.



Congress spokesperson —Randeep Surjewala

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Successful launch

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Space superpower" (March 29). Having successfully test-fired an anti-satellite missile, India has joined the elite space league comprising the US, Russia and China. Mission Shakti is the result of nine years of hard work by our scientists. By shooting down a low earth orbit satellite, the mission has been declared successful. India has rightly assured the international community that it would not misuse this new capability.

KV Seetharamiah Hassan

Uphold spirit of game

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Between spirit and rules" (March 28). R Ashwin's "Mankading" of Jos Buttler during an Indian Premier League match between Punjab and Rajasthan has stirred up a controversy. The cricket fraternity and fans stand divided on the "Mankading" incident. However, it must be understood that Ashwin just followed the rule

Mission Shakti sets deterrence barrier

This refers to the editorial, "Space superpower" (March 29). For one hour or so, citizens were kept in suspense and fright. And then came the Prime Minister's announcement that India had successfully test-fired an Anti-Satellite (ASAT) Missile and joined the hitherto three-member exclusive and elite club of space powers. However, in the absence of any immediate external threat, people were not that excited over the success of Mission Shakti.

The question whether we could not have done without contributing to the weaponisation or militarisation of space went unasked. Technology-driven space wars are a recipe for the annihilation of the whole human race. Some commentators stressed that India shot down its own low-orbit satellite 'Leo' in less than three minutes from Kalam Island off the Odisha coast in the Bay of Bengal without realising that it was a test that was carried out. Shooting down the satellite of any other country would have been an 'act of war'. Further, no



enemy satellite has been ever shot down in real warfare by any one of three powers — the US, Russia and China — in possession of the anti-satellite weapon. Reassuringly, the Prime Minister made it amply clear that India's newly-acquired capability to destroy satellites was not aimed at any one country as such.

G David Milton Maruthancode

Prepare for the polls

Sir — This refers to the article, "The fatal game of opportunistic politics" (March 27) by Kalyani Shankar. Impartially speaking, both the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance are set for a high-octane political battle, come

May 2019. The writer's comparative analysis between the Congress and the BJP holds good. For the latter, issues like anti-incumbency, agrarian crisis, demonetisation blues and most importantly, non-delivery of poll promises, including jobs for the youth, will matter. As a united Opposition was leaving no stone unturned to pose a grave challenge to the ruling

regime, the Pulwama terror attack and the subsequent air strike in Balakot gave the latter a chance to uplift its sagging image. Further, while the BJP has announced a slew of pre-poll alliances, the grand alliance has been more interested in forming state-specific partnerships. In the end, it is the electorate who will play the role of a king-maker.

Azhar A Khan Rampur

Where is the rulebook?

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Between spirit and rules" (March 28). After Ashwin's "Mankaded" dismissal of Jos Buttler, much talk has erupted about the true spirit of the game. If the rule is against the game's true spirit then why was it included at all? Nowadays, batsmen take advantage of being out of the crease even before a ball is delivered. It's time to include "Mankaded" as the 11th type of dismissal in ICC laws.

PK Suresh Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Sensex soars over 400 points; Nifty reclaims 11,500-mark

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Global equities were mixed amid a fall in bond yields, underscoring recession fears. The 30-share Sensex, after a positive start at 38,208.30, stayed in the green throughout the session, with buying pace gathering momentum towards the end.

banks and IT. Bank Nifty propelled to a new high in expectation of rate cut from RBI next week and recapitalisation of banks. Besides, the slide in India's 10-year bond yield further raised the possibility of rate cut.

We eyeing up to 20% sales from sustainable fabrics products in 18-24 months

New Delhi (PTI):

Apparel brand W, a part of TCNS Clothing Co Ltd, is eyeing up to 20% of its revenue from sale of products made from sustainable fabrics in the next 18-24 months.

Infosys to acquire 75% stake in ABN AMRO Bank subsidi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's second largest IT services firm Infosys on Thursday said it would acquire a 75% stake in ABN AMRO Bank's wholly-owned subsidiary, Stater, for 127.5 million euros (about ₹989 crore).

S&P downgrades Tata Motors, JLR credit rating

New Delhi (PTI): S&P Global Ratings has downgraded the credit rating of Tata Motors and its wholly-owned subsidiary Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), citing weak profitability, Tata Motors said on Thursday.

PFC completes acquisition of REC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Power Finance Corporation (PFC) on Thursday completed the acquisition of majority stake in REC Ltd. by transferring ₹14,500 crore to the government, an official said.

Sharma handed over the RTGS advice to Power Secretary AK Bhalla on Thursday to complete the acquisition. The money has been transferred into the government's account online.

NIFTY 50

Table listing NIFTY 50 stock indices with columns for SCRP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, and CHANGE. Includes stocks like IRLHSNGFN, ZEE, ADANI PORTS, etc.

BSE 500

Table listing BSE 500 stock indices with columns for SCRP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, and CHANGE. Includes stocks like SUZLON, DHFL, RPPOWER, etc.

Table listing top gainers and top losers in the market. Columns include stock name, change, and percentage change.

NSE Nifty

Table listing NSE Nifty stock indices with columns for SCRP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, and CHANGE. Includes stocks like JAGAN, NAIKRI, SHREKCEM, etc.



Table showing Gold prices for 20th, 22nd, 23rd, 25th, 26th, 27th, and 28th of March. Prices range from 32,970 to 33,060.

Table listing BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty stock indices with columns for SCRP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, and CHANGE. Includes stocks like IRLHSNGFN, ZEE, ADANI PORTS, etc.

Trend Blazer

Amitabh starts prepping for KBC

Actor AMITABH BACHCHAN has started prepping for the new season of the reality game show *Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC)*. "So prep for KBC starts and here we are running into introductions, systems, learning new inputs, rehearsing, getting ready for another year," Amitabh wrote on his blog. The actor has been a part of the show for nine seasons. He also talked about his association with the general knowledge-based game show. "Its 2019 and it all began in 2000. 19 years and a gap of about two years when it did not happen for me. But 17 years is a lifetime and a life time that was given a lifeline by you," he wrote.



'Criminal Justice has been an amazing experience for me. It is a legal crime drama, bold and edgy but takes you on a journey that will keep you hooked till you finish the series. It is commendable how smoothly every scene was shot. I'm thrilled that my digital debut has been so intense and enriching.'

—Jackie Shroff



Actress MADHURI DIXIT NENE says she is not contesting the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. There were reports that the actress might contest the Lok Sabha elections from Pune for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). But the actress says she is not involved with any political party. "It is just a rumour. I am not contesting for any political party. I think I have already cleared the air on that matter," Madhuri said. "In fact, I think there are three other actors who were roped in for the rumour and I clarified it," she added. The actress will soon be seen in multi-starrer *Kalank*.



'Excited for The Titan Games'

Actor DWAYNE JOHNSON recently launched his show, *The Titan Games*. Speaking about the participants that have been chosen to come on the show, Dwayne said, "I think one of the compelling things about our hopeful titans are their background stories and where they have come from. The trials that they have gone through and the challenges that they have faced, proves that they are the potential titans from all walks of life." "I am pretty excited for everybody to watch the show, not only for the physical competition but also the mental strength it is going to take these titans to actually win," he added.



Actress JACQUELINE FERNANDEZ tells AYUSHI SHARMA why...

...IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

Health sensibility and consciousness has been on the rise at an exponential rate in the country. Taking the stairs instead of the escalator, accounting a trainer after or before work hours, replacing soft drinks and other packaged drinks with health and immunity-boosters — these are some of the ways a fit routine and the need for a healthy body is taking over the Indian minds. There is yet another side to India's growing health consciousness. Actress and fitness enthusiast Jacqueline Fernandez said that the trend blazer has been pointing upwards for people reading food labels and understanding nutrition charts before making a decision. She said that the change has surely come in and people are taking their health as the "most important factor." Well, it's also one of the major reasons why 'Delhi Gets Raw' was organised in the city recently by the Raw Pressery. She said that cold-pressed juices are more helpful in maintaining health as compared to other packaged drinks or everyday juices in the market, which are made with concentrate, stabilisers and extra-added sugar and preservatives. "Cold-pressed juices are never heated and consist 100 per cent fruit. They



retain more nutrition and living enzymes in the juicing process. It basically makes your food work harder to gain more nutrition, vitamins and enzymes to lead a healthy lifestyle," said she. The actress is an extremely avid follower of yoga, purely because of its "holistic health benefits." She said, "I'm really glad we hosted *Yoga Rise* in Delhi, as the city is now leaning towards making healthy the new sexy. Nothing looks as good as a healthy body and vibe. Our aim is to go out there and help people make the right choices. I'm grateful that yoga has become that channel for us. The energy in Delhi is surreal and we hope to do more of such wellness events." Jacqueline, who was initially not so inclined towards it, now

'ALWAYS SET AN AIM FOR EVERY WEEK AND KEEP A TRACK OF YOUR PROGRESS. DON'T PUSH YOURSELF BEYOND LIMIT ESPECIALLY AFTER A TIRING DAY. NEVER PUNISH YOUR BODY'

fully embraces yoga. It is rooted deep in her workout and fitness regime. She not only follows it religiously, but also suggests her friends and family to practice it. She said, "To achieve flexibility, yoga is the best exercise. It also slows down your stress level." Talking about her fitness mantra, Jacqueline said, "It is quite simple — one should eat right, must get adequate sleep, and exercise regularly because it's never too early or too late to work towards being the healthiest you. I ensure that I maintain a healthy diet, stay positive and relaxed. Being healthy is the need of the hour." No matter how one keeps in mind the fitness mantras, she says, there are certain things that need to be worked upon like "stamina and flexibility."

She recalls that she discussed about how there was a need of cold-pressed juices with no added preservatives with her friend before the beverage brand was even launched. "At the same time, such juices should also be convenient and a seamless fit in our current fast-paced life without making any compromise in quality. The juices are easy to carry and can be home-delivered whenever required," she suggested. Some of her fitness tips: - Always set an aim for every week, keep tracking your progress. - Have sufficient quantity of water, it keeps the body hydrated. - Don't push yourself beyond limit especially after a long tiring

day. Never punish your body. - Always read the label before buying food items. - Eat fresh, healthy and nutrient-enriched foods. It's no wonder that more than half of us open a supplement bottle to get the nutrition we need. Many of us take supplements not just to make up for what we're missing, but also to give ourselves a boost. Jacqueline feels that getting nutrients straight from a pill sounds easy, but supplements don't necessarily deliver on the promise of better health. She said, "I believe in eating healthy and having a natural diet as that is best for the body. While this might take some time to adapt, it will surely pay off in the long run and help lead a more balanced life."

They say 'literature is the voice of human heart'. As the JCB Prize for Literature jury comes back this year, Rana Dasgupta, literary director, said, "The Jury is conceived to reflect a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. This is how we ensure the verdicts are fresh and interesting to a large number of readers. The members of the 2019 jury are passionate readers, and eminent within their respective fields. They will have fascinating debates about the books we send in their direction." Pradip Krishen, Jury chairman, said, "I'm honoured and immensely pleased at this opportunity to peer deeply into a year's worth of Indian fiction. It is especially gratifying that the prize goes

BEAT THE JURY

The JCB Prize for Literature returns with inclusivity for Indian fiction in languages other than English high on its agenda. By TEAM VIVA

out of its way to include Indian fiction in languages other than English, bringing it to the attention of a wider audience. It's going to be intense and together with a set of wonderful colleagues on the jury. I'm looking forward to play my part in this year's selection." The jury comprises Anjum Hasan (author and critic), Pradip Krishen (filmmaker and environmentalist), K R Meera (author), Parvati Sharma (author), and Arvind Subramanian (economist and former chief econom-



ic adviser to the Government of India). The jury will announce the list of ten titles on September 4, followed by the short list of five titles on October 4. The winner of the ₹25 lakh prize will be announced at the awards dinner on November 2. If the winning work is a translation, the translator will be awarded an additional ₹10 lakh. Each of the five shortlisted authors will receive ₹1 lakh; if a short-listed work is a translation, the translator will receive ₹50,000.

The 2018 prize was awarded to *Jasmine Days* by Benjamin, translated from the Malayalam by Shahnaz Habib.

Love is ageless

Is There Still Sex in the City? the follow-up to the iconic novel, brings a fresh take on women in their 50s

Comedy series *Sex and the City*, which examines love and dating after 50. In a competitive situation, Paramount Television has landed the rights to its follow-up novel — *Is There Still Sex in the City?* which is set to be released by Grove Press on August 6, hails from *Sex and the City* author Candace Bushnell. The book is a take on sex, dating, and friendship in New York city after 50. Set between the Upper East Side of Manhattan and a country enclave known as the village,

the book looks at love and life, marriage and children, divorce and bereavement, as well as the real pressures on women to maintain their youth. Bushnell will write the pilot script and serve as an executive producer on the project along with Liza Chasin from 3dot Productions and Robyn Meisinger. "The original *Sex and the City* book and series served as a ground-breaking touchstone for an entire generation of women, myself included," said Nicole Clemens, president of Paramount TV. —IANS

Diljit unveils his wax statue at Tussauds

Actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh on Thursday unveiled his Madame Tussauds' wax statue. A die-hard fan of reality TV star Kylie Jenner, Diljit wants her wax figure too, should find a spot in the iconic Regal Building at Connaught Place. The *Udta Punjab* star has said in the past, he wanted to visit Madame Tussauds in London, but could not. "There was a long line. I was in London for a day so couldn't find the time. I tried again but the attempts were not successful. Then I thought, I will go in like this only," he said. And now the singer's wax replica has indeed entered the museum. He acted surprised by the strong resemblance between him and his wax figure, which sports black and red casuals with a huge neck piece and a black turban. It is the first turbaned figure in Madame Tussauds Delhi. "Forget about having a wax figure here, I had almost given up hope of even entering Madame Tussauds," said the artist, who took a selfie with the figure. Asked which actress' statue he would like to have here, he laughed and said, 'Kylie Jenner.' Diljit, who turned up at the event all suited up, has often expressed his "love" for the reality TV star on social media. His fans gathered outside the Regal building to get a glimpse of him. One of them said, "It's an honour for all the Sikhs to have his wax figure as he is the first Sikh celebrity to get a wax statue at Madame Tussauds." Diljit wasn't seen interacting with his fans, but he had a message. "First of all, there is no need to be like me. I am just doing my job. I am working for myself and family. Keep working hard, you will get what you want," he said.



Photo: Pankaj Kumar

Doing without convenience

Automotive technology has come a long way in the past two decades but is there any modern convenience you could do without?



KUSHAN MITRA



The automobile has been around for a 125 years now, and ever since Bertha Benz, the pioneering wife of the car's inventor Karl Benz demonstrated that a vehicle could be used over long distances, humanity has not been the same because the tyranny of distance was suddenly removed. The internal combustion engine may be loathed by misguided environmentalists but without it we cannot imagine modern society. Even if we consider that the real boom in automobile ownership really started a century ago at the end of the First World War and the subsequent economic boom, the car of those days were nowhere near the cars of today, even something as elementary as the layout of the pedals and self-starting engines were not around. Forget a hundred years, I have been driving cars since I was just under 18, working my way up to a license at a driving school. And back then, about to give my twelfth boards, I had a rather different vision for my life, even thought that I would give my IIT entrance exams. The last thing I imagined was that I would end up travelling

around India and the world driving and writing about cars for a living, so things turned out fairly alright I'd say. But back in the late-1990's, while the Maruti 800 and Zen had made their way onto our roads and the first of the cars from the new breed of manufacturers like Ford, Opel and Hyundai were just coming in, many folks still drove the Ambassador and the Padmini. And if you did you would remember that changing gears was a bit of a skill. Today, many cars have a rev-counter and while that is something that you would miss in a car if it was not there, unless you are out and out gunning the car, do you really need it? Because in an automatic car, the computers are so smart that they know exactly how you are driving and what gear you need to change to, and even if you override the system, the gears change seamlessly. That wasn't the case in old cars, you had to listen to the note of the engine and know just when to slot the cogs in. But synchromesh gears are not new, so that is not a rabbit hole that we will go down. But from the 2000's to today, in cars that I have been driving for a living so many things have changed.



So I asked a couple of my peers what feature of the last twenty-odd years in automotive development that they could not live without today. Now these features are necessarily brand-new but have become far more common in the past twenty years. Murali Swaminadhan of the Hindu BusinessLine told me that it would be modern Climate Control systems, which according to him are now essential thanks to hot weather conditions and rising dust and pollution, as well as so advanced that you don't really need to keep on fiddling with them like you needed to with the sliders on the Maruti

800 for example. Adil Jal Darukhanawala, automotive expert and historian and my driving companion over the past few days driving a new luxury car told me that it would be the dual-clutch gearbox. This is a remarkable feature that allows for near instantaneous gear changes with the car keeping the next gear in the sequence selected by having two clutches, one for odd gears and one for even gears. Of course that is a very simplistic way of describing this but essentially that is what it is. While these DCT gearboxes are standard on luxury cars, you can find them on the Volkswagen Polo

GT TSI and Automatic options on the Vento, and the VW Group calls their DCT gearboxes a DSG and the technology was developed by Porsche for sporty versions of the 911. Ford had such a gearbox on the earlier EcoSport and Fiesta. For me, the feature I can't really live without are reversing and even all-round 360 cameras. Particularly with modern car safety features ironically leading to a rash of blind spots, it is impossible to often reverse without these, and occasionally even make tight turns. The 360 camera on the new Nissan Kicks might feel like a gimmick but is very useful. As I wrote in an earlier column, I have become so used to this that my basic reversing skills are not as good as they used to be. The fact is that cars today are very advanced, very fuel efficient and very safe. And not only are they a world removed from cars of a century ago, they are a world removed from cars from just twenty years ago. I like driving classic cars occasionally, but anyone who says that the 'old days' were better has no idea of what they are talking about. Nothing like the present and I can't wait for the future!



Seven Stars of Happiness



Vir Singh

Our contemporary civilization and all the civilizations to come must be saturated with happiness. Happiness is an attribute of an environment that builds up with seven sources. These sources generate positive energies and combat entropy of the biosphere and evolve happiness, more happiness, and more happiness - putting the civilization on the path to an everlasting joy. Everlasting joy is conditioned by sustainable happiness. We can call these sources as Seven Stars of Happiness (figure 1). These are:

1. Knowledge
2. Beauty
3. Institutions
4. Spirituality
5. Democracy
6. Freedom
7. Creativity

Knowledge is a source of enlightenment. And any source of enlightenment brings infinite happiness to life. Knowledge charges your mind with an

amazing lure to unfold mysteries of the universe. And when your mind is creatively engaged in unfolding mysteries of the universe, you are immersed in infinite joy.

Happiness flowers in all its bright and enchanting colours amidst beauty. Happiness itself is an imperative for synthesizing beauty. As Lady Blessington says, there is no cosmetic for beauty like happiness.

Many institutions - such as marriage, family, schools, universities, etc. - developed and evolved by human society prepared a fertile base to multiply and enhance happiness through the promotion of selflessness, unity, integrity, solidarity, learning, peace, tranquility, humility, and intellectualization. These institutions are vital for passing happiness-cultivating values on to future generations.

Spirituality breaks down dormancy of all human faculties and activates them to unleash their potential of physical, intellectual, ethical and aesthetic development to help individuals illuminate the self and the society they are part of with happiness.

Democracy has its national and global role in consolidating human freedom and giving freedom its valuable dimensions of deeper responsibility and commitments. Blooming in luxuriant premises of democracy, freedom nurtures

happiness for one and all. We cannot imagine any lasting happiness without freedom. Dictatorship rules are curse to human freedom. A hell of democracy is much better than a heaven of dictatorship. For democracy keeps the seeds of happiness viable, which at certain point of time grow into bumper crop of happiness, but a 'heaven' of dictatorial regime crushes human dignity and erases hope of happiness.

Creativity evolves from happiness. And creativity also gives happiness its true meaning. The both are complimentary to each other. A happy environment explodes potential of superb creativity. Creativity evolves to its climax forms amidst an environment of happiness. Creativity itself transcends human happiness. The higher the forms of creativity the more vibrant the faculties of happiness. Development of art, philosophy and cosmology has emerged as inexhaustible sources of happiness. Happiness sought new dimensions of its expression. And conditioned by happiness, our scholars evolved more illuminating forms of art and philosophy.

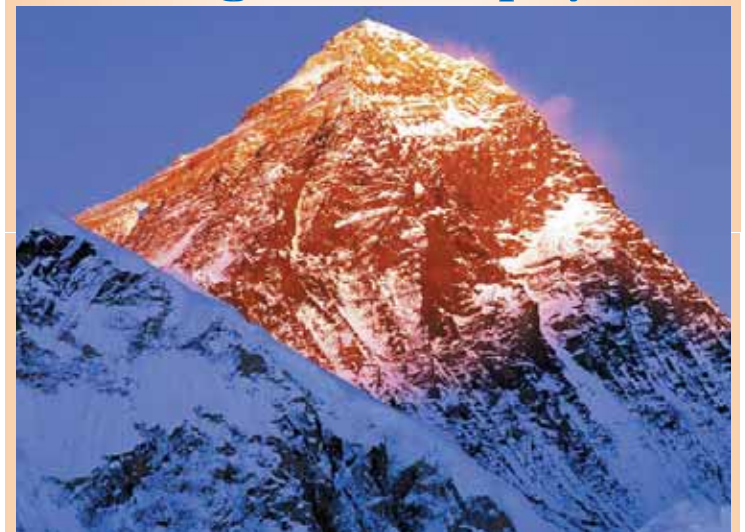
Philosophy elevated its interest from Earth to the cosmos and cosmology continuously served to nourish human intellect to unfold cosmic mysteries giving human happiness a new dimension of its own vastness. Happiness, indeed, finds deeper

roots with creativity. The higher the form of creativity the more intensive the happiness. Creativity keeps you reverberating with fullness of life. With creativity one can beautifully link oneself with the past and happiness can be fetched even from the times which are gone. Happiness is dynamic; it travels across ages. Creative achievements and glory of the past trigger happiness in the present times. Happiness of the present helps create happy futures.

What should be the motto of a civilization? It must be Happyism. Pursuance of happyism must be the central theme of every concept, every perspective, every project, every art, every philosophy, every plan, every policy, every law, every governance. Happyism would help cultivate peace and beauty in a civilization. A happy civilization is a highly creative civilization. A happy civilization is a vibrant civilization. A happy civilization is a life-enhancing civilization. A happy civilization is a true civilization. Happiness, in essence, is a gist of a civilization. Happyism would serve as a foundation of sustainably happy civilization.

(The writer is a Professor of Environmental Science at GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology. He is author of numerous books on environmental, agroecological and eco-philosophical issues).

The Power of Himalayan Yogic Philosophy



Ravi Dabral

I have heard and read about many famous international personalities such as Steve Jobs (co-founder of Apple) and Mark Zuckerberg (Chairman and CEO of Facebook). They went to the Himalayas in Uttarakhand to learn spirituality under the patronage of ashram gurus and yogis, soon after which they became very successful, renowned and wealthy personalities. I was embarrassed to know that foreigners understood the importance of the spiritual powers of gurus and yogis in the Himalayas, but despite being a native of Uttarakhand, I never understood their role and significance.

For around fifteen years, I conducted extensive studies, research, investigation, and interacted with many Himalayan yogis and ashram gurus. During my stay at the ashrams in Rishikesh, Haridwar and hills of Himalayas, I interacted with some renowned international personalities and came to know about their real-life experiences. On the condition of anonymity, they agreed to share their enlightening experiences for the benefit of global readers and citizens. Finally, I found secrets to spiritual peace and material wealth, ways to inculcate virtues and values, and methods to eradicate vices such as greed, lust, and addiction.

The materialistic way of life is that of enjoying the pleasures of the five senses, and ignoring spirit, intellect, and virtue. Materialism considers enjoyment as the final objective of human existence. It believes neither heaven nor hell. It does not seek liberation, and doesn't believe in reincarnation.

As per Charvaka, the illusion of the soul is due to a particular combination of four elements - earth, water, fire, and air. Maybe through a chemical process generating wild thoughts and dreams in the mind, humans were led to believe that they were special on earth and needed values and ethics, which, indeed, are mere phantoms created by a diseased mind.

Charvaka's philosophy declared that religion was a means of livelihood for the priests, propagated by kings and politicians to fool and rule over the innocent.

Sage Charvaka, said to be one of the chief disciples of sage Brihaspati, was impressed with the materialism philosophy. He promoted and spread it among Devils. As it is easier to be addicted to vice than virtue, addiction to vice spread like fire in a jungle and reached ordinary people; it became their lifestyle. People who used to earlier worship nature or deities soon inherited vices which still exist in modern society.

Marketing experts, public relations (PR) agencies, event management companies and psychoanalysis experts cash the consumerist mindset. They kill our intellect and reason with the help of glamourised events and celebrity advertisements. People thus become slaves to harmful products. Once addicted, the person suffers in terms of health and money. On the contrary, MNCs selling such products become richer and treathumans as mere products who consume their products.

In mythology, sage Brihaspati, the teacher of Devas or Deities, propagated the materialism philosophy, that is, 'eat, drink and be merry' among the Asuras or Devils so that they may spend their lives in material pursuits and ruin themselves without giving any trouble to deities.

To lead a virtuous and peaceful life, the being must avoid jealousy, anger, hatred, selfishness, gossip, expectation from others, comparison with others, and criticism of others. It is important to have empathy and sense of brotherhood to live in harmony with other beings. Such mental and spiritual development can occur through practice of Indian spiritual principles.

India must consider including principles of spirituality from ashrams in Himalayas in degree courses and MBAs, given that stressed executives from international corporations have sought solace in these holy spots.

A spiritual immersion course may be made part of higher education, degree courses and MBAs as students, from this point forth, head towards a very stressful materialistic world. It is important to prepare future leaders with a spiritual mindset so that generations to come don't lose sight of what is essential during material pursuits.

(Based in Uttarakhand, the author has been a commodity trader for over two decades. The article is based on his latest launched book 'Greed Lust Addiction' in English and 'Laalach Vaasana Lathi' in Hindi)

KNOW THYSELF



Pranav Pandya

It is but natural to enquire about the name, village, address, etc. of a person with whom one has to travel or whom one has to accompany for some time. This acquaintance gives freedom from worry and at the same time paves the way for depending on mutual help in emergencies. A total stranger looks suspicious.

One's own entity always remains with oneself. Its physical and mental aspects are so close that they remain with the self round the clock whether one is awake or asleep. Wife is called by many epithets like life partner, better half of the husband, two bodies-one consciousness, etc. but, she too remains with the husband for a few hours that too at some distance from him. Children come near once in a while for specific purposes but they are considered one's very own and one has to share their pleasures and pains. A person is always worried about the future of his children and, as far as possible, plans ahead for it. It is strange that our inseparable instruments of expression like the body and the mind, which are always there with us, are neglected by us. Seldom one enquires about their purpose.

The soul has embodied itself in the material plane with some purpose. Do we understand the purpose and consciously and resolutely pursue it? Whenever a bungalow or a vehicle is given to an officer, he is told that these are to be used for official purposes and not for personal work. If any officer defaults and rents out a portion of his bungalow or uses his vehicle for private purposes, it would be considered immoral and willful infringement



ment of the rules for personal gain and will attract suitable punishment.

Human life is precious. It is a unique, artistic creation of the Creator. Such a boon is not available to any other creature on the earth. No other creature is endowed with the faculty like the human intellect, or with two hands with ten fingers that can be creatively and dexterously used? Which other creatures have the ability to stand erect and walk on two feet? Who is capable of earning their livelihood and accumulating the surplus for later use? Which other creature uses clothes and houses? Who else other than man possesses the wisdom to develop an organized family and social order? Whose senses possess such sensitivity? Who

possesses the intricately fashioned living garment like the human body? The fact that a human being has been blessed with special faculties sets him apart from other creatures. Thus it becomes evident that human life has been given to us for some specific purpose willed by God. We must concentrate on clearly understanding this purpose and then live life in the light of our true identity as a spark of Divinity. If appropriate efforts are not made to know our true selves through the special faculties and instruments gifted to us for this search by our Creator and we squander away these divine gifts in sense-gratification, it would be a betrayal of our spiritual inheritance leading to endless suffering and pain.

In order to get started on this pilgrimage of self-discovery, we will have to wake up out of the stupor of self-forgetfulness - Maya. Here is what Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo has said about self-effort in the path of self-discovery in his marvelously inspiring words:

"In all that is done in the universe, the Divine through his Shakti is behind all action but he is veiled by his Yoga Maya and works through the ego of the jiva in the lower nature.

In yoga also it is the Divine who is the sadhak and the sadhana; It is his Shakti with her light, power, knowledge, consciousness, Anand, acting upon the adhara and, when it is opened to her, pouring into it with these divine forces that makes the sadhana possible. But, so long

as the lower nature is active the personal effort of the sadhak remains necessary.

The personal effort required is a triple labor of aspiration, rejection and surrender - aspiration, vigilant, constant, unceasing - the mind's will, the heart's seeking, the assent of the vital being, the will to open and make plastic the physical consciousness and nature; rejection of the movements of the lower nature - rejection of the mind's ideas, opinions, preferences, habits, constructions, so that the true knowledge may find free room in a silent mind; - rejection of the vital nature's desires, demands, cravings, sensations, passions, selfishness, pride, arrogance, lust, greed, jealousy, envy, hostility to the Truth, so that the true power and joy may pour from above into a calm, large, strong and consecrated vital being; - rejection of the physical nature's stupidity, doubt, disbelief, obscurity, obstinacy, pettiness, laziness, unwillingness to change, tamas, so that the true stability of Light, Power, Anand may establish itself in a body growing always more divine; surrender of oneself and all one is and has and every plane of the consciousness and every movement of the Divine and the Shakti.

In proportion as the surrender and self consecration progress the sadhak becomes conscious of the divine shakti doing the sadhana, pouring into him more and more of herself, founding in him the freedom and perfection of the divine nature. The more this conscious process replaces his own effort the more rapid and true becomes his progress but it cannot completely replace the necessity of personal effort until the surrender and consecration are pure and complete from top to bottom.

Note that a tamasic surrender refusing to fulfill the condition and calling on God to do everything and save one all the trouble and struggle is a deception and does not lead to freedom and perfection."

(Pranav Pandya is the head of the World Gayatri Pariwar, Chancellor of Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya and director of Brahmavarchas Research Institute. Besides, he is the editor of Akhand Jyoti and president of Swami Vivekananda Yogvidya Mahapeetham)

