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PAPER WITH PASSION

Discordant notes

NCP chief Sharad Pawar met Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani last week

The Congress' strategy to unite the entire Opposition over the Adani-Hindenburg issue seems to be falling apart. The script almost had the monogram of a Marxist classic: an evil corporate house, in cahoots with a friendly regime, trying to dominate the nation by hook or by crook. It is not the first time that the name of a business house or a tycoon has resonated in the political arena, but it is unprecedented that the grand old party and many others in the Opposition thought that they could oust a government as strong as that of Narendra Modi. Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar, however, has poured cold water on the plan to bring the parties opposed to the Bharatiya Janata Party together. It needs to be emphasised here that Pawar is not just another Opposition leader; he is a stalwart with sharp instincts and matchless political nous; he is also one of the most networked politicians in the country. He is the leader who played a key role in Maharashtra in bringing the Congress, the Shiv Sena (before the split), and his own NCP together and cobbling together a government in the western state. What made the feat really commendable was the fact that his political rivals were Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, who are among the most astute politicians in the country with a proven track record.

The fact that Pawar did not try to conceal his meeting with Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani at the former's Silver Oak residence in Mumbai hints at sharp differences within the Opposition ranks over the GOP's Adani-centric strategy. Then there is Ajit



Pawar, Sharad Pawar's nephew. There are signs of his growing proximity with the BJP. It may be recalled that Ajit surprised everyone in Maharashtra on November 23, 2019, when the then governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari swore him in as deputy chief minister with Devendra Fadnavis as chief minister. The government lasted for three days only, with Ajit coming back to the NCP and the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA). There are again rumours that he may join hands with the BJP, though the NCP has denied these. But it is a fact that Ajit Pawar recently praised PM Modi's leadership. It is not just Sharad Pawar who is uneasy with the Adani issue being dragged into politics; even not all Congress leaders feel comfortable about this development. For instance, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and his Rajasthan counterpart, Ashok Gehlot, are among those leaders whose criticism of Adani seems to be pro-forma. The Adani Group has investments in both Congress-ruled states. Besides, there is former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi's obsession with Savarkar. This strained intra-MVA relations, with the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) unequivocally making its displeasure public. In both cases, Adani as well as Savarkar, Rahul's doctrinaire approach is hurting the Congress' prospects.

PICTALK



Farmers during the ceremonial act of sowing seeds in a paddy field 'Akshaya Tritiya', in Khordha

Towards self-reliance in defence

Uttar Pradesh Defence Corridor is a step in the right direction. It would make India a production hub of defence equipment

In recent years, the Indian government has taken significant steps towards achieving self-reliance in defence production. One such initiative is the Uttar Pradesh Defence Corridor, launched by the Uttar Pradesh government in February 2018. The corridor is a significant push towards creating a conducive ecosystem for defence production and attracting investment in the sector.

The Uttar Pradesh Defence Corridor is spread across six cities (districts) in the state, including include Agra, Aligarh, Chitrakoot, Jhansi, Kanpur and Lucknow. The corridor has been designed to provide a range of facilities and support services to defence manufacturers, including land banks for setting up manufacturing units, testing facilities, and research and development centres. The government has also announced a range of incentives for companies investing in the defence corridor, including tax exemptions and subsidies.

The defence corridor has already seen the signing of several MoUs with leading defence manufacturers, including Lockheed Martin, Airbus, and Tata Advanced Systems. These companies have committed to investing in the state and creating job opportunities for the local population.

The Uttar Pradesh Defence Corridor is a critical component of the government's "Make in India" initiative, which aims to boost domestic manufacturing and create job opportunities in the country. India is one of the largest importers of defence equipment in the world, and the government's focus on indigenous production is a step in the right direction towards reducing the country's dependence on imports. Aim plus is effectively moving from import substitution to export surplus i.e. "make for the world". The wars of 1962, 1965 as well as 1971 operations flag that the capability to respond to foreign aggression got stymied under foreign pressure and we were forced to either accept unfavourable terms as in the Tashkent accord



or go for a diplomatic manoeuvre in 1971 by signing a 'Friendship and cooperation accord' with the erstwhile USSR to keep the US 7th fleet from interfering with the operations in Bangladesh. Also, considering that India is surrounded by two nuclear-powered hostile neighbours and even in the maritime domain, Chinese efforts to dominate sea lanes in the Indian Ocean are shaping an environment where military preparedness is obligatory, India will have to build a strong Military Industrial Complex (MIC) if India wants to have strategic autonomy. The contribution of the UPDIC in this direction will be promising

The defence corridor is expected to generate employment opportunities for over 250,000 people and attract investments worth Rs 20,000 crore. The corridor is expected to create job opportunities across the manufacturing value chain, from component suppliers to assembly and testing facilities. The corridor is also expected to generate ancillary industries and support services. The Uttar Pradesh government has taken several steps to improve the state's infrastructure, which is critical to the success of the defence corridor. The



THE UTTAR PRADESH DEFENCE CORRIDOR IS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S "MAKE IN INDIA" INITIATIVE, WHICH AIMS TO BOOST DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING AND CREATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COUNTRY

government has announced plans to build new airports, highways, and railway lines to support the manufacturing ecosystem. The state government has also announced plans to set up a dedicated defence industrial park in the state, which will provide a range of support services to defence manufacturers.

The Uttar Pradesh Defence Corridor is a significant step towards India's self-reliance in defence production. The government's focus on indigenous production is critical to ensuring the country's long-term security and reducing its dependence on imports. The defence corridor is expected to strengthen India's defence manufacturing ecosystem.

The defence corridor is also significant from a geopolitical perspective. India's defence imports have been a concern for its strategic partners, including the United States. The defence corridor is expected to reduce India's dependence on imports and provide a platform for strategic partnerships with other countries, as also to get some of the critical technologies transferred under offset clauses with various deals already concluded but clauses not yet fructified.

The Uttar Pradesh

Defence Corridor is a prime example of the government's efforts to boost the manufacturing sector in the country. The defence corridor is expected to create a conducive ecosystem for defence production and attract investment in the sector. The government's focus on indigenous production is critical to ensuring the country's long-term security and reducing its dependence on imports. The Uttar Pradesh Defence Corridor is a step in the right direction towards achieving these objectives.

The defence corridor is also expected to have a positive impact on the state's economy. Uttar Pradesh is one of the largest states in India, with a population of over 200 million people. The corridor is expected to generate employment opportunities for the local population and boost the state's economy. The defence corridor is expected to create a conducive ecosystem for defence production and attract major investment in the sector. The defence corridor is a step in the right direction towards achieving these objectives and strengthening India's defence manufacturing ecosystem.

(The writer is a former Engineer-in-Chief, of Indian Army)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

China turns mediator



There is no better cure than the dialogue between two conflicting powers. The geopolitical conflicts and regional rivalry had their solution in diplomatic dialogue. We can end years of long rivalry and conflicting interests, by effectively utilising foreign policy decisions. With China turning into a global superpower, it is playing an effective 'Peace-Maker' and 'Negotiator' role to devise peace and tranquillity in like-minded nations.

China has recently concluded the 'Beijing

Accord" by playing role in restoring normalcy in the ties of conflicting Iran and Saudi Arabia. The reopening of embassies, consular missions and diplomatic arms between rival nations, had proved the Chinese prowess.

This is the reason why when it comes about the mediation role to be played between Russia and Ukraine, everybody names China first. Hence there is no doubt that China is filling the diplomatic vacuum by effectively utilising its stellar diplomatic prowess and dynamic mediation skills. India no doubt had very strong soft diplomatic skills and embraced its soft power in the entire world since our independence, but our approach to bit less impactful vis-a-vis China. Considering China's changed approach concerning foreign policy decisions handling, India too must extend its diplomatic arms to cover more stretches and corners of the world.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

to modern needs. This may help minimise or nullify greed, war mindsets, economic instability, increasing diseases and bad habits like tobacco and liquor consumption, extremism, terrorism, etc.

Madhu Nitviti PS | Secunderabad

NARODA MASSACRE

Sir — More than two decades after 11 Muslim community members were killed in the post-Godhra riots in Ahmedabad's Naroda Gam, the court of S.K. Baxi, special judge for special investigation team (SIT) cases, acquitted all the 67 accused including former Gujarat Minister of State for Women and Child Development Maya Kodnani (is a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and was convicted of orchestrating the Naroda Gam and Naroda Patiya massacres. Witnesses testified that Kodnani was at the scene of the crimes, handed out swords to Hindu rioters, exhorted them to attack Muslims and at one point fired a pistol), former VHP leader Jaydeep Patel (is believed to have had a role in the controversial decision taken

to send the bodies of 59 victims of the train burning to Ahmedabad) and ex-Bajrang Dal leader Babu Bajrangji (Telhka published a hidden-camera interview with Bajrangji, in which Bajrangji talks of his role in the violence against Indian Muslims in the Naroda Patiya massacre, and reporting to Saheb), after a trial spanning 13 years.

People wonder if the special court took 21 years to acquit all accused who killed 11 people! If the special court is unable to find any accused, then why should the court not direct the police or CBI to find out who was responsible for this mass killing? Are such acquittals not emboldening the rioters to do more such acts? This is our new India. Rioters are acquitted, the opposition is put behind bars for complaining against the Government, and rapists are given bail and treated like war heroes when coming back from jail.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The lust for power is anathema to democracy

Karnataka is witnessing defection which is not in keeping with the true spirit of democracy

Democracy is one of the beautiful words in our narrative. Whether it be in India or elsewhere, the term arouses devotion and a sense of belonging among the citizens. It's only those who have experienced the aesthetics of democracy can understand the joy of democracy. The feeling that my vote counts in electing the rulers expected to govern adds to the beauty of this socio-political phenomenon.

Myriad political parties and differing ideologies make democracy a carnival. The interesting aspect of this political system is that even the Communists, for whom democracy is alien, swear by democracy! Isn't it a unique process? All political parties in India believe in democracy so long as it suits their convenience. Many times one is reminded of the words of Henry Ford, the founder of Ford Motor Company that a customer can have a car painted any colour he wants as long as it's black.

Those who are passionate about democracy describe legislature as the temple of democracy. That's also a scintillating description. But in



India, our politicians are adept at altering the meaning of the temple of democracy through shady deals and actions. In the 1960s, 1970s and till 1985, the phrase Aaya Raam, Gaya Raam was synonymous with popular democratic culture. Elected representatives had no qualms about jumping from one party to another in search of greener pastures. There were instances of a politician defecting from one party to another in the morning, coming back to the parent party by noon only to return to the party that had offered to make him a minister.

When the Rajiv Gandhi Government, which came to

power in 1984, amended the Constitution with provisions to disqualify those who cross over from the political outfit to another party, there was a sense of relief among the citizens that the Aaya Ram Gaya Ram phenomenon has come to an end. But the treatment has turned out to be worse than the disease. What we see is mass defection from one party to another to subvert the democratically elected government.

Karnataka which is going to polls is an ideal example of this wholesale defection. Legislators are purchased en masse to bring down governments. Crisis managers hire aircraft or luxury buses to transport the MLAs owing allegiance to their party from one hill station to another beach resort to save them from poaching by the rivals.

The run-up to the Karnataka Legislative Assembly elections saw many BJP legislators jumping over to the safety and luxury offered by the rival parties. If you have leaders like D K Shivakumar, it is not at all difficult to pull down any government that survives because of the political alms seekers.



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

A former chief minister and deputy chief minister who were denied tickets by their party rushed to the rival camp and start abusing their party leadership. Temples of Democracy have become exchanges where stocks are traded. They are share markets where kerd deals are the order of the day. Service to humanity was described as Service to God. (Manava Seva Madhava Seva). But these leaders would not be able to serve the people without being an MLA or MP or minister. All services in the country are taxed. Probably the membership in a legislature assembly or parliament or a minister's post are taxes the public has to pay for the Manava Seva rendered by these leaders.

God save Democracy before it gets labelled as Mobocracy. Our leaders are so passionate about becoming ministers. Withdraw all pay and perks allocated to them and make the entire governing process transparent. They are likely to improve.

(The writer is a senior journalist with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

PAPER LEAK IS A NATIONAL PROBLEM

Sir — Unemployment is taking the form of a big problem in the country, but in the midst of unemployment, 'paper leak' has become a national issue. To become eligible for a respectable government job, thousands of children leave their happiness aside and study, but while studying for the competitive exam, they are apprehensive that the paper might get leaked. Paper leak is like betrayal of hard working youth. Despite all the problems and struggles, the candidates reach the exam center for a government job, but there are all restrictions before entering the exam center, but the sealed paper is already circulating outside.

This is the reason why the paper leak incidents from Rajasthan to Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh are being investigated at different levels. Even the people involved in paper leak and copying are roaming outside after a few days. It is clear from the incidents that the government's arrangements are succumbing to the copycats. The future of lakhs of people hinges on one exam, in such a way paper leak is collectively playing with the future of lakhs of people.

Mahesh Kumar Sidhmukh | Jaipur

GLOBAL BUDDHIST SUMMIT

Sir — Buddha's preaching and ideas are meaningful to any era. Holding Global Buddhist summits will inspire one and all. Good Buddhists must play an active and practical role to stop wars including the ongoing one between Russia and Ukraine. Buddhists have a good name in the entire world for their selfless nature, compassion, sacrifice nature, vegetarianism, non-violence, greedless nature, no domination etc. They must use Buddhist principles for starting peaceful negotiations to bring peace, prosperity and progress to Russia, Ukraine and the entire world (of excellence). This can be easy if Buddhists make a digital presentation of happy development management and joyful success solutions based on Buddhist principles but suitable



FIRST COLUMN

GOD IS BOTH A REALITY AND A SYMBOL

God wants us to follow dharma because dharma is the basis of creation



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

What are these? I will mention a few. God wants us to follow dharma because dharma is the basis of creation. It is founded on sound principles of fairness, justice, etc., out of which the 'karmaphala principle' occupies a premier position, and that is so simple: "What you sow you reap." Throughout our lives, we are doing karmas with our bodies, minds and words. These generate karmaphalas of two kinds: good and bad. They come to fruition in the future. If we act according to dharma with others, we will create trust and goodwill. These are great assets to be able to live a quality life. Similarly, God expects us to do our duties, which pleases Him enormously, because that is only right given to us. Results are in divine hands. When we are dutiful, we please people around us; our families, persons related to our profession, etc.; all are pleased, and we benefit.

God expects us to love Him, and He does likewise, which brings us many rewards. If we follow the same practice i.e. of loving others, we are loved in return. Don't we usually evoke a similar response in our dealings with others? Similarly, God expects us to serve Him by preaching supreme knowledge amongst His devotees. God expects us to seek His guidance because He is omniscient. Only God can give perfect guidance



God encourages us to seek His help because we small souls are capable of doing small acts only, unless our past karmas from previous lives are coming to fruition. For example, someone becomes very rich in a short period. Whatever that person may think, he is benefiting from his pious deeds of earlier lives. I follow this instruction to seek help from God whenever I am stuck and from others, who can help. Likewise, God encourages us to take His shelter. Not only should we do that but also benefit by approaching someone who can help us by having a similar mood of surrender. This practice has helped me tremendously in my dealings with others.

God encourages the mode of goodness, which essentially means that we should be good overall. We should behave well towards others, eat what is good for us, speak what is useful to others, etc. Don't we know that being good pays rich dividends? It is a known fact that people help good people rather than bad ones. Similarly, God encourages humility towards Him. When we do that towards God and practice the same in our relationships with others, we benefit immensely. What about being kind? God is a perfect example of this. He never condemns anyone; He punishes, yes, but never condemns. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 9.30-31) Similarly, when we are kind towards others, we reap rich dividends. In the same context, God forgives if someone is truly repentant.

There are plenty of other qualities we can learn from our beloved God. Purity is another. God is purity personified. We can be at least reasonably pure. Purity is such a valued quality that Lord Krishna specifically mentioned that yogis perform acts by body, mind, intelligence and by sense also for self-purification only. (5.11) God wants us to give up ahankara and take His shelter; we will benefit in every facet of our lives. Because this ego pulls us down again and again in our lives. God is so generous that He has allowed us free will, but we mistake it for being independent, which no one can ever be. Why? Because we are always bound by our karmaphalas. When we have good feelings about God (18.65), we become dear to Him.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher)

Mann Ki Baat: Democracy dialogue

Democracy is not just about electing a government once in five years. It is about dialogue and assimilating various groups



SUMEET BHASIN

In the countdown to the 100th episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', the monthly radio broadcast, there is much to look back on and reflect on the journey of conversation and action. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's penchant for direct dialogue with the people of the country is now without a parallel within the country and also abroad. The radio broadcast has truly been an exemplar that politics is not just the means to gain power but to serve the people. In the 99 episodes, millions of people have found comfort in the voice of empathy of PM Modi and also a reassurance that the prime minister of the country accords topmost priority to their concerns.

Democracy is not at all about electing a government once in five years. Democracy is all about dialogue. The discourse must be uninterrupted. Ears should be on the ground. Leaders must know the pulse of the people. Also, leaders cannot be dependent on intermediaries to connect with the people. PM Modi set a trend to connect with the people directly. Millions of letters are received in his office, and many of them have been read out in the radio programme to convey the message that connecting with the people is direct and a bond that is cherished.

A careful study of the contents of the 99 episodes reveals that PM Modi has been highly considerate of the issues closer to the people, and he worked to find ways to mitigate the hardships. In a way, the 'Mann Ki Baat' has been a two-way communication between the people and the prime minister. Since the communication has been direct, there has been no scope for noise as well.

Under the watch of PM Modi, the conventional 'top-down' governance approach has been transformed into a 'bottom-up' participatory and democratic model, wherein the potential of 'Jan Shakti' has been unleashed. Public campaigns for women empowerment, cleanliness, promotion of swadeshi products, environmental conservation and others have in some ways been also guided by Prime Minister's conversations with the people in 'Mann Ki Baat'.

'Mann Ki Baat' indeed scores high when compared with any radio-based outreach programs hosted by world leaders in entire history, including former US President Franklin Roosevelt's 'Fireside Chats', or Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's 'Azad Hind Radio'. It must be noted that 'Mann Ki Baat' has driven home persuasion to the people to own up to the responsibilities of the issues which concern large sections of society. That the government alone will do everything has been an attitude, which has been firmly dispelled by the radio programme.

From December 2016 to March 2023, 'Mann Ki Baat' on Prime Minister's official Facebook handle garnered nearly six crore views. During the covid-19 lockdown period, 'Mann Ki Baat' on PM's Facebook handle garnered over two crore views.

Three common themes characterize 'Mann Ki Baat' -- 'Jan Shakti', changing the mindset of the people, and connecting India to its civilisational roots. Also, PM Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' episodes have proven to have a significant impact on the attitude of the general public, turning various government initiatives into



'MANN KI BAAT' INDEED SCORES HIGH WHEN COMPARED WITH ANY RADIO-BASED OUTREACH PROGRAMS HOSTED BY WORLD LEADERS IN THE ENTIRE HISTORY

(Author is a policy analyst)



mass movements. He lent his weight to the promotion of Khadi and other 'swadeshi' products, 'Swachhata, Yoga, women empowerment through 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao', water and energy conservation, environmental protection, etc. This has also given suitable support to the realization of the core Gandhian philosophy of 'Swadeshi se Swaraj'.

This can also be gauged from the fact that PM Modi's exhortations led to an increase in the sale of Khadi by 125 per cent within one week. In the last eight years, i.e. from 2014-15, the production in the Khadi sector in 2021-22 has increased by 191 per cent, while the Khadi sales have increased exponentially by 332 per cent. PM Modi's espousal of a self-reliant India with his call for 'Atmanirbharta' has also found resonance among the listeners of the radio programme. In the 66th episode, he received calls from a woman in Assam and a man in Tamil Nadu, who expressed their wishes to see India becoming a self-reliant country by being 'Vocal for Local' and by achieving Atmanirbharta in the field of defence.

In his first 'Mann Ki Baat' broadcast, PM Modi, while reading a letter he received from a citizen, suggested his listeners eliminate 10 bad habits (evils), including dirt and filth, calling it the biggest evil that plagued the nation. This set off an ambitious task to guide the country to

accord top priority to solid waste management. The state of filth in the cities had been appalling. The municipal administrations were proving to be too inadequate for the task of dealing with the ever-increasing solid waste, which was taking the form of a mountain at landfill sites across the country. Such garbage mountains have also been sources of emissions of toxic gases, besides contributing to global warming by emitting greenhouse gases. PM Modi wanted the support of the people to deal with the humongous challenge.

India's population is 1.3 billion, which currently generates 62 million tonnes of municipal solid waste per year. Further, as per various studies, India has recently become the most populous country in the world. At this exponential population growth rate, landfills almost 90 per cent of the size of Bengaluru would be required for dumping if the waste remains untreated.

The 'Waste to Wealth Mission' aims to identify and support the development of new technologies that promise to create a clean and green environment. To tackle this issue, the prime minister talked about the potential of recycling garbage and waste to make fertilisers, bricks, electricity, and recycling water for irrigation in several of the 'Mann Ki Baat' episodes.

His call found resonance with the people as accounts of individuals and municipal bodies began

coming of collective efforts to address the issue of solid waste management sustainably. Soon, Gram Panchayats also joined the campaigns. The water bodies which had become dump yards for solid wastes were reclaimed and restored to their pristine glories. This is an irreversible attitudinal change in the way people think about issues confronting them.

Giving credit to the media persons, PM Modi recalled an incident where an 18-year-old Bilal Dar from Srinagar was working for 5-6 years to clear plastic, polythene, used bottles, etc., from the Wular Lake, which had become infamous for its toxic debris. It was found that Bilal Dar had cleaned 12,000 kgs of trash as of 2017, for which he was made the brand ambassador by Srinagar Municipal Corporation as well.

In the 84th episode, PM Modi shared another inspiring story of scuba divers, who removed 4,000 kg of plastic waste from up to 100 metres away from the coast of the Mangamaripeta beach within 13 days, highlighting how a small beginning could become a big campaign.

The 99 episodes of 'Mann Ki Baat' has ingrained the message that PM Modi is also a listener, and he has the patience to listen to the tales of the people. This has been the story of 'Mann Ki Baat' so far, which has given a new direction to the three-tier democracy of the country.

(To be continued ...)

Air Strategies for Delhi to combat rising pollution levels

The Delhi government can show the way forward by employing an imaginative mobility policy that would address the pollution problem in the capital

While pollution has been a longstanding and perpetual challenge for the whole country, the urban areas and the metro cities have particularly borne the brunt of this scourge. Indian cities have regularly featured among the world's most polluted cities in recent years. And among Indian cities, Delhi has often been the worst-performing one with the dubious distinction of having been ranked the most polluted city in the world for the fourth consecutive year in 2022. So what can Delhi do to moderate and reduce the rising pollution levels?

Recognize pollution as a multifaceted challenge
First, the authorities must treat Delhi pollution not



SUYASH GUPTA

(The writer is Director General, of Indian Auto LPG Coalition)

merely as an environmental concern but as a larger policymaking challenge which is invariably also intertwined with a range of other issues such as rampant and unplanned urbanization, rising population, ever-surging vehicular population, fossil fuel combustion, stubble burning in the neighbouring states, shoddy and unsystematic waste disposal and management and burning of firecrackers during Diwali and the extended festive season.

Tackle vehicular pollution

Given the excessively high contribution of vehicular emissions on account of a disproportionately high number of vehicles on Delhi's roads, the government must mount an immediate and

full-frontal campaign to tackle this issue first. According to a recent analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment, vehicles contributed to 51% of PM2.5 levels in the city, the most dangerous air pollutant for human health. And of vehicular emissions, according to another study, 20% of emissions came from four-wheelers.

Auto LPG is far better than others

Exhaust emissions of vehicles running on auto LPG as compared to those running on petrol emit 75% less CO, 85% fewer hydrocarbons, and 40% less NO while leading to 87% less ozone depletion. Furthermore, auto LPG emits almost no black carbon

and has a zero global warming potential (GWP) as against CO2 and methane 25.

Auto LPG is a better option than even EVs, for now

While the recent policy push on EVs must be appreciated, there is a need to acknowledge that setting up an EV ecosystem not only necessitates an enormous amount of investment but also has its supply chain-related constraints, especially in terms of the availability of lithium-ion batteries, a key prerequisite. In contrast, auto LPG already has a well-oiled infrastructure in place. Moreover, not only an auto LPG vehicle is a cheaper option than an EV, the price of converting an existing ICE vehicle into LPG is far more

modest as compared to converting it into an electric vehicle.

Auto LPG is better than CNG

We have seen how over the years, the authorities in Delhi have been gradually bringing in CNG buses for public transport. While CNG may be good for large vehicles such as buses, for a private vehicles such as cars and other four-wheelers, LPG is a better choice. According to experts, auto LPG cylinders weigh less on account of their operating pressure being around 25 kg per cylinder as against 200 kg-300 kg of a CNG cylinder, impacting the performance of the vehicle.

BS norms are not enough
It is worthwhile to note that despite the introduction

of Bharat Stage (BS) emission norms and the need for a periodic upgrade for vehicles in terms of stringency and implementation, our cities including Delhi continue to reel under heavy pollution. This has occurred even as cities such as Delhi were mandated to be among the first ones to implement and upgrade the required emission norms from time to time as compared to smaller cities and the rest of the country.

Delhi Govt's approach

Admittedly, the Delhi government has taken a slew of measures such as setting up smog towers and air filtration systems, taking up traffic-related dust management, identifying and monitoring pollution and traffic hotspots,

and most notably, implementing Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) earnestly. Under GRAP, the recent prohibition of plying diesel non-BS VI-compliant four-wheelers and entering heavy trucks in Delhi is particularly notable. At the same time, the government has also initiated steps on other non-vehicular origin emissions such as appealing to neighbouring states for redress stubble burning, suspending construction activities and banning firecrackers as part of policy stimulus, bringing down GST on auto LPG and conversion kits would be a first step. Simultaneously, it would also have to accelerate measures on other fronts responsible for the city's pollution.

BANGALORE WINS ROYAL BATTLE

PTI ■ BENGALURU

A late charge led by a cameo from Dhruv Jurel was not enough for Rajasthan Royals as a century stand between captain Faf du Plessis and Glenn Maxwell set up a thrilling seven-run win for Royal Challengers Bangalore in their Indian Premier League match here on Sunday.

Invited to bat, Maxwell (77 off 44 balls) and du Plessis (62 off 39 balls) shared 127 runs for the third wicket from only 66 deliveries to power RCB to 189 for 9 in 20 overs.

Devdutt Padikkal (52 off 34 balls) struck his maiden fifty of the season and Yashasvi Jaiswal made 47 for a 98-run partnership for the second wicket but the Royals were lagging behind in the run chase before gaining momentum in the last five overs.

Jurel played a small cameo of 34 not out off just 16 balls (2x4; 2x6) as the Royals scored 61 runs off the last five overs, losing three wickets in the process. But they fell short by seven runs in the end, reaching to 182 for 6 in 20 overs.

The Royals needed 20 runs off the final over bowled by Harshal Patel but could score only 12.

The Royals thus suffered their third defeat in seven matches but remained at the top of the points table due to a superior net run rate (0.844).

Harshal Patel (4-0-32-3) was the pick of the RCB bowlers while David Willey (4-0-26-1) and Mohammed Siraj (4-0-39-1) also played their parts.

RCB dealt a huge blow to RR when Siraj bowled a nip-backer to beat the defence of the dangerous Jos Buttler, cleaning him up for a two-ball duck in the first over.

Having scored consistently in the last few matches, Padikkal ended his drought of a half-century as he struck one six and seven fours during his innings. Padikkal was dismissed by Willey, with Virat Kohli taking his 100th catch in the IPL.

Only two players, Suresh Raina (109 catches in 205 matches) and Kieron Pollard (103 catches in 189 matches) have taken more catches than Kohli in IPL history.

Padikkal's opening partner Jaiswal played some spectacular strokes in the powerplay post which RR were placed at 47 for 1.

Both Padikkal and Jaiswal perished in quick succession



and in that phase, RR also could not find a boundary with Willey keeping it tight.

The benefit was reaped by Patel in the 14th over, when he pegged back RR while denying Jaiswal his fifty, who hit a slow full toss straight to Kohli at long-on. Patel struck again, in the 16th over, to have Sanju Samson (22) caught by Shahbaz Ahmed with RR stumbling to 125 for 4.

Shimron Hetmyer found it tough, managing just three runs from nine balls before he was run out off a superb direct hit from Suyash Prabhudessai at extra cover.

Earlier, du Plessis and Maxwell's century stand threatened to take RCB to a massive total before RR fought back to restrict them to 189 for 9.

Du Plessis and Maxwell had put on 115 runs from 50 balls against Lucknow Super Giants and 126 from 61 balls against Chennai Super Kings.

But RCB stuttered once the momentum was broken after the dismissal of du Plessis, run out off a brilliant direct throw from Yashasvi Jaiswal in the 14th over. The home side collapsed from 139/2 to 189/9, losing seven wickets for 50 runs at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

Du Plessis extended his overall tally to 405 runs in just seven matches with his fifth half-century -- the most for any batter so far. His 39-ball knock had eight fours and two sixes.

On the other hand, Maxwell struck his third fifty of this IPL to make a 44-ball 77 (6x4s, 4x6s) but the rest of the RCB batters squandered the platform set up brilliantly by their top order. Dinesh Karthik (11) was the only other RCB batter to score in double digits.

Royals bowlers were particularly impressive in the final five overs as they pulled things back with a disciplined effort, while also affecting two run-outs.

None of the Royals bowlers could, however, trouble either Maxwell or du Plessis, who batted with utmost ease.

The two batters came together when RCB were put in a spot of bother by Royals pacer Trent Boult (2/41), who rocked them early twice in his first two overs.

Boult gave a perfect start to RR when he pinned Virat Kohli (0) in front of the wickets for the first breakthrough on the first ball of the game, which was his 100th overall wicket in IPL.

CSK reach top of IPL 2023 Points Table



PTI ■ KOLKATA

They had come for their beloved Mahendra Singh Dhoni's 'Last Dance' and CSK didn't disappoint them either.

But for that credit goes to Rahane, who is surprising all and sundry each day with his positive intent. What is missing in KL Rahul is exactly what is there in Rahane but perhaps, the presence of Dhoni in that dug-out which is proving to be a clincher.

Rahane 2.0

It was hard to fathom that the same Rahane had scored just 133 runs from seven matches at a strike rate of under 104 for KKR last season. But Rahane seemed to have got a new lease of life after getting under the leadership of talismanic Dhoni as he continued his rampaging form for CSK with second fifty of the season.

Long perceived as a Test batter, the 34-year-old dished out some never-seen scoop shots, ruthless pulls laced with his signature drives, en route to his second fifty of the season. Overall, he smashed sixes fours and five sixes in his 29-ball knock that came with a 244-plus strike rate. His fifty came off just 24 balls. His tournament strike-rate among specialist batters, who have faced a minimum of 100 balls, is just a shade below 190.

In all, CSK batters hit 18 sixes, exposing the plight of KKR bowlers in-front of a crowd, which for them was like playing at "home away from home".

On a day, the Eden immersed in a sea of yellow, KKR bowlers ran for covers with Kiwi opener Devon Conway once again leading the charge with a 40-ball-56, his fourth half-century of the season.

A transformed Rahane took Eden Gardens by storm with his sensational stroke-play which was complemented in equal measure by the muscular Shivam Dube (50 off 21 balls) and ever-consistent Devon Conway (56 off 40 balls) with CSK scoring an imposing 235 for 4 in 20 overs.

With Jason Roy pulling a hamstring while fielding, the chase was out of question and Dhoni's young pace trio of Akash Singh (1/29 in 4 overs), Matheesa Pathirana (1/27 in 4 overs) and Tushar Deshpande (2/43 in 4 overs) along with seasoned spinners Moeen Ali (1/20 in 1 over), Maheesh Theekshana (2/32 in 4 overs) and Ravindra Jadeja (1/34 in 3 overs) restricted KKR to 186 for 8 in 20 overs.

Jason Roy (61 off 26 balls) coming in at No.5 due to hamstring niggle, did try his bit with a 19-ball half-century but 236 even with best of batting line-ups would have been a tall-order. The win took CSK to top of the table with 10 points from seven games while KKR are now placed eighth among 10 teams after fifth defeat at half-way stage.

To add insult to injury, KKR didn't get any home support as the 67,000 capacity Eden stands resembled a Sunflower as 'Canary Yellow' jersey filling up every corner of the venue.

DC, SRH eye collective batting effort

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Their first win secured, Delhi Capitals would expect more from their batters when they take on a stuttering Sunrisers Hyderabad, who will be eager to return to winning ways, in the IPL here on Monday.

The Capitals have had a tough season so far. They have struggled in all departments and, as a result, lost five games on the trot.

However, David Warner and his troops finally managed to eke out their maiden victory as they scrapped their way to a four-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders on Thursday.

The bowling unit got its act together and put up a stellar display to restrict KKR to 127 but the Delhi batters, barring skipper Warner and deputy Axar Patel, failed once again as the hosts

huffed and puffed to the win.

Much was expected of Prithvi Shaw and Mitchell Marsh but the two have been huge letdowns so far this season.

Marsh hasn't fared well with the ball either, and it is to be seen if the management persists with him or the likes of Rovman Powell and Rilee Rossouw are given another chance.

With the young Indian batters struggling, the onus is also on Manish Pandey, a seasoned campaigner, to bat more responsibly in the middle so that Axar has the freedom to play the big shots towards the end.

While the Capitals have a lot of work to do, there are a few positives they can build upon.

Playing his first game of the season, veteran Ishant Sharma bowled a brilliant spell, turning back time. He bowled with accu-

racy and produced inward movement to fashion the team's first win.

Under the scanner for his below-par strike rate, skipper Warner also looked at his fluent best against KKR. He will hope to continue in similar vein against his former team, come Monday.

Sunrisers Hyderabad have slumped to back-to-back defeats after it seemed their campaign had taken off. They currently occupy the penultimate spot on the table with four points from six games.

The Orange Army has looked good on paper but their batting has failed them. Their batters have neither been able to chase nor put up a good total in the previous two games they lost.

With plenty of match winners in the side, they would hope to get their campaign back on track.



Priyam replaces Nagarkoti in DC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Capitals has roped in Uttar Pradesh batter Priyam Garg as replacement for the injured Kamlesh Nagarkoti for the remainder of the Indian Premier League.

According to an IPL release, fast bowler Nagarkoti has been ruled out of the remainder of the tournament after sustaining a lower back stress fracture.

DC have signed Garg for his base price of Rs 20 lakh.

The attacking batter was first picked by Sunrisers Hyderabad in 2020 and featured in 21 IPL games for SRH across three seasons.

Garg is a forced inclusion despite his poor showing recent years due to lack of options for Delhi Capitals.

Such was DC's plight that even red ball specialist Abhimayu Easwaran, not exactly known for his power-hitting was summoned for trials although Garg pipped him to earn his spot in the side.

Remaining calm under pressure reasons for my success: Arshdeep

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The left-arm quick played a big role in his side's 13-run win over Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium here on Saturday, picking up four wickets, including two in consecutive deliveries in the final over, for 29 runs as Rohit Sharma's side fell short by 13 runs while chasing a target of 215.

"Feels good whenever I take wickets, the win makes the feeling better. Before IPL, I changed my run-up and it helped me with avoiding no-balls. The rhythm is nice and I'm enjoying my cricket right now," Arshdeep said at the post-match presentation.

Arshdeep has taken 13 wickets in seven games in this edition of the IPL.

Asked about his mindset during pressure situations, he said, "Calmness comes naturally, my heart rate doesn't even go up to 120."

Punjab Kings captain Sam Curran described the win at MI's home ground as special.

"It's a special win. Amazing ground, played many games with different sides. Great to get the win. Don't think I should be getting the award, with the way our pacers finished the match," said Curran who was named player of the match for his 55 off in 29 balls in the Punjab innings.

"Arshdeep and Nathan

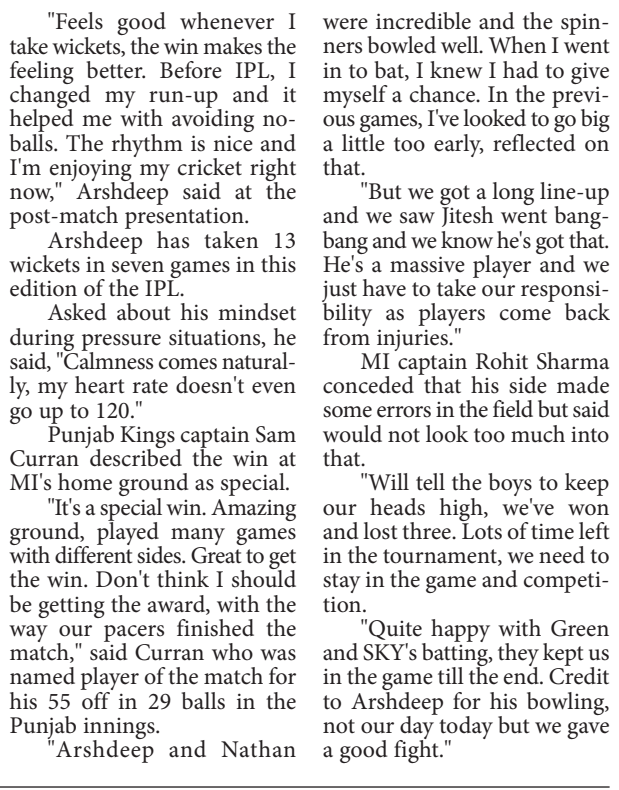
were incredible and the spinners bowled well. When I went in to bat, I knew I had to give myself a chance. In the previous games, I've looked to go big a little too early, reflected on that.

"But we got a long line-up and we saw Jitesh went bang-bang and we know he's got that. He's a massive player and we just have to take our responsibility as players come back from injuries."

MI captain Rohit Sharma conceded that his side made some errors in the field but said would not look too much into that.

"Will tell the boys to keep our heads high, we've won and lost three. Lots of time left in the tournament, we need to stay in the game and competition."

"Quite happy with Green and SKY's batting, they kept us in the game till the end. Credit to Arshdeep for his bowling, not our day today but we gave a good fight."



Sachin technically the best batter I've ever seen, played with or against: Ponting

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Australian captain Ricky Ponting has rated Sachin Tendulkar as technically the best batter he has ever played against, adding that the legendary Indian cricketer always found a way to combat anything the bowlers threw at him.

Ponting added that he would wait for Virat Kohli to end his international career before drawing a "fair comparison" between the two Indian cricketing giants.

"I've said forever, Sachin's technically the best batter that I've ever seen, and played with or against.

"Whatever plan that we came up with as a bowling group, he found a way to com-

bat it, whether it was in India or Australia," Ponting said on 'ICC Review' on the eve of Tendulkar's 50th birthday.

"It's hard to rank and judge players as everyone is different and everyone plays the game differently. But certainly through the generation that I played, he was technically the best player that I saw."

Ponting, however, refused to be drawn into comparing Tendulkar and Kohli just yet.

"Trying to compare the times and I know Virat played a little bit in the back end of when Sachin played, but it is a bit of a different game now," said Ponting.

"There's different rules, for instance, around 50-over cricket, with less fielders outside the circle, two new balls, it makes



it a lot easier now for batting than probably ever before.

"There's no doubt that the bats have got better. Field restrictions and new balls is a big part of it as well," opined Ponting.

He indicated that during Tendulkar's era, facing the old ball, which was reverse swinging, was indeed a tough task.

"When Sachin was playing ODIs, the ball at the end of a 50-over game was very hard to see. It was very soft. It was very hard to hit, it reverse swung. You don't see that at all in the modern 50-over game," said Ponting.

The World Cup-winning captain, who played 168 Tests for Australia, added that a fair comparison between the two giants of Indian cricket could

be made once Kohli calls time on his international career.

"Virat's got all that (time) ahead of him just yet. He's an unbelievably good player, there's no doubt about that. He's got over 70-odd international hundreds now. Sachin made a 100 (centuries), didn't he? Let's wait until Virat's career's over and then I think it'll be a much fairer comparison."

Ponting feels longevity in the game is a big parameter to judge a player and Tendulkar, having played for more than two decades, is high up in the pecking order.

Tendulkar played 200 Tests and 463 ODIs during the period, scoring 51 and 49 centuries respectively in the two formats and holds the distinction of being the highest run-getter of all-time.

"I always like to judge the quality of players on their longevity in the game. I think that's the best way to judge players because maintaining such a higher level of excellence for so long is the hardest thing to do. Some players can come in and do it for three or four years and look like the best players in the world, but the very, very best sustain it for long periods of time and Sachin sustained it for more than 20 years at the international level."

Recalling Tendulkar's 241 against Australia at the SCG during the drawn fourth Test of the 2003-04 series, Ponting, who was a part of Steve Waugh's side then, said it was an awe-inspiring watching the Indian player's straight drives.

"I think his straight driving was his best shot. Whether it be on front foot or even back foot -- because he was short in stature, he won't mind me saying that -- he was able to sort of stand up on top of the bounce of the ball and punch it back down the ground, off the front foot or back foot."

That marathon innings helped the Sourav Ganguly-led side post 705 for seven declared. Tendulkar remained unbeaten on 60 in the second innings.

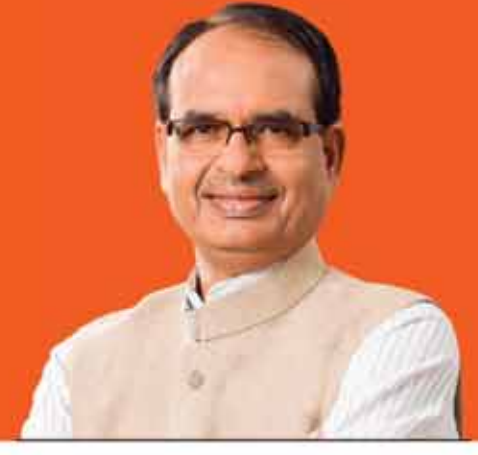
"The trademark things you think about with Tendulkar was just seeing the full face of that bat coming straight back down the line of the ball and straight back past the bowler. So I think that'd be his trademark for sure."



नरेन्द्र मोदी
प्रधानमंत्री



मंगुभाई पटेल
राज्यपाल, मध्यप्रदेश



शिवराज सिंह चौहान
मुख्यमंत्री, मध्यप्रदेश



राष्ट्रीय पंचायती राज दिवस

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मध्यप्रदेश शासन

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प्रातः 10:30 बजे, सोमवार, 24 अप्रैल, 2023

एस. ए. एफ. ग्राउंड, रीवा, मध्यप्रदेश