

Meditation is a great way to keep my body well-centered while juggling shooting schedules and recording sessions
— Ariana Grande



REVDI CULTURE IS HERE TO STAY

Despite so much debate and discussion of the revadi culture in the recent past, all political parties have gone all out of the way to offer sops to woo voters in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh assembly polls, writes DIPAK UPRETI

Childhood stories like that of 'Kabuliwala' remind one of the street hawkers announcing their arrival and selling goodies like 'budia ke baal', peanuts, 'channa', 'gazak', and also ubiquitous sweet, 'revdis'. The last selling item has recently taken a political colour with no less a person than Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself giving a condescending look at the humble 'revdis' and decrying what he called "revdi culture" of freebies spawned by certain political parties and more specifically by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) of Arvind Kejriwal ruling Delhi and Punjab and currently making a high-pitch foray in PM's home state Gujarat.

'Revdis' themselves are popular sweet meat available even as 'prasad'. But now all political parties are showcasing 'Revdis' in their poll campaigns to distract the voters from their political rivals to their own decorative election campaign carts.

The 'freebies' or 'revdis', though, seen in the larger context, could also include tax cuts for corporate sectors, waiving off of Non-performing assets, and also sanctioning projects and schemes in the poll-bound states by the ruling parties.

They have been in vogue for long but received currency of late in the political dialogue which is increasingly turning bitter unlike the 'revdis', which have always been a good 'time pass' sweets for an average Indian to be taken without much fuss...

The debate raised is that freebies are a waste of tax payers' money which should be invested in such a way that it institutionalizes benefits and that too on a 'permanent basis' and is unlike offering a free laptop, cycle or a monthly allowance without any accountability to available finances or the budget.

In a welfare state, free health, education, and a minimum subsistence allowance to poor should not be viewed as 'freebies' but be welcomed as a step towards positive discrimination.

For example, the 'Janaushadi kendras', under Central Scheme, offering allopathic medicines at less than half the market prices go a long way in relieving the pain of economically backward and middle class who are already facing the mercenary grind of an insurance-based healthcare system.

A free or highly subsidized health and education system catering to the economically poor section should be an obligation of the state and must not be considered 'bad

economics' and part of the "Ravadi culture" as has been made out by some of the advocates of 'globalization'.

The poll-time 'revdis' are, however, polished goods whose shine go away, once elections are over and at a time never delivered or fulfilled.

In circulation on the eve of poll season, all political parties rigorously decorate their 'election face' with goods and items which could fetch them easy and enough votes to win. And like wily hawkers, political leaders announce them in their manifestos as if these could be the vehicles of transformation in a developing country like ours.

Despite the Prime Minister's disapproval of freebies, BJP's Gujarat manifesto is full of revdis and has also drawn sharp criticism from the Congress and AAP, for its "striking commonalities" with the sops, guarantees or 'revdis' promised by them.

The BJP manifesto titled "Agresar Gujarat Sankalp Patra 2022" pledges to provide free education to girls from kindergarten to post-graduation. This promise mirrors the Congress manifesto released on November 12.

The AAP too has promised free education to all children. At a rally at Mahidarpura in Surat's diamond market, the AAP candidate from Varachha, Alpesh Kathiriya, charged that the BJP manifesto was a "xerox copy" of the AAP guarantees.

Targeting the BJP, Gujarat AAP president Gopal Italia makes taunts, "When we announce our guarantees, the BJP calculates cost and tells us where will you get the money from."

The BJP manifesto promises to provide free medical treatment by doubling the cap of 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana' to ₹10 lakh from the existing ₹5 lakh.

The Congress has also promised a ₹10 lakh free medical health cover to all citizens.

While the BJP has promised two free LPG cylinders annually for women under the 'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana', Congress has pledged subsidized cylinders at ₹500 per unit.

Gujarat Congress spokesman Manish Doshi says, "The Congress manifesto announced well in advance forced the BJP to focus on education and health. Their promises follow ours."

"In 2012, when we announced the 'Ghar nu Ghar' scheme (promising houses to voters) the BJP promised to build 50 lakh houses," he says.

'Revdis' distributed by political parties, in the game of winning elections, are more or

less the same except for their packaging and carry bags..!

Congress has pledged to write off farmers' debt up to ₹3 lakh each in the state, while the figure promised in this regard by the AAP is ₹2 lakh. Both Congress and the AAP have promised electricity to farmers during the daytime for irrigation purposes.

In its manifesto, BJP promises to host Olympic Games in the state by 2036 and provide 20 lakh jobs in the next five years.

As part of their poll pledges, both the Congress and the AAP have promised 300 units of free electricity for people, which the BJP has not done.

Giving an example of the first Solar-powered village in Modhera in Gujarat Prime Minister sought to counter rivals by claiming that it is time to "sell electricity" instead of receiving it free.

As against the BJP's promised 20 lakh new jobs in the next five years, Congress and the AAP have promised to fill 10 lakh vacancies in the state government's departments and PSUs.

Congress also pledged to regularise contractual government employees.

Both the Congress and the AAP have also promised to provide ₹3000 unemployment allowance to jobless youth and restoration of the Old Pension Scheme which the Congress has also promised in Himachal Pradesh that voted on November 12.

The party has also promised an unemployment allowance of ₹3,000 per month, ₹2,000 pension to 'divyangs', widows, senior citizens, and needy women, and waiver of loans of up to ₹3 lakh of all fishermen.

The AAP has also promised free water to farmers, ₹3,000 unemployment allowance, and a waiver of electricity bills

All three parties have promised assistance for cows and livestock and sought to milch cows for votes even though the emaculated bovines themselves are eating plastic in cities and towns of Indian streets.

While the BJP in its manifesto pledges to roll out 'Pashu Aadhar cards' and subsidised cattle feed for calves, Congress has promised ₹5,000 for every family seeking to buy a cow. The AAP has promised ₹40 per day for the maintenance of each cow in the state.

Besides, the Congress has offered a ₹2,000 pension to 'divyangs', widows, senior citizens, and needy women, and a waiver of loans of up to ₹3 lakh for all fishermen.

The AAP has also promised free water to farmers, ₹3,000 unemployment allowance, and a waiver of electricity bills.

With an eye on tribal constituencies, the BJP manifesto promises to set up 25 residential schools for tribals. The AAP too has matched it by promising to build residential schools for tribals in all districts besides constructing houses for them.

The women voters are being increasingly enticed by the political parties with the 'revdi' offerings with Congress in Himachal Pradesh promising monthly ₹1500 to each woman above the age of 18. AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal has offered ₹1000 monthly 'financial assistance' to all women in Gujarat above 18 of age saying "it is not a freebie but people's money which is theirs".

Leave aside Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh elections, the humble Municipal Corporation of Delhi elections have attracted a rainbow of 'revdis' by AAP, Congress, and the BJP too.

The ruling BJP in the MCD has promised to provide free cycles to meritorious girl students of class V studying in MCD-run schools in Delhi and to set up 50 'Annapurna Rasoi' run by women in which citizens will get food at ₹5!.

It is estimated that over 84 percent of Delhi government schools, mostly run by the AAP government, don't have Principals. This apart, teachers in the MCD-run government schools are missing their salaries and schools are grossly understaffed with a single teacher teaching many subjects and some primary schools don't have money to even employ a guard. Many government schools have been closed or on the verge of being closed even though DDA land is available with the MCD to open new government schools.

The 'revdi culture' could not be a substitute for real development lest there would not have been potholes, broken drainages, miserable hospitals, and schools without teachers. But when the political intent is to be in power and not the transformation of the 'basics', 'revdis' come in handy to outplay the voters as deceiving lollypops. They are superficially created to treat the symptoms of 'development' but rarely contribute to it and create undesired inequalities and nepotism.

It would be apt to quote the traditional idiom to describe the crafty mist created by the political class during the poll season: "andha baante revdi, apne apno ko de", that is, a sightless person will distribute revdis only to his near and dear ones.

(The writer is Special Correspondent of The Pioneer)

“ON THE EVE OF POLL SEASON, ALL POLITICAL PARTIES RIGOROUSLY DECORATE THEIR 'ELECTION FACE' WITH GOODS AND ITEMS WHICH COULD FETCH THEM EASY AND ENOUGH VOTES TO WIN. AND LIKE WILLY HAWKERS, POLITICAL LEADERS ANNOUNCE THEM IN THEIR MANIFESTOS AS IF THESE COULD BE THE VEHICLES OF TRANSFORMATION IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY LIKE OURS



YOU ARE NOT WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE

Number of business leaders interested in personal growth rising, says 'Happiness guru' SRIKUMAR RAO

The number of business leaders interested in personal growth is rising and they are those who can handle stress and anxiety that are increasing worldwide, says 'happiness guru' Srikumar S Rao.

The elite coach, who works with a select group of entrepreneurs, professionals, and senior executives, recently came out with a book "Modern Wisdom, Ancient Roots", in which he distills and condenses valuable life lessons, from ancient masters, sacred writings, and his own experience, into quick-to-read, easily digestible chapters.

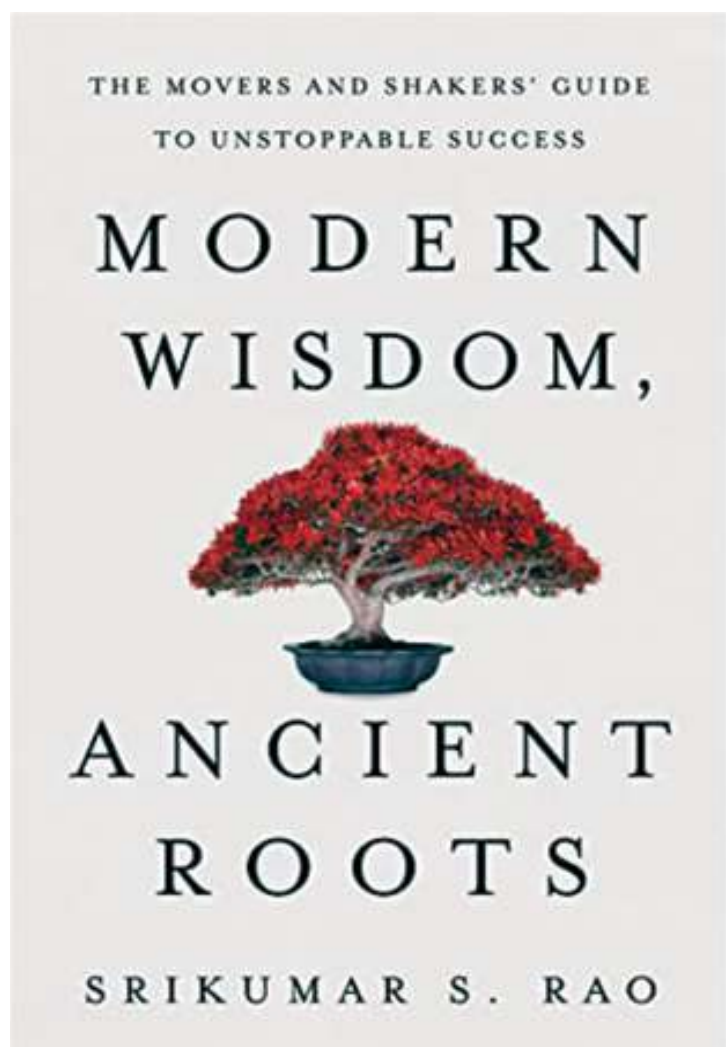
"There are many lessons in the book and they derive from great masters who come from many different traditions and who lived in different times," Rao says.

"The common themes are: You are not who you think you are – a lone individual struggling in a world that is indifferent to you. You are pure awareness and have power that you cannot conceive of.

"You do not live in a 'real' world. You live in a 'construct' you created with your mental chatter and mental models. If you don't like any part of your life, you can deconstruct the parts you do not like and build it again. This is something you will do over and over," he says.

According to Rao, it is "entirely possible to live a life where you are free of stress and radiantly alive every day. In fact, you are wasting your life if you do not feel this way."

On leaders and self growth, he says, "Not all business leaders are interested in personal growth. But the



YOU DO NOT LIVE IN A 'REAL' WORLD. YOU LIVE IN A 'CONSTRUCT' YOU CREATED WITH YOUR MENTAL CHATTER AND MENTAL MODELS. IF YOU DON'T LIKE ANY PART OF YOUR LIFE, YOU CAN DECONSTRUCT THE PARTS YOU DO NOT LIKE AND BUILD IT AGAIN. THIS IS SOMETHING YOU WILL DO OVER AND OVER

number of those who are increasing. These are the leaders who can handle the stress and anxiety that are increasing worldwide." He also says that there are many entrepreneurs who are on a path of conscious growth.

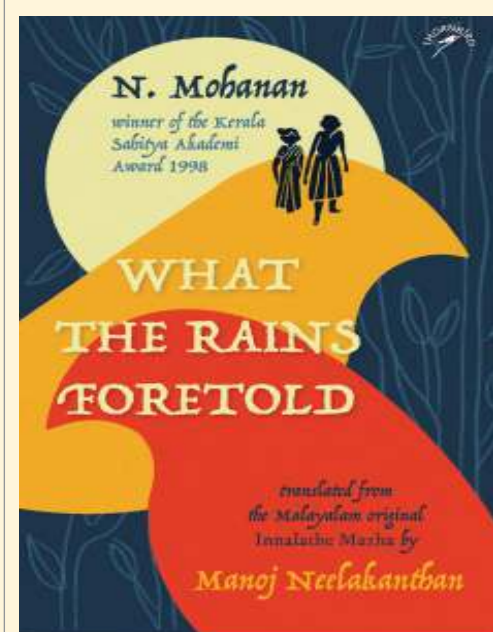
"I will not name them because they have their ups and downs and fall down many times even as their overall trajectory is upward. An external observer can easily misinterpret the initiatives that did not work." Rao believes that personal mastery gives people the ability to focus one-pointedly on any issue that they choose.

"Without the customary distraction of unbridled mental chatter, ideas spring up spontaneously. Entirely different perspectives emerge. Many possible solutions to your problem come to mind. This is what others would call creativity," he says.

Rao, who has coached many CEOs in the world, thinks business leaders can make a quantum leap in their lives by gaining personal mastery.

"Business is not an end in itself. It is a vehicle for personal growth. Yes, you want to increase revenues and become more profitable. Yes, you would like your company to be known as one of the 'best places' to work in. You would like to be considered an exemplary boss," he says.

Rao goes on to add: "But, as you try to achieve each of these ends, you are really working on yourself. If you sincerely hew to this intent, quantum leaps happen. You don't have to try to achieve them.



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WHAT THE RAINS FORETOLD

For sure, for sure, It is ordained. The writ of destiny Awaits its unfolding. The writ of destiny Brooks no undoing.

voice, 'Let this be heard, oh Lords of the cardinal directions, Mother Nature, Clairvoyant Messengers! I have heard my fate, my destiny. But I, Vararuchi, am capable of rewriting my destiny... I will prove destiny wrong by my actions. Bear witness, divine forces, that Vararuchi shall not be turned back in his resolve, come what may.'

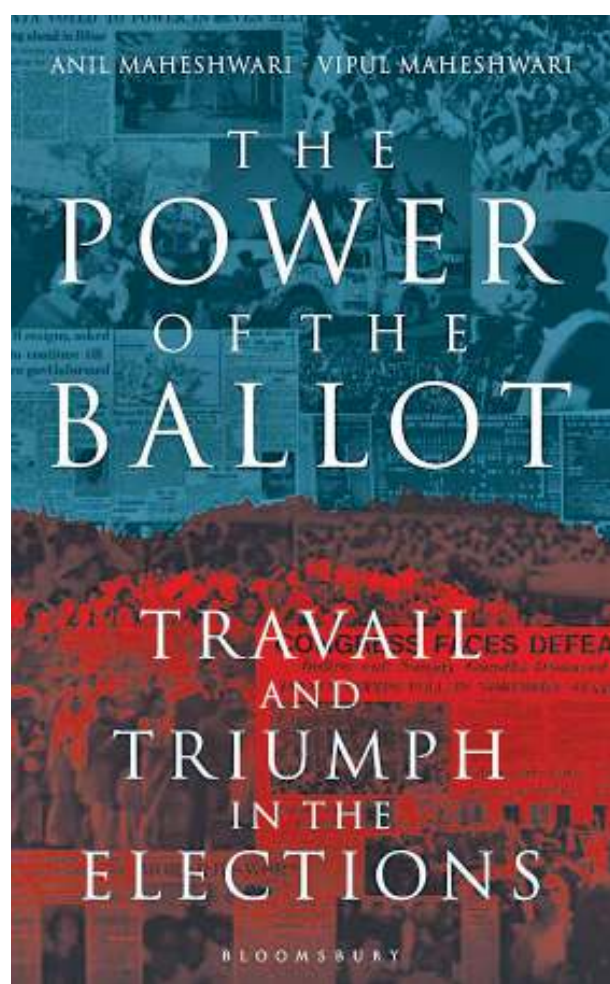
Vararuchi sprang up and looked angrily upwards, from where the voices came. 'Never, never! The writ of destiny will never happen. It is I, Vararuchi, who says this. This will never happen,' he yelled.

Agitated, Vararuchi walked up and down, wringing his hands in sheer exasperation. At length his gait slackened as he quietened visibly. Looking all around in the darkness, as though searching for someone who would hear him, he declared at the top of his

Speaking thus, he gathered his staff and belongings and disappeared into the night. Presently the skies darkened, the stars hid under heavy clouds and lightning flashed threateningly. A maddening wind tore through the heart of the forest, shaking trees in its wake. Thunder rent the night air as it began to pour heavily.

The Power of The Ballot

The book gives an in-depth look at the many challenges surrounding Indian elections, including the problem of criminalization, the role of money



The Bharatiya Jan Sangh, the forerunner of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), ran as a new political organisation in the 1962 Lok Sabha elections. Suraj Lal Verma, the proprietor of a flour mill, contacted Jan Sangh activists in Lucknow with hopes of securing a seat for the Sitapur constituency in the upcoming election. When asked why he wanted to run for office, he said that an astrologer had foretold he would win.

After a brief outburst of laughter, the party officials decided to award Verma the ticket in exchange for his donation of five jeeps and Rs 25,000 to five assembly candidates. In

order to compete against Dinesh Pratap Singh, the Raja of Kasmanda, who was running for Congress, the party needed a candidate from the Sitapur region. Additionally, it required financial and material resources. Nevertheless, the Jan Sangh did not validate Verma's claims about his riches. He was the owner of a relatively small flour mill, after all. Verma's jeep was seized, and he was given a light beating by irate party members. When the Jan Sangh began campaigning for him, using his last name frequently, Verma fled to Lucknow to hide. Even though the people desired a candidate

from among themselves rather than a "Raja," the Congress treated Verma as if he were irrelevant. With a margin of 3,377 votes, Verma was declared the victor.

The narrative is full of the components that Indian elections are made up of, including the criteria for receiving a ticket, the significance of caste and community, the ability of the voter to denigrate the powerful, and the use of astrological forecasts.

These are only a few of the many anecdotes told by Anil Maheshwari and Vipul Maheshwari in their book The Power of the Ballot: Trial and Triumph in the Elections, in which they tackle the massive topic of election in India.

The depiction of the tradition in Haryana of weighing candidates against coins is another example of utilising an anecdote to highlight the idiosyncrasies of Indian elections. By the 1980s, the chances of victory for every candidate, including unaffiliated candidates who had little chance of victory, were being compared to coins. All the performances were carefully orchestrated to fool the voters. A creative candidate even went one step farther and had himself measured against country booze, which was then served to the crowd. A second contender was weighed against laddoos, which were also presented to the audience. An enraged rural population allegedly weighed a senior minister in the Bansilal government against a pile of stones.

The book gives an in-depth look at the many challenges surrounding Indian elections, including the problem of criminalization, the role of money, concerns expressed about computerised voting machines, and the necessity for electoral reforms, all of which are brought out with vivid detail.

Price Rs 699 Pages 381

The magic of sound healing

Sound healing is an age-old procedure that uses frequencies to bring the body into vibrational balance and improve physical and emotional health and well-being



The concept of Sound healing as a form of therapy has been known for a long time, but it has not been put into practice effectively or widely. Dr. Anju Sharma's Brahm se Brahmaand lucidly explores the magic of sound healing by spelling out the effectiveness of vibration on the human mind and body.

The book centres on the theme that everything in the universe is in the form of vibration including sound. The author claims that if we understand the impact of sound, 90 percent of the disease in the body can be cured because sound not only affect the surroundings but also the individual.

According to the author, the concept of sound healing is based on the idea that everybody creates a vibration that is resonant in a certain way. Claiming that vibrations healing is based on the idea that everything in the universe including our body is in the state of vibration, the author says that "illness is caused by blockage which stops that organ in question from vibrating at its healthy /optimum frequency."

Explaining the logic behind sound healing, the book claims that sound healing works by sending sound waves throughout the body, which brings harmony through oscillation and resonance.

This helps restore the body's balance, which in turn helps you heal.

Backing her claims with scientific data, the author cites a study published in 2017 that found that 30 minutes of sound therapy combined with traditional care after spinal surgery reduced stress and helped body cells repair-- and sometimes grow.

The book tries to drive home the point that sound therapy first heals at the emotional level, then at the mental level, and when the energy movement heals the mental blockage, then it automatically helps us in clearing the physical health.

Book explores heroic exploits of Lachit Barphukan, other bravehearts

Lachit Barphukan was a master tactician and war strategist whose military zeal infused a sense of immense responsibility in his army, says a new book on the Ahom general of Assam who led his force to victory over a numerically larger and superior Mughal army.

In his book "Bravehearts of Bharat: Vignettes from Indian History", historian Vikram Sampath profiles 15 unsung heroes and heroines of India from varied time spans who fought to uphold the tradition and culture of their land.

The book comes at a time when the 400th birth anniversary of Lachit is being celebrated in the national capital from November 23 to 25 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi slated to attend the valedictory function.

In the chapter on Barphukan, the author describes how Assam's "man of destiny" stood up to be counted and to create history for himself and his clan.

Sampath also goes on to give a brief overview of the Ahom kingdom, which, he

says, was highly regimented in its structure.

The Barphukan was the military and civil commander of the Ahom army.

Assam was invaded several times by the Delhi Sultanate up to the 16th century, but this met with no success. The inhospitable and inaccessible terrain, and the warrior spirit of the people who fiercely guarded their independence enabled them to maintain their dogged resistance against all attacks.



Overall, an interesting concept that needed to be explored and practiced in the challenging modern times when stress is turning out to be one of the biggest health

hazards. Dr. Anju Sharma is an award-winning doctor, psychic reformer, motivational health awareness speaker, and founder of the musical healing band Sound of Infinity.

Hapless victims of borderless cyber terror

Globalisation accompanied by multiple waves of advanced information and communication technologies has made nation states and their citizens more prone to attacks by unknown enemies.

The cyber enemies are fast creating a world devoid of trust, creating a brand new vocabulary of conflict and chaos. James Adams, one of the founders of a cyber security firm called iDefense, had in 2001 warned that cyberspace is fast going to be a "new international battlefield".

Cyber warfare is a new reality.

A decade ago, then US Secretary of Defence Leon Panetta declared the dangers of a "Cyber Pearl Harbour". Further then US Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano cautioned for a "Cyber 9/11". In 2015, James Clapper, the then Director of National Intelligence, stated that the US must get ready for a "Cyber Armageddon".

Since the 9/11 terror attack on the US, the most powerful nation has been exposed to external threats. No one, even the US intelligence and other top security agencies would have thought of a terror assault on the US.

But it happened that too at an unparalleled magnitude, and terrorism received a new nomenclature called "global terrorism" and the fight against this scourge came to be known as "Global War on Terrorism". The massive global terror network starting from the dreaded al-Qaeda to the Islamic State has in fact redefined the contours of global terrorism.

Precisely, this phenomenon has grown like an industry accompanied by a large institutional mechanism all around the world. While these monstrous radicals are taking on humanity irrespective of region, religion and race, the devil of cyber terror has emboldened them. And frankly, the nation states have once again encountered an unidentified, borderless and all-encompassing catastrophic regime of terror.



In the light of the latest cyberattack on the e-services at the prestigious All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, in the last week of November, the possible threat of ransomware is surfacing again. With this horrendous strike, nearly three crore data storage of patients, including the VVIPs like the former Prime Ministers, Presidents, etc, are either lost, damaged or seriously compromised.

With immediate steps taken by the Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations of the Delhi Police, there is every chance that the perpetrators will be identified soon. At the moment, we do not have sufficient legal and security measures to prevent such malware attacks in India. Since the establishment of the Indian

Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) in 2004, a national nodal agency, the collection, and analysis of data, and preventive measures to avert cyber security threats have become stronger than before.

The National Cyber Security Coordinator under the National Security Council Secretariat coordinates with multiple institutions at national level on various cyber-security matters. Besides, the National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre established in 2014 under the 70A of the Information Technology Act 2000 (amended in 2008) makes necessary arrangements to protect all institutions of national critical importance.

Again, the Cyber Swachhta Kendra (Botnet Cleaning and

Malware Analysis Centre) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) is providing us adequate preventive mechanisms to stop such malicious viruses into our cyberspace. In fact it is part of Digital India Initiative of the Government of India that aims to create a secure cyber space by detecting botnet infections across the country. This centre also helps to notify, clean and secure systems for all end users to protect them from possible malware attacks.

But it is pertinent to know whether such mechanisms are enough to protect our national and regional critical infrastructures against hundreds of malwares released by various nefarious actors? If not what more can our Government do? At the moment, the nation-

al cyber security agencies and all other civil-military organisations are certainly not sufficient to counter possible cyberattacks. It must be noted here that no nation, even the mighty US, is completely protected against such attacks. While global organisations like the Interpol and other top security and intelligence agencies can be the hope for countries like India, the US, China, Russia, the UK, the EU, etc, an immediate global-level cooperation and safe data sharing to fight cyber crime is the only way to minimise threats emerging from the cyberspace.

Today, national governments are facing single most serious security threats not from air force, navy, or infantry divisions but from cyberspace. A simple computer or any digital device linked with the

Internet is open to such attacks.

Indeed, nation states are facing an existential threat not only from their real and perceived enemies but also from growing corporate conglomerates around the world. At this juncture, governments at all the four levels — global, national, regional and local — are grappling to safeguard their territorial boundaries from cyber enemies.

The current Ukraine war is a testing ground for cyber warfare. This conflict has provided extensive insights into the current domain of the digital war zone. Leaders like Putin are once again shaking people's confidence in national and international institutions, making them rather irrelevant for some time.

It's time to stop him and save democracy and basic

human rights of the people on both sides of the border of Russia. Putin's designs have no place in a civilised world like ours. His nasty cyber tactics have already brought immense loss to hapless Ukraine.

The moot question is whether we will be able to overcome the chaos in the near future? Experts say there is a very remote possibility to completely destroy the cyber enemies. No nation is safe today, not even those who launch cyberattacks. It is time to realise the fact that we are living in an open world, wherein there is no place to hide from enemies. All the nations are interdependent, and no one can claim to be fully protected from enemies, both physical and virtual.

It is high time we realised that cyberspace is not an isolated realm. It binds all of us together. We are creating our enemies. The irony is that these viruses are man-made. But we are unable to keep them under control. But we are still struggling to grasp the underlying reality.

For an emerging global power like India, we do not need to wait for another AIIMS like cyber attack chaos. Delhi must respond to the crisis effectively. Its security and intelligence agencies must stop any future attacks over Parliament, the Reserve Bank of India, All India Radio, Prime Minister's Office and all other critical infrastructures.

The magnitude and cyber threat is increasing at an unimaginable rate. But strategies to counter it are purely inadequate at the moment. Today biggest challenge is to remain isolated. It is beyond our control. Many security experts predict that cyber threats might push many countries into physical conflicts. Cyber enemies are creating distrust, pitting one against another and making us suspicious of each other.

(The writer is the Head of the Department of Arts and Humanities at Geeta University, Panipat)

In the light of the latest cyberattack on the e-services of the prestigious AIIMS-Delhi that hacked nearly three crore data storage of patients, including VVIPs like the former Prime Ministers and Presidents, the possible threat of ransomware is resurfacing at an unimaginable scale



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Twitter — A signature takeover?

A social media platform must consider all possible solutions to flush out junk, spam, bots, and other secondary data points. This will keep the focus on first-hand data, which can lead to impressive engagement levels for users and advertisers to rely on and spend more time on the platform



SIDHARRTH SHANKAR

What started as a data-heavy world wide web is no more just about the internet and data. Since Twitter's launch in 2006, social media platforms have been on a roller-coaster ride.

Beyond data content, the focus is on privacy and security shackles entangled in data transmission. It is the Web3 era where the fundamental right of equality also has a digital interpretation. Users on the internet seek democracy in the digital world with their share of rights and duties.

While content and publishing were the triggers for a long time, the platform's health and hygiene are much more critical than any other aspect. Today, it is more about building sustainable digital and social media platforms than the age-old aggression-driven conversation platforms. While excitement and real-time content pull from the users still prevail, the time now is for social media barons to pause and look at the nextGen social verse.

A scrutiny of the rules for social media players reveals the following most impact guidelines.

Priority to user privacy & trust

Social media episodes are presently rife with controversies, harassment, fake information, privacy attacks, and other disturbing trends. This infiltration of the mischief-oriented environment has led to an excessive loss of trust by users from diverse platforms. It is time that the back-end innovators restore this trust by



bringing in content moderation and AI-driven default rules that debar users from crossing the line.

Quality & insight-driven data strategy

Given that what's visible on the platform defines the level and quality of the information being perused, whether or not it's used, platforms must consider all possible solutions to flush out junk, spam, bots, and other secondary data points.

This will keep the focus on first-hand data, which can lead to impressive engagement levels for users and advertisers to rely on and spend more time on the platform.

Monetise better

Platforms now need to move towards more innovation-driven monetisation models, which are economically more viable than the current ones. Elon's announcement addressing a new high for advertising on Twitter is an effort in the right direction to monetise it in a better way. Setting standards being his goal, he says: "Twitter aspires to be the most respected advertising platform in the world that strengthens your brand and grows your enterprise."

The bitter truth

While the bird app's fall after a series of failures has been criticised worldwide, it

must be appreciated that both Elon and Twitter have joined hands to take on the challenge ahead, which is a reboot of all operating mechanisms: from its workforce to policies, product environment, revenue models, and so on. Musk's takeover of the Twitter world may prove to be one of the most important benchmarks for the social media champions of the future.

A change hero but not a leader?

Musk's competence for being an efficient change agent but not the right fit for leadership has been the topic of speculation. However, enough examples from the past prove that the own-cum-CEO for-

mats of running entities are barely successful.

ny about his decision to take over.

Musk & his legal muscles

Notwithstanding the constructive criticism that Musk has been facing for his failed leadership and unreliable management decisions, his ideas on the kind of innovation and change that would benefit Twitter have received support and appreciation. These innovative ideas can create a historical transition point for the bird app if these are coupled with the appointment of inspired leadership officers. It will also provide pointers for others in the field to learn how the life graphs of social media platforms become messy if not the same is dealt with promptly.

Binge watch on legal episodes

That Musk is a lawyer's nightmare is a proven fact. Tesla's changing three legal heads within two years speaks volumes about Musk's penchant for an experiment. Keeping aside Musk's dramatic brushes with the law, it is relevant to look at how the legal battery was at work for Musk to make the Twitter deal happen the way he wanted it and how he continues to grapple with the issues arising out of layoffs.

In July 2022, Musk and his legal team got another jolt when Twitter sued him as he tried to escape the deal. He was pushed to adhere to the contract he had signed. This was again a moment when the legal minds behind Musk built up a strong case emphasising that he had every right to seek more details about the compa-

ny about his decision to take over.

ny about his decision to take over.

It's not all Musk's act

Regardless of the diatribe around the Twitter-Musk saga, it's time to look at essential numbers and stop relating everything to Musk's takeover of Twitter. As per Sensor Tower's data, during the days Musk announced his plan to terminate the agreement to buy Twitter amid spambot and fake account debates, the mean average weekly advertising spending in the US had touched \$945,800. Come September, this dropped to \$944,200, when tensions were building up further over Twitter's deposition in the lawsuit filed in Delaware Court of Chancery. Despite the looming law, the deal seal was expected to be postponed for a while.

By October, before the deal went through, the mean dropped to \$877,200 and plunged to \$589,100 a week after Musk's takeover. Such figures beg further scrutiny.

Musk's current anxiety

After the bloodbath of strategies to take over the bird app, Musk is not enjoying a beach side vacation. Having laid off nearly half of the company staff, he faces many challenges in turning a socially-free platform into a profitable one. But his taste for haste has not gone down well with critical stakeholders - advertisers, regulators, and of course, the tweeters.

Whether the feverish sale of each official blue tick at \$8 or many other such tools in the making, Musk is all out to create cash-ringing models for the social media platform to reg-

(The writer specialises in general corporate commercial, mergers & Acquisitions, and private equity)

