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INFLECTION POINT FOR HUMANITY

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18 KILLED, 13 HURT IN US SHOOTINGS

MONEY 10
BLOODBATH ON DALAL STREET

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PAK LOCKED IN DO-OR-DIE BATTLE AGAINST SA
12 SPORT

Qatar shocks India

8 former Navy officers sentenced to death; India explores legal options

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

A local court in Qatar has sentenced eight former Indian Navy personnel to death allegedly on charges of espionage. India on Thursday said it is “deeply shocked” and is exploring all legal options in the case. The eight personnel have been held in a Qatari jail since August 2022, and charges against them have reportedly not been made public by the authorities in Qatar.



“We have received initial information that the Court of First Instance in Qatar has today issued a judgment in the case involving eight Indian employees of Al Dahra company,” said the External Affairs Ministry on Thursday in a statement.

Officers who once commanded major Indian warships, were working for Dahrha Global Technologies and Consultancy Services, a private firm that provided training and related services to Qatar’s armed forces. Some of them were working on a highly sensitive project — Italian technology-based midjet submarines with stealth characteristics, sources said.

October 1 after being granted consular access. The seventh hearing in the case took place on October 3, sources said. The trial started in March. Commander (retired) Purnendu Tiwari, who is among the detained Indians, served as Al Dahra’s managing director and commanded several warships while serving with the Indian Navy. The sentenced people include Captain Navtej Singh Gill, Captain Birendra Kumar Verma, Captain Saurabh Vasishth, Commander Amit Nagpal, Commander Purnendu Tiwari, Commander Sugunakar Pakala, Commander Sanjeev Gupta, and Sailor Ragesh. They were detained in Doha. It was also learnt that an Indian journalist and his spouse were recently asked by Qatari authorities to leave the country for reporting the case. The Indian nationals had their first trial in late March. Meetu Bhargava, the sister of one of the officers, had sought help from the Indian government to bring her brother back.

In a post on X on June 8, Bhargava had appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene. “These former Navy officers are the pride of the nation, and again I request our Hon’ble Prime Minister with folded hands that it is high time that they all are brought back to India immediately without any further delay pl. @narendramodi @AmitShah @rajnathsingh @MOS_MEA,” she had posted on X. According to media reports, the former Navy officials faced allegations of espionage related to a submarine programme on Israel’s behalf. Qatari authorities claimed that they hold electronic evidence pertaining to the matter. The men were reportedly accused of spying on Qatar’s advanced submarines for Israel. These submarines were coated with special materials that enhanced their stealth capabilities, something that would be valuable for any navy in the world, source said. According to reports, the submarines were being built in collaboration with an Italian ship-building firm. In 2019, Commander Purnendu Tiwari was awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, the highest honour conferred on overseas Indians. In a post at the time, the Indian Embassy in Doha had said the award was given to Commander Tiwari for enhancing India’s image abroad.

Brief raids poise Israel for Gaza ground attack

8 former Navy officers sentenced to death; India explores legal options

AP ■ RAFAH (GAZA STRIP)

Israeli troops and tanks briefly raided northern Gaza overnight into Thursday, the military said, striking several Hamas militant targets in order to “prepare the battlefield” before a widely expected ground invasion after more than two weeks of devastating airstrikes. The raid came after the UN warned that it is on the verge of running out of fuel in the Gaza Strip, forcing it to sharply curtail relief efforts. Gaza has been under a brutal siege — running out of food, water and medicine — since Hamas’ bloody rampage across southern Israel earlier this month ignited the war. The rising death toll in Gaza is unprecedented in the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza said on Thursday more than 7,000 Palestinians have died in the conflict, a figure that could not be independently verified. Even greater loss of life could come if Israel launches an ground offensive aimed at crushing Hamas, which has ruled Gaza since 2007 and survived four previous wars with Israel. Israeli airstrikes in the southern city of Khan Younis levelled more than eight homes belonging to an extended family,



Residents of Kibbutz Kfar Azza, near the border with the Gaza Strip, that was overrun by Hamas militants in the unprecedented Hamas attack on Israel, hold pictures of their loved ones during a protest calling for the return of more than 220 civilians captured by Hamas militants, in Tel Aviv on Thursday AP

killings at least 15 people. Ambulances raced to the scene as dust from the collapsing buildings hung in the air. The conflict has threatened to ignite a wider war across the region. Hezbollah, an Iranian-funded ally of Hamas operating out of Lebanon, has repeatedly traded fire with Israel along the border. Israel has carried out airstrikes in Lebanon, Syria and even the occupied West Bank. Israel has vowed to crush Hamas’ capacity to govern Gaza or threaten Israel again, while also saying it doesn’t want to reoccupy the territory from which it withdrew soldiers and settlers in 2005. That could prove a daunting challenge, since Hamas is deeply rooted in Palestinian society, with political and charity organisations as well as a formidable armed wing. The blast zone was a chaotic wasteland of crumbled concrete and twisted metal. Rescuers carried wounded people covered in gray dust. The body of a boy was dug out from beneath a concrete slab, where his head had come to rest next to the foot of another person entombed in the wreckage. The Israeli military has claimed that it only strikes Hamas militant targets and accuses Hamas of operating among civilians in densely-populated Gaza.

Biden links Economic Corridor to Hamas attack

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden has said that he is convinced that one of the reasons why Hamas launched a terrorist attack on Israel was because of the recent announcement during the G-20 Summit in New Delhi on the ambitious India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor that integrates the entire region with a network of railroads. Israel has launched a massive counter-offensive against Hamas after unprecedented attacks by the militant group on October 7 killed more than 1,400 people.



Biden told reporters at a joint news conference with the visiting Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese that his analysis is based on his instinct and does not have any proof for this. “I am convinced one of the reasons Hamas attacked when they did, and I have no proof of this, just my instinct tells me,

is because of the progress we were making towards regional integration for Israel, and regional integration overall. We can’t leave that work behind,” Biden said. This is the second time in less than a week that Biden has mentioned the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) as a potential reason for the terrorist attack by Hamas. The new economic corridor, which many see as an alterna-

ive to China’s Belt and Road Initiative, was jointly announced by the leaders of the US, India, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, France, Germany, Italy and the European Union on the sidelines of the G20 summit in September. The corridor comprises an eastern corridor connecting India to the Gulf region and a northern corridor connecting the Gulf region to Europe. Biden said in the past few weeks, he has spoken to leaders throughout the region, including King Abdullah of Jordan, President Sisi of Egypt, President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority, and Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia about making sure there’s real hope in the region for a better future about the need to work toward a greater integration for Israel while insisting that the aspirations of the Palestinian people will be part, will be part of that future as well. Earlier, in a joint news conference with visiting Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Biden said, “Israel has the right, and I would add responsibility, to respond to the slaughter of their people, and we will ensure Israel has what it needs to defend itself against these terrorists. That’s a guarantee,” Biden said. However, he spoke out against retaliatory attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank in the aftermath of the Hamas attacks on Israel.

Mahua summoned on Oct 31

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After recording “oral evidence” of BJP MP Nishikant Dubey regarding his allegations against TMC member Mahua Moitra on cash for query in Parliament, the Lok Sabha Ethics Committee on Thursday asked Moitra to appear before it on October 31. Dubey told the panel that it was an “open and shut” case and the TMC member should be disqualified. He recalled the 2005 expulsion of 11 MPs, who were caught in a sting operation accepting bribes for asking fixed questions in Parliament, to make his point. Sources said Dubey and advocate Jai Anant Dehadrai gave “oral evidence” to the panel against Moitra during the day, after which its chairperson Vinod Kumar Sonkar said the committee will also seek assistance from the Ministries of Home Affairs and IT in probing the allegations. In a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla dated October 15, Dubey said advocate Dehadrai, close to Moitra before they fell out, has shared “irrefutable evidence of bribes exchanged” between her and businessman



Darshan Hiranandani to target the Adani Group and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Birla had referred the matter to the Ethics Committee. Sources said the panel’s meeting began with sharp differences among the 10 members present, excluding the chairperson, regarding who they should hear first, the complainant or the accused, which led to a vote to resolve the matter. Opposition members cited the recent case involving BSP MP Danish Ali and BJP’s Ramesh Bidhuri as an example. They noted that another parliamentary panel had called the ruling party member accused of making derogatory comments in Parliament to testify first. In contrast, the Ethics Committee recorded the statement of

Dubey, the complainant, during its first meeting. The vote ended in a tie as the members, five of the BJP and five of Opposition parties, voted on partisan lines, with the Chair casting his deciding vote in favour of hearing Dubey first as scheduled. After the meeting, Sonkar, a BJP MP, told the media, “We have decided to ask Moitra to appear before us on October 31.” Eleven of the committee’s 15 members attended the meeting. In his statement before the panel, Dubey pitched for her disqualification saying the matter pertains to Parliament’s dignity and is an issue of national security, sources said, adding that he noted it was an “open and shut” case as even businessman Hiranandani, who allegedly paid her bribes, has admitted to the charge. Some panel members belonging to Opposition parties, including BSP’s Danish Ali and JD(U)’s Giridhari Yadav, called for taking a lenient view in the matter as she was a first-term MP, to which Dubey insisted that an example should be made of her to serve as a lesson to other parliamentarians,

sources said. The meeting had its share of heated moments as Congress MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy raised the issue of Dubey’s alleged fake degree, a matter often flagged by Moitra, prompting a strong rebuttal as he said the matter has been visited by constitutional bodies like the Election Commission and the Supreme Court, sources said. He said an FIR in the fake degree matter was quashed by a High Court and the Supreme Court upheld it while the EC too agreed with his contention. It seems some people think they are above the Supreme Court and that they are involved in corruption and posing a threat to national security, he claimed. Sources mentioned the committee is also likely to seek a response from the Ministry of External Affairs as a matter of protocol as Hiranandani, accused of giving bribes to Moitra so that she can ask questions in Parliament at his behest, filed an affidavit admitting to the charges before India’s consulate in Dubai. Moitra so far has dismissed the charges as a “jilted ex’s lies”.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Signs of thaw

India resumes some visa services in Canada even as New Zealand joins the anti-India chorus

In a significant diplomatic development, India has announced the resumption of a few of its visa services for Canadians, marking a possible turning point in a high-profile dispute that has strained bilateral relations. As per the Indian Embassy in Ottawa, it has resumed visa services for Canadians from yesterday, a move aimed at de-escalating tensions between the countries. This must come as a relief to many Canadians of Indian origin who frequently visit their native country. However, for now, only a few visa categories have been allowed --- health, business conference, etc --- but it opens up the possibility of normalising bilateral ties. The decision to open up the visa process comes on the heels of Canada's decision to recall 41 of its 62 diplomats from India. Canada was forced to prune its team in India after the latter's warning of stripping the Canadian diplomats of their immunity which, Canada argued, violated the Vienna Convention. The Indian Government has now relented



a bit to ease the situation. The problem escalated after Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau publicly accused "Indian agents" of involvement in the murder of its national and Khalistan sympathiser Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a claim that India vehemently rejected.

To date, Trudeau has not shared any proof of Indian involvement in Nijjar's killing. With the backing of the western countries (especially the Five Eyes alliance), however, he stands emboldened on his allegations. Also, taking a cue from the US, other countries such as the UK, Australia and New Zealand have criticised India's decision to expel 41 Canadian diplomats or potentially revoke their diplomatic immunity. New Zealand, as a member of the Five Eyes intelligence network to weigh in on this matter, has invoked the Vienna Convention governing diplomatic relations. To put things in perspective, Nijjar was a vocal advocate of Khalistan, a proposed Sikh state carved out of India, a stance that put him on the radar of Indian authorities who sought him on charges of terrorism. India has been asking Canada to check anti-India activities from its soil but so far they have not been heeded to. Nijjar was found murdered near a gurudwara in Canada. India denied any role and assured the Canadian agencies of full cooperation but Canada took the unprecedented step of expelling an Indian diplomat. India took counter measures, including the suspension of visa services for Canadians. The visa services resumption is a positive step towards easing tensions and fostering diplomatic relations between the nations. Both India and Canada need to engage in diplomatic dialogue and cooperation to address the concerns surrounding the Nijjar case and work towards a resolution that respects international law and diplomatic norms; otherwise, common people would suffer, especially students and old people who are waiting eagerly for this issue to be resolved.

PICTALK



Devotees carry deities in planquins during Kullu Dussehra festival, in Kullu

Inflection point for humanity

The methods of war in Gaza have been shameful as many innocent lives have been lost. Humanity must survive the madness of war



UMANG KOHLI

As was expected, the so-called 'ground invasion' by Israel has been delayed again, and the reasons are well understandable. The tactical and strategic situation right now warrants a pause in hostilities. Tactically speaking, fighting in a built-up area (FIBUA) is one of the toughest kinds of warfare, often even tougher than jungle warfare. From the Israeli perspective, the release of 220 hostages has to be the top priority, even before any ground operation is launched. The international community, however, must focus on how there is minimum loss of life of the civilian population. The UN has been calling the situation in Gaza catastrophic and one that is growing more dire by the hour, repeating the call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. However, the situation on the ground keeps on getting worse by the day, with reports of more and more civilian casualties being reported across the length and breadth of Gaza. So, what is the way forward? Is the ground invasion by Israel imminent? Will the humanitarian crisis in Gaza get worse? Will the hostages be released and will the aid reach the people who require it the most? What is the UN doing to neutralise the situation? What are the leaders across the world doing to prevent the war from spreading? What does it mean for the Russia-Ukraine war?

These are some of the questions that are going to confront the world in the coming few weeks and the answers to these questions are going to be critical for world peace in the long run. Russia has put forward a draft resolution for consideration before the United Nations Security Council which calls for an immediate ceasefire and allowing humanitarian aid into Gaza. However, this effort may give little result, as Russia itself is involved in Ukraine, and the US, UK and France are likely to oppose any resolution coming from Russia's table. Arab countries have also moved a resolution on similar lines, which also calls for recognition of the state of Palestine. This resolution is to be placed in



the general assembly and may not be voted for. So, this resolution may not cease the hostilities either. The UN needs to seriously reflect upon its ability to handle the crisis and deploy mechanisms to rise above geopolitics when basic human rights are at risk for a large population. The UN also needs to expand its security council keeping in mind the rising significance of the 'Global South'. Amendment to the constitution of the UN is the need of the hour and the world leaders must live up to this need.

Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia have clearly stated that the war should not be escalated. However, the involvement of Iran in the conflict can not be ruled out, which further threatens to increase the canvas of the war manifold. So, the way forward looks gloomy and more civilian casualties are likely. Amid Israel's intelligence failure and the resurgence of armed groups in the Palestinian territories, recent events highlight diplomatic inaction over the last many years. These events highlight the failure of successive governments and the UN.

The rise of armed groups in the occupied territories is over a decade-old phenomenon and points towards a collective system failure. The Palestinian issue has always been man-



THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE HAS ALWAYS BEEN MANAGED, AND THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A SERIOUS EFFORT TOWARD WAR RESOLUTION

aged, and there has never been a serious effort towards resolution. This time it calls for serious crisis management before a resolution can be reached. Few hostages have been released by Hamas and some aid has been allowed in, which are positive steps in the direction of crisis management and hopefully will prevent a catastrophe from happening. Some of the hostages have not been ill-treated, this is again a positive development that could go a long way in soothing some of the wounds. Ground invasion by the IDF at this stage is not a good move in the overall picture, because not only does it threaten the war to go to the next level, it also is sure to inflict more casualties not only on the IDF but also on the civilians. No doubt Hamas needs to be punished for the barbaric attack on villages and non-combatants, but ground assault is not the answer to it. IDF needs to do more surgical strikes, making sure that none of the non-combatants are harmed in these strikes. A surgical strike on pinpoint targets looks like the only viable option shortly, as ground assault could further complicate the situation. Hybrid warfare includes a military, legal humanitarian, military, political and diplomatic angle and this war in the

Middle East has all the associated tenants. Hamas has also mastered the art of creating a narrative. In FIBUA, all the tenets of asymmetric warfare would be put to use which could spiral into a point of no return and could convert this battle into a long-drawn-out conflict zone. IDF must step back and then leap forward, as taking a giant leap forward without seeing a landing ground may land them in trouble and in turn be harmful to the entire region. Hence, it would be reasonable for the IDF to wait and watch and improve upon their intelligence network and get pinpoint information and then only conduct surgical strikes rather than plan a ground invasion and bomb indiscriminately. Surgical strikes, taking embedded journalists along, on the top leadership of Hamas would do their narrative a world of good and reduce non-combatant casualties as well. The world is watching how the situation will fan out in the days to come. The methods of war over the last 20 days since the morning of October 7 have been shameful. This is a reflection point for humanity and we must shun war.

(The writer is expert on geopolitics and international Affairs. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CIRCULAR BANNING RSS ACTIVITIES

Sir—In a recent High Court verdict, the Kerala government-run Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) issued a circular banning the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and organisations with 'extreme ideologies' from temple premises under its administration. Namajapa protests (with demonstrators chanting mantras) have also been prohibited on temple premises managed by the board. The circular stipulates that all RSS and 'extreme ideology' activities are prohibited without TDB permission. The board controls 1,200 temples, including Sabarimala, and issued a circular on October 20 directing the Devaswom Vigilance Wing to conduct surprise raids to check RSS or other outfits' activities on temple properties. There have been complaints about RSS and other groups encroaching on temple premises. These organisations are alleged to conduct weapons training and mass drills, often under the cover of night. Priests and temple employees are instructed to report such activities. Non-compliance may lead to disciplinary action. The RSS has criticised this directive as a political move by the CPI (M), aiming to control temple affairs in Kerala. A tussle between the Kerala government and RSS has begun.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

INDIA'S HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS

Sir—In a remarkable display of compassion and generosity, the Government of India has provided much-needed aid to the Republic of Palestine through the El-Arish International Airport base, facilitating its journey to Gaza via the Rafah Corridor. Despite our strong strategic and economic ties with Israel, India has successfully maintained a delicate balance in the face of conflicting situations. Even in the wake of the catastrophic events in the Gaza Strip, India's humanitarian aid was a significant demonstration of support.

This gesture from India sends a clear message that we stand against any attempt by Israel or any other party to harm innocent citizens. In times of crisis, every life is pre-

Indian Community in Canada under stress



The diplomatic tensions between Canada and India have created uncertainty within Canada's Indian community, which comprises a diverse population of over 1.86 million people, constituting about 5% of Canada's residents. This community includes naturalised citizens, permanent residents, international stu-

dents, and temporary visitors who contribute significantly to Canada's society and economy. The ongoing diplomatic rift has disrupted consular and visa services, affecting not only established citizens and permanent residents but also those aspiring to study, work, or visit Canada. Reduced consular services have left many in limbo, hindering access to essential services, document renewals, and family reunions. India is a significant source of immigrants to Canada, with a substantial number of international students choosing the country for higher education. In 2022, over 40% of study permits issued were for Indian students. These students and other temporary visitors enrich Canada's education system, economy, and cultural diversity. It is imperative for both nations to resolve their differences and restore efficient consular and visa services, benefiting Canada's Indian community and strengthening ties and economic cooperation between the two nations.

Maimul Safui | Howrah

cient, and India's efforts in assisting Gaza are both commendable and welcoming. It is essential that other nations follow suit and engage in humanitarian aid to mitigate the suffering caused by geopolitical rivalries.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

EMPLOYMENT AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Sir—During the skill initiation ceremony, PM Modi underscored the government's commitment to providing training to 1.5 crore young individuals, a move that has undoubtedly led to a significant decrease in unemployment rates. This proactive approach to skill development is laudable and speaks to the government's dedication to empowering the nation's youth. Nonetheless, it is crucial to assess the effectiveness of these training programs. Recent reports indicate that only a small fraction of those who undergo training in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) manage to secure jobs. This disparity can be attributed in part

to the outdated curriculum in these institutions, which often includes training in languages like HTML while modern industries increasingly demand proficiency in languages like Python. The need for alignment between educational curricula and industry requirements is evident. Another factor contributing to the growth in labor force participation rates (LFPR) is the increased engagement of rural women in low-paying jobs like the MNREGA. Additionally, the government must also address the economic challenges faced by rural communities, which drive many into the low-wage job market. Aligning training programs with industry needs and addressing economic disparities in rural areas will contribute to the overall effectiveness of these initiatives.

N. Ashraf | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Rev up Anganwadi workers to fight NDDs

Capacity-building programs for Anganwadi workers is important to lessen the burden of neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs)



MADHAVILATHA MAGANTI

In India, the burden of neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs) and their associated disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) is a growing concern. Disability-adjusted life year (DALY) is a metric that integrates both years of life lost due to premature mortality (YLLs) and years of life lost due to living in states of reduced health or years of healthy life lost due to disability (YLDs). The burden of these disorders extends beyond the individuals themselves, impacting families, communities, and society at large. In this context, Strengthening Anganwadis could act as a game changer in reducing the burden.

Monitoring the Problem According to a multicentric study conducted in 2018, the prevalence of neurodevelopmental disorders, such as vision impairment, epilepsy, neuromotor impairments including cerebral palsy, hearing impairment, speech and language disorders, autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disability, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and learning disorders, was found to be 9.2% among children aged from 2 to less than 6



years and 13.6% among children aged from 6 to 9 years. It is essential to record and address these issues as early as possible to help every child reach their full potential. Monitoring the developmental progress of children from birth to 2 years can lead to early identification of developmental delays or sensory impairments. These developmental delays may also be early signs of compromised neurodevelopment and so Early Childhood Interventions (ECD) implemented during time-sensitive, developmental periods can help to meaningfully address the root causes of these challenges.

The Risk Factors There are multiple risk factors that predispose neonates and

infants to neurodevelopmental delays. A combination of genetic and environmental risk factors including non-institutional delivery, a history of perinatal asphyxia, neonatal illness, postnatal neurological/brain infections, stunting, low birth weight/prematurity, severe acute malnutrition and lower head circumference are found to be significantly associated with neurodevelopmental delays in infants below 2 years of age. In India, of the 25 million children born in a year, at least 3.5 million babies are born prematurely and 1.7 million are born with birth defects and one million new born babies need prolonged hospitalisation and require special healthcare or dependence on technology at the

Special-New-born Care Units (SNCUs) to save them and reduce medical morbidities after birth.

Another disadvantage is that the children growing up in poverty face higher levels of adversity and stress, which can negatively impact their neurodevelopment. As per the World Bank, poverty and stunting are potential markers of developmental impairment caused due to environmental factors and at least 250 million children, aged under 5 years, fail to reach their potential in cognitive and socioemotional development in low- and middle-income countries. One potential reason for this is children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds tend to have heightened stress response systems as differences in parenting influenced by income and education, such as parent-child interaction, vocabulary, and responsiveness, can affect the maturation of specific brain areas.

(The writer is professor of psychology, at Ashoka University; views are personal) To be continued...



FIRST COLUMN

'DANA' HAS SPIRITUAL CONNOTATIONS

A simple act of giving is much more than just an act of compassion



SWAMI CHARANSHRIT

India, a land known for its rich tapestry of traditions and cultures, is also renowned for its deep-rooted spiritual heritage. Among the various customs and rituals that have been practiced for centuries, the tradition of "Dana" holds a special place. 'Dana', which translates to "giving" or "charity," is a significant practice in India that transcends the boundaries of religion, caste, and creed. It is deeply embedded in the spiritual fabric of the nation, fostering compassion, selflessness, and unity among its people.

'Dana', as a tradition, encompasses various forms of charitable acts, including donating food, money, clothes, and other essentials to those in need. The core philosophy of 'Dana' is to give without expecting anything in return. This selfless act of giving is believed to purify the soul, strengthen the sense of community, and create a more compassionate and equitable society.

Across Religions

One of the remarkable aspects of 'Dana' in India is its universality. It transcends religious boundaries and is practiced across different faiths.

1. Hinduism: In Hinduism, the concept of 'Dana' is deeply rooted in the belief in karma and dharma. The act of giving is seen as a duty and a means of purifying one's soul. During festivals and rituals, Hindus often perform 'Dana', offering food, clothing, or money to the less fortunate.

2. Buddhism: 'Dana' is one of the fundamental virtues in Buddhism. Buddhists believe in the importance of generosity and selflessness. Monks and laypeople alike engage in acts of 'Dana' to accumulate merit and practice the teachings of the Buddha.

3. Sikhism: The Sikh tradition promotes selfless service and giving. The concept of "Langar" in Sikhism, where free meals are provided to all visitors at the community kitchen in Sikh gurudwaras, is a significant example of 'Dana'. It symbolises equality, humility, and community service.

4. Jainism: 'Dana' is an integral part of Jainism, which emphasises non-violence and compassion. Jains believe in giving to the less fortunate, not just material possessions but also sharing knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual guidance.

5. Islam and Christianity: Even in religions like Islam and Christianity, charity is a cornerstone of the faith. Muslims practice "Zakat," a form of almsgiving, while Christians are encouraged to tithe, which involves giving a portion of their income to those in need.



Spiritual Significance

The act of giving in the tradition of 'Dana' holds profound spiritual significance in India:

1. Purification of the Soul: 'Dana' is considered a means to purify one's soul. It is believed that by giving, one sheds their attachment to material possessions and cultivates a sense of detachment, ultimately leading to spiritual growth.

2. Karma and Dharma: The concept of karma (the law of cause and effect) and dharma (duty) plays a pivotal role in the act of giving. By fulfilling their dharma and performing acts of 'Dana', individuals accumulate positive karma, which is believed to influence their future lives.

3. Unity and Compassion: 'Dana' fosters a sense of unity and compassion within society. It brings people from different backgrounds together, highlighting the common human bond and promoting a sense of responsibility towards one another. 4. Happiness and Inner Fulfillment: Many find a deep sense of happiness and inner fulfillment in the act of giving. The joy of helping others and making a positive impact on their lives is considered a source of spiritual contentment.

'Dana', the tradition of giving in India, is a powerful testament to the spiritual and ethical values that have shaped the nation for millennia. It transcends religious, social, and economic boundaries, promoting compassion, selflessness, and unity among people.

(The writer is spiritual guide; views are personal)

ISRO: Propelling India's space industry



AS MITTAL

Encouraging private participation could free up ISRO to focus on research and development, interplanetary exploration and strategic launches



India is rapidly advancing in space exploration, having achieved the feat of landing on the Moon's south pole and garnering a reputation as a cost-competitive space industry. The country's space programme is gaining global recognition in the field of science and engineering and is playing a vital role in exploring new frontiers.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the world's sixth-largest space agency, spent only Rs 613 crore (\$74 million) on the successful Chandrayaan-3, which is less than the cost (\$200 million) of the failed Chandrayaan-2, in 2019. In contrast, China spent \$12 billion on its Moon programme in 2022, while NASA, the world's largest space agency, is on track to spend \$93 billion (Rs 7.72 lakh crore) on its Artemis Moon programme, and is now seeking collaboration with ISRO for its future Moon Mission.

Despite having a mere 2% share in the global space economy, India's reputation for cost-effective engineering has caught the attention of the world superpower US, which has a 40% share in the same. The success of Chandrayaan-3 will undoubtedly benefit India's space business, and its next space milestone mission Gaganyaan including a Venus Orbiter Mission, a Mars Lander, setting up an Indian Space Station by 2035, and sending the first Indian to the Moon by 2040.

The current competition to explore a previously uncharted region of the Moon is reminiscent of the space race between the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1960s. However, unlike then, space exploration is now a competitive industry, with the Moon's south pole being a highly coveted destination due to the presence of water ice that could potentially support future lunar colonies, mining operations, and even expeditions to Mars.

The global space economy is projected to increase from \$546 billion to \$1 trillion by



THE SPACE INDUSTRY HAS THE POTENTIAL TO TRANSFORM VARIOUS SECTORS SUCH AS TELECOMMUNICATIONS, HEALTH, EDUCATION, INFRASTRUCTURE, NAVIGATION, DEFENCE

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2040. NASA has paved the way for private players to participate in space exploration. India has also entered the race by privatising space launches and is now considering opening the sector to foreign investment, to increase its share in the global launch market by five times in the next decade.

The space economy is growing rapidly, with the entry of private players and 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). This will lead to the adoption of newer, more efficient technologies that are also cost-effective in the space sector. The Indian Space Policy-2023 and the Indian Space Activities Bill provide a framework that prioritises private players' involvement in the space sector. This will help India increase its share in the global space economy from 2% to 9% by 2030, according to a recent report by Deloitte India.

India's current space sector is valued at approximately \$8 billion and has been growing at a rate of about 4% per year, which is higher than the global average of 2%. It is expected to reach \$40 billion by 2040. With the successful Chandrayaan-3 mission, India can achieve this target much earlier, as it is likely to receive requests from NASA and other countries for satellite launches.

Cost competitiveness

The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACE) and NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL) have been transferring existing technologies to the private sector since 2020. Their goal is to create an ecosystem of industry, academia, and start-ups and attract a larger share of the

global space economy. The Department of Space has helped emerging companies build upon ISRO's foundational technologies to reduce their development time and costs. They have also provided guidance to help these companies build advanced technologies with a robust foundation of space infrastructure, a repository of existing technologies, and active support to enable a seamless fusion of traditional expertise and modern innovation.

Globally, private players in space are on the rise due to commercial benefits. Companies like Elon Musk's SpaceX are developing the Starship rocket for their satellite launch business and to ferry NASA astronauts to the moon's surface under a \$3 billion contract. Beyond that contract, SpaceX plans to spend approximately \$2 billion on Starship this year. US space firms Astrobotics and Intuitive Machines are building lunar landers expected to launch to the moon's south pole by year's end or in 2024. NASA aims to map the lunar south pole and its water ice by 2024. Companies such as Axiom Space and Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin are developing privately funded successors to the International Space Station.

As a potential industry: The space industry has the potential to transform various sectors such as telecommunications, governance, agriculture, health, education, infrastructure, navigation, and strategic defence. Through technological advancements and innovation, space applications can bring tangible benefits to every citizen's life. Empowering the private sector amplifies the socio-economic

impact of space applications. By finding innovative solutions to pressing challenges in areas such as agriculture, disaster management, or communication, the private sector can bring significant improvement to people's lives.

The way forward: India's space industry comprises a significant number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that supply parts and components for satellite and launch vehicle manufacturing. This sector supports the government's vision of 'Atmanirbhar India' and 'Make in India,' which aims to make India a leader in the global space industry. However, private players have so far been limited to being vendors or suppliers to the government's space program. Encouraging private participation could free up the ISRO to focus on science, research and development, interplanetary exploration, and strategic launches. Therefore, there is a need for Non-Governmental Entities (NGEs) to participate in the Indian space programme and boost India's market share in the Global Space Economy.

Expanding ISRO's collaborations with start-up products to more remote institutes and research labs is necessary. Additionally, the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme and customs exemptions can cost-effectively encourage indigenous manufacturing capacity. Furthermore, a comprehensive study on fully tapping the downstream capabilities of this sector is equally important to make India a sunrise global space industry and tap the potential of young entrepreneurs to create more employment opportunities.

Moral anchoring for a global climate policy is a must

With the planet facing the climate crisis, it's time we re-evaluate our motivations towards development and shun anything detrimental to the environment

American astronaut famously said, "If somebody had said before the flight 'Are you going to get carried away looking at the earth from the moon?' I would have said, no; no way. But yet when I first looked back at the earth standing on the Moon, I cried." This profound expression reminds us of the bond we share with our planet as the tapestry of life unfolds itself with every breath we take, the every step we tread on its soil doubt, we have all the responsibility to preserve and nourish its magnificence for the generations to come and thrive on it. So when climate change poses existential jeopardy transcending geographies, it makes one question, if the moral construct of the nation-state order in the



ISHOO RATNA SRIVASTAV

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contemporary world, the philosophical rootings of its political systems, the ideas of rights, liberties and justice which form the cornerstone of world's constitutions, the principles of economic theory adopted for modern policy-making; is robust and persuasive enough to generate a unified response from humanity. A political thought for a warmer planet: The foundations of modern political thought, forged during the Enlightenment and afterwards, were shaped by influential figures such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Rousseau, Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, John Rawls and others. The ideas of rights, liberty and justice which aspired to nurture human lives were premised upon the assumption that by and large

ethical conduct; which avoids harming others essentially forms the bedrock of our social systems. The utilitarian perspective which emphasised maximising the greatest good for all as an end goal; underwent a refinement with the acknowledgement of fairness of means as well. While these ideas have contributed immensely to shaping modern political theory; they are primarily human-centric and struggle to account for the well-being or interests of non-human entities, furthermore are also found lacking in elaborating humanity's relationship with its environment. The political philosophy for a global system grappling with climate change must have a framework where utility is defined in a broader sense,



inclusive of impacts on both animate and inanimate human surroundings. The right to life which is a key instrument in the majority of the world's constitutions, requires to be recalibrated to include the threats due to emissions and a global legal framework is the

need of the hour to ensure equity and justice for all affected by climate change. Are emissions an externality?: Externality is a concept in economics that refers to the unintended side effects or consequences of an activity that affect third parties who did not choose to be involved in that activity. Also, an externality does not get reflected in the cost of the goods or services involved. The climate impact of consumption of goods and services must be accounted for climate change mitigation. A robust system for pricing carbon is necessary and till such time such a mechanism matures, initiation of the emissions labelling of items would send the right signals. The invisible hand needs a nudge: Free markets are lauded

for their ability to self-regulate, which Adam Smith referred to as the invisible hand, where, the individuals, in the pursuit of maximising their self-interest bring about the overall well-being of the society as well. Smith's proposition however is dependent on the moral foundations of individuals involved in the market play. The subprime crisis was rather a recent demonstration that beyond the invisible hand, government intervention is necessary at times. Also, the timing of the action is crucial. The world is chasing time-bound targets to a net zero. Governments need to intervene to create market mechanisms conducive to climate action as if left to their own, markets may take time to

respond, which an already hotter world can not afford. We must act before it's too late, as John Maynard Keynes famously said "in the long run, we all are dead" he advocated for government spending in the times of the great depression, rather than merely relying upon markets to course correct. Post the Industrial Revolution, the world has been in a relentless pursuit of creating wealth and prosperity. No doubt, our lives are better in so many ways. But with the planet facing the climate crisis, it's time we re-evaluate our motivations towards development and the world's institutional mechanisms entrusted with addressing the climate crisis are guided by humanity's innate moral intuitions.

BORUSSIA DORTMUND IGNITES CHAMPIONS LEAGUE CAMPAIGN WITH 1-0 WIN

AP ■ NEWCASTLE
Newcastle was handed a Champions League reality check by Borussia Dortmund.
A 1-0 loss to the German team at a soggy St. James' Park on Wednesday was in stark contrast to Newcastle's euphoric 4-1 thrashing of Paris Saint-Germain three weeks ago.
Turns out this hard-to-call group, which also contains AC Milan, might go right to the wire after all.
Dortmund ignited its Champions League campaign with a first win as Felix Nmecha turned in Nico Schlotterbeck's cross in the 45th minute for what, surprisingly, was the only goal in an end-to-end encounter.
Newcastle, the top scorer in this season's Premier League, couldn't discover its clinical edge, hitting the goal frame twice in the second half through Callum Wilson and then Anthony Gordon in stoppage time.
Dortmund, which is in hot form after five straight wins in the German league, survived to join Newcastle on four points - two fewer than leader PSG.
"We weren't anywhere near our best," Newcastle defender Kieran Trippier said. "We pushed them more in the second half, but we know we can do a lot better."
A bad night for Newcastle included



injuries to striker Alexander Isak in the first half and winger Jacob Murphy after coming on as a second-half substitute. Offseason signing Sandro Tonali came on as a 65th-minute replacement for what could be his last appearance of the season after becoming implicated in a betting scandal in his native Italy.
Newcastle was overwhelmed by Dortmund's midfield runners in the first half and lost the intensity it had against PSG on one of the Saudi-owned club's greatest nights.
Newcastle goalkeeper Nick Pope produced a stunning double save early on from Donyell Malen and Niclas Fullkrug but could do nothing to keep out Nmecha's shot at the end of a move that started with Schlotterbeck tackling Gordon to claim possession and ended with the defender providing the cross for the goal.
"We had a fantastic first half, when we deserved the win. In the second, we defended it," said Dortmund coach Edin Terzic, who saw midfielder Emre Can come off injured. "We invested a lot, showed a lot of passion and gave everything to bring that win home."
Newcastle face back-to-back away games against Dortmund and PSG next.
"It was always going to be tight in the group," Newcastle manager Eddie Howe said.



Evanilson's second-half hat trick gives Porto 4-1 win at Antwerp in Champions League

AP ■ ANTWERP (BELGIUM)
Substitute Evanilson scored a second-half revival to beat Antwerp 4-1 in the Champions League on Wednesday and further reduce the Belgian club's hopes of reaching the knockout stage.
Antwerp has now lost its three opening matches in Group H. Barcelona tops the standings with a perfect record of three wins and a three-point lead over Porto. Shakhtar Donetsk is in third place with three points.
"I never imagined that when I came on, I'd score three goals," forward Evanilson said. "It's incredible, not even in my best dreams. I don't even know if I'll sleep tonight."
Antwerp produced a gritty first-half display that was rewarded with a goal from Alhassan Yusuf. But their catastrophic start to the second half was too much to handle as they once again surrendered a lead.
Before Evanilson — who came on in the 44th minute — and Stephen Eustaquio turned things round for Porto, the hosts had won most of the duels in a close contest at Bosuilstadion.
Porto's first clear-cut opportunity came in the 22nd after Yusuf gave the ball away and allowed the visitors to launch a swift counterattack. The slick passing move ended with a shot from Mehdi Taremi that was blocked in the box. Brazilian forward Galeno then missed the target after cutting inside following another counterattack as Porto grew into the game and became more dangerous.
But a poor clearance by the Porto defense in the 37th was enough for Anderlecht to take the lead as Yusuf unleashed a strike into the top right corner from Vincent Janssen's deflected cross.
The teams had been back in action after halftime for less than a minute when Antwerp's Arthur Vermeeren took unnecessary risks in his own half in trying to get past a pair of Porto players only to lose the ball. Taremi then rushed toward the Antwerp box and set up Evanilson, whose deflected shot ended in the back of the net.
Antwerp looked destabilized by the goal and Porto applied more pressure. The Portuguese dominance was rewarded by a goal from Eustaquio at the end of a well-built passing move in the 54th.
Antwerp captain Toby Alderweireld came close to an equalizer only for his header to hit the crossbar before Evanilson made it 3-1 with a fine volley from Pepe's assist, and he then chipped over goalkeeper Jean Butez to complete his treble.



Barcelona beats Shakhtar 2-1 for third straight win in group stage of Champions League

AP ■ BARCELONA
Barcelona beat Shakhtar Donetsk 2-1 on Wednesday to keep a perfect record and stay on course to advance to the knockout rounds of the Champions League after two straight group-stage eliminations.
Ferran Torres and Fermín López scored a goal each in the first half to help Barcelona secure its third straight victory in Group H. The Catalan club reached nine points, three more than Porto, which won 4-1 at winless Antwerp. Shakhtar stayed with three points.
Barcelona, the five-time European champion, hasn't advanced past the group stage since Lionel Messi left in 2021. "It's a sign of progress for us to earn nine points in the first three matches," Barcelona coach Xavi said. "We are not through to the next stage yet, but we took a step



toward that." The victory kept the Spanish club unbeaten in 13 matches overall this season, with 10 wins and three draws.
Shakhtar, in the debut of new coach Marino Pusić, was trying to win consecutive Champions League matches for the first time in more than five years.
Torres put Barcelona ahead in the 28th with a volley from inside the area after López's shot hit the woodwork.
López added to the lead in the 36th after clearing a defender just outside the area and firing a right-footed shot into the top corner. The ball hit the post before finding the net.
Shakhtar, which won at Antwerp in the previous round, pulled

one closer with Georgiy Sudakov in a breakaway in the 62nd in what was the first goal conceded by Barcelona in the Champions League this season. The Catalan club stayed mostly in control through end to end to secure the win, its fourth in the last five matches in all competitions.
Torres had a goal called off for offside in the 59th, and López had one disallowed for the same reason in the 60th, just after he had hit the post. Torres had scored the winner for Barcelona in its 1-0 win at Porto in the previous round.
"It was difficult, they have a good team, but we are happy with the victory and the nine points," said the 20-year-old López, another product of Barcelona's famous La Masia academy. "It was a key match to move us closer to qualifying to the next stage. We suffered a bit, but in the end we got the three points."

Atletico misses chance to take outright group lead after 2-2 draw at Celtic

AP ■ GLASGOW
Atletico Madrid missed a chance to take the outright lead of its group after a 2-2 draw at Celtic in the Champions League on Wednesday.
Antoine Griezmann and Álvaro Morata scored a goal in each half as Atletico twice came from behind to salvage the away draw. Celtic scored before halftime through Kyogo Furuhashi and Luis Palma.
Atletico played with 10 men from the 83rd minute as midfielder Rodrigo de Paul was sent off with a second yellow card for a hard sliding tackle.
Atletico reached five points in Group E. It's one behind leader Feyenoord, which beat Lazio 3-1 in the other group game. Celtic stayed last with one point, three behind third-place Lazio. Celtic was trying to end a run of 10 games without a win in European competitions, with two draws and eight losses, including at Feyenoord and against Lazio in the Champions League this season. Celtic's last Champions League win was in 2013.
Atletico had won its last six matches in all competitions, including against Feyenoord. "We were in control in the second half until the red card to De Paul, which I think was a bit harsh," Atletico defender Mario Hermoso said. "That changed everything. But it happens, now we have to rebound in the next match at home."
The Scottish hosts went ahead only four minutes into the match at Celtic Park with Furuhashi finding the net from close range

Haaland ends barren streak in Champions League



AP ■ BERN (SWITZERLAND)
Erling Haaland's barren streak in the Champions League is over. Two second-half goals by the scoring phenom led Manchester City to a 3-1 win at Young Boys and the brink of the knockout stage already in its title defense.
Haaland hadn't scored in his previous five matches in the competition, stretching back to last season's semifinals in May, but he ended that improbable run by blasting a spot kick down the middle in the 67th to put City 2-1 ahead.
The Norway striker wrapped up the victory by curling a shot into the top corner with his weaker right foot in the 86th minute.
"People expect him to score four goals every time," City manager Pep Guardiola said. "They want him to fail."
"I'm sorry, this guy's going to score goals all the time... He is going to score until the last day he plays football."
It's now 37 goals in 33 Champions League games for Haaland, who is into double figures (11) for the season in all competitions as he looks to fol-

low up a debut campaign for City when he netted 52 times.
"People get onto him because of the season he had last year," City defender Rico Lewis said. "It is a credit to him."
A third straight win by City to open Group G extended its unbeaten streak in European competition to 17 games, which is tied for the longest by an English team.
City is making the most of being handed a benign group in its title defense, having already beaten Red Star Belgrade and Leipzig. Another win at home against Young Boys in two weeks and Guardiola's team will have qualified with two matches to spare, allowing City to focus on a tough-looking upcoming Premier League schedule.
That begins with Sunday's Manchester derby at Old Trafford.
Before his penalty, it had been a frustrating evening for Haaland and indeed for City, which was restricted to half-chances in a first half that ended goalless on the artificial pitch at Wankdorf Stadium.
A tap-in by center back Manuel Akanji eventually gave City the lead in the 48th after Ruben Dias' header has been tipped onto the crossbar.
The titleholders conceded against the run of play four minutes later when Meschack Elia timed his run perfectly to get in behind City's defense and scoop a classy finish over the stranded Ederson.
Rodri was tripped in the box to give Haaland a chance to regain the lead for City. He didn't squander it, and his finish for his second goal was a sign of his growing confidence.

Xavi scores one goal and sets up another as Leipzig beats Red Star Belgrade 3-1

AP ■ LEIPZIG (GERMANY)
Xavi Simons scored a spectacular first Champions League goal and set up another to propel Leipzig to a 3-1 win over Red Star Belgrade on Wednesday as the German team took a step closer to the knockout stages.
The 20-year-old Dutch midfielder on loan from Paris Saint-Germain assisted on David Raum's opener in the 12th minute and curled a shot into the top-right corner from outside the box in the 59th.
Leipzig stays second in Group G, three points off leader Manchester City, but moves five points clear of third place after City won 3-1 against Swiss club Young Boys in the other game Wednesday.
Leipzig took the early lead by playing around Red Star's narrow defense as Simons passed for the overlapping Raum to score with a powerful low shot. It was the left-back first career Champions League goal, as well. Center back Castello Lukeba



Praggnanandhaa held by Aryan Chopra; Gukesh draws with Mamedov

PTI ■ ISLE OF MAN (UK)
Grandmaster and World Cup silver medalist R Praggnanandhaa was held to a draw by compatriot Aryan Chopra, while D Gukesh signed peace out of a theoretical opening against Rauf Mamedov of Azerbaijan in the first round of the FIDE Grand Swiss that got underway here.
Chopra is another young Grandmaster who hails from Delhi and is trying to make a mark in international circuit. Playing the black side of a Slav defense against someone who is, by consent, one of the best talents in the world, Chopra fought valiantly and held on to his own in a finely-paced game.
Praggnanandhaa traded queens early in the opening and dented the black's pawn structure a bit and even stood slightly better for quite some time. However, the position was always closer to a draw and a flurry of exchanges led to an equal opposite coloured Bishops endgame. The game was drawn after just 33 moves.
Gukesh never got a chance against Mamedov who is known as a theoretician.
Playing the black side of a Sicilian Scheveningen, the Indian Grandmaster went for the Scheveningen setup and Mamedov went for an old variation that is solid in nature.
Against strong players, it is not easy to win with black if they are not trying to win as white, is the mantra that goes around and that was the true case for Gukesh as, after a mere 23 moves, the players repeated the position and signed peace.

Return to Mexico most important race of season: Perez

AP ■ MEXICO CITY
Sergio Perez was still in Texas when he called the Mexico City Grand Prix his most important race weekend of the season. He needs the feel of home soil and a warm embrace from a national fan base that adores him.
For a driver who sits second in the standings while racing for a Red Bull team that has already won the constructor's championship, Perez has had a difficult year: No wins since April, constant criticism that he can't keep up with teammate Max Verstappen, insensitive remarks about his heritage from a team official, and speculation of a pending retirement or split from the

team after this season. It's no wonder Perez could use some love right now. "I am massively looking forward to my home grand prix," said Perez, who is also known as "Checo."
The 33-year-old's season started well enough with two wins in the first four races. There was even talk of a title chase. Verstappen shut that down by winning 10 races in a row. The Dutch driver now has a record-breaking 15 victories this season after winning last week's United States Grand Prix.
Measured against the three-time champion in the same garage, Perez has all but disappeared. Lewis Hamilton was even threatening to chase him



down for second place until the Mercedes driver was disqualified from second in Austin. Perez now leads Hamilton by 39 points with four races remaining.
Perez has only five podium finishes since May. And while Perez has been part Red Bull's crushing constructor's championship, Verstappen is so dominant that he would have Red Bull in first place all by himself. Thing went from bad to worse in September. Red Bull senior adviser Helmut Marko suggested to a media outlet that Perez's "South American" heritage could explain a lack of focus or inconsistency from the driver. Perez is from Mexico, which is in North America.
The 80-year-old Marko later apologized publicly and in person to Perez for the remark and the driver seemed to move past it. But the incident is certainly not forgotten by Perez's fans. And they remember how important Perez was to Verstappen in the final race of 2021 that won Verstappen's first championship. "Checo is a legend," Verstappen

said that day. "Red Bull has not been fair with him. Red Bull has been a team that hasn't supported him at all. I think it's a team that is 100% focused on the other side of the garage and Checo is there, on his own," said Luis Manuel de la Concha of Mexico City, who was at the race in Austin and will attend the Mexico City Grand Prix as well.
"I believe there has never been justice," he said.
Mexican fans can cheer for Perez all week. His career wins are the most ever in F1 for a Mexican driver and was instrumental in securing F1's return to Mexico City in 2015 after 23 years. His photo adorns just about everything in Mexico

City this week, from race promotional billboards, television commercials and ads for car insurance and breakfast oats. There's even a special "Checo Menu" at McDonald's: a Big Mac, a soda and two orders of fries.
All of that raises the pressure for a big result Sunday. Red Bull has dominated the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez with four wins since 2017, all by Verstappen. There were rousing cheers for Perez's consecutive third-place finishes the last two years, but the home crowd wants more.
Perez's fans let Red Bull hear it at the U.S. Grand Prix with boos for Verstappen during the post-race podium celebration.



ENGLAND BOWLED OUT FOR 156

Took leg-stump guard, changed to top-hand grip and got results: Smith



PTI ■ BENGALURU

England needed a return to their aggressive ways but they produced a cagey batting effort to get bowled out for a modest 156 against a confident Sri Lanka in their World Cup match here on Thursday. Having logged just two points from four games, England were expected to show some urgency but the defending champions struggled massively on a pitch that offered spongy bounce after batting by

choice. But more than the surface or the enterprising Sri Lankan bowlers, the English batsmen battled inner demons, save Ben Stokes who made a gritty 43 off 73 balls. Opener Dawid Malan who milked 45 runs with Jonny Bairstow, could be excused though. Angelo Mathews, an injury replacement for pacer Matheesha Pathirana, put him in two minds with a delivery that bounced from the length just enough to

take an edge off his bat to Kusal Mendis behind the stumps. However, Malan during his 25-ball 28 showed that the pitch is not a hard one to bat on while essaying some gorgeous drives through the off-side. Unfortunately, the route was not taken by several subsequent batters and they were also culpable of playing some really poor cricket. Joe Root got run out while taking off for a non-existing single, captain Jos Buttler made an expansive drive outside the off-

stump off Lahiru Kumara to get caught behind and Bairstow never timed the pull off Kasun Rajitha to find Dhananjaya de Silva at mid-on. Liam Livingstone played the wrong line off Kumara to get trapped leg-before. Moeen Ali went for a cut off Mathews when there was no width on offer, and Kusal Perera snaffled the simple offering at point. These batsmen were expected to lead England's batting charge in a must-win match, and they failed to respond to the situation. Stokes did try on his own. He had the assistance of fortune as well when Sadeera Samarawickrama floored a tough chance at point off Kumara when the all-rounder was on 12. England were 86 for 5 then. The left-hander played some archetypal power-packed shots through either side, but the day was not made for a one-man show that Stokes is known to produce. His dismissal, caught by substitute Dushan Hemantha, at deep of Kumara, effectively ended England's chances of posting a challenging total despite them having an extra-long batting line-up. Adil Rashid's comical run out while backing up too far could be taken as a symbol of England's drudges with the bat on the day. But the inept batting display of England should not rob the Lankan bowlers of the just credit. Kumara (3 for 35) has the tendency to be all over the place but when he hits his lengths correctly, the right-arm pacer is a different beast, who can also crank up some serious speed to hustle the batters. And hustled England were indeed on the day. They will hope for some more spunk from their bowlers to conjure an unlikely win and remain in the semifinals race.



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Taking the traditional leg-stump guard and tweaking his grip from bottom to a top-handed one went a long way in Steve Smith regaining his form after a mini-slump in the ongoing World Cup. On Wednesday, the 34-year-old smashed nine fours and a maximum on way to a solid 68-ball 71 and forged a 132-run partnership with David Warner (104) to lay the foundation of Australia's mammoth 399-8. Smith said he worked on a "couple of things" during the net sessions on Tuesday. "I moved back to leg stump a little bit. I got my hands a little bit higher than what they've been for the last week. For some reason, they've dropped down a bit. I just felt it in the nets yesterday and everything sort of clicked back into place again," he said after Australia beat the Nether-

lands by a record 309 runs. "I felt like I was batting well a couple of weeks back against India. I thought I was actually getting back through the ball nicely on a pretty tough surface and playing well and then for a week kind of lost it for a bit." Smith made a good start to the tournament with a 46 against India on a tricky pitch in Chennai but then followed it up with scores of 19, 0 and 7 in the next three matches. "I got a couple of nice balls, I suppose the one that swung back and got me out, and (Kagiso) Rabada's, which was a little questionable. I felt like I've been batting really well. I just needed to get the feel again and batting yesterday at the nets straight away I had a smile on my face at the back end. "I felt good and took that into today and felt nice. I thought I was getting good positions today and yeah, hopefully that continues." Smith looked good to get a hundred before he was stopped at 71 off 68 with Roelof van der Merwe holding on to a sharp catch at backward point. "Yeah, it (hundred) would have been nice. I felt I was batting well. It was a nice partnership obviously with David and were able to set it up for the guys to have a smack at the back end and get us up near 400 so," he said. "It would have been nice to kick on for a little bit longer and have a bit of fun, but yeah, it was a nice platform that we were able to set." India and South Africa are currently positioned at the number one and two spots in points table. "I think both of those sides are playing really good cricket. South Africa batting is kind of structured similarly to what we did, this sort of game the way we played. They're trusting kind of their top five batters to go out and build a platform and then guys like Klassen and Miller to smack it at the back end. "So they've done it well, obviously played on some nice surfaces as well with one here. And then India I think, yeah, they're obviously the favourites at the moment. I think in the tournament they're playing at home, they're playing really well and they're a good side."

Guys will be hurting, semifinals looks a bit distant now: Cook

Captaincy on line, Babar's Pakistan locked in do-or-die battle against South Africa



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Netherlands coach Ryan Cook admitted their dream of reaching the semifinal at the ongoing World Cup "looks a bit distant" following the drubbing that the team got at the hands of Australia here. The Dutch team lost by 309 runs — the biggest in tournament history — against Australia, their fourth loss to lie at the bottom of the points table. The Dutch team will face Bangladesh in their next assignment, before taking on Afghanistan, England and India. "We're going to back ourselves against any team that we come up against. Obviously, we do have four more matches left and we'll be aiming to try and get as many victories as we can. "We said that at the start of the tournament when we got here that we'll sort of be pushing for semifinals. That looks a bit distant at the moment," Cook said after the match.

"But obviously, if we can get a couple of wins along the way from any of the teams that we come up against, we'll be preparing really well for that and we're trying our best to make that happen." "I think the guys will be very disappointed out there in the change room. We talked a good game before the game, and we didn't play a good game of cricket today," Cook added. "We didn't execute our plans quite like we wanted to and then the fight that we have shown in lots of the matches we saw only glimpses of that and we need to play better cricket for a lot longer if we're going to compete with teams like Australia. "Resilience is something we pride ourselves on as a team and we'll be able to get back up for the next game and learn our lessons from that. But the guys will be hurting in the changing room for sure."

COOL CHALLENGE TO BOWL TO MAXWELL; VAN BEEK The Netherlands bowling completely fell apart in the face of a brutal assault from Glenn Maxwell at the back end as they were left with a mountain to climb after Australia posted 399 for 8. One of the bowlers who was at the receiving end of Maxwell's onslaught was Logan van Beek, who was smashed for two maximums. "Well, it has to be one of the best (innings). I think some of the shots he played, in particular those reverse shots were superb. I was bowling at the end there and I didn't miss by much and he tied me over backward point. "The uniqueness of Maxwell is that Bas is trying to bowl to the leg side, and he can reverse you over the off side," Logan van Beek, who conceded two sixes to Maxwell in the next over, said after the match.

PTI ■ CHENNAI His captaincy on line after a hat-trick of defeats, Babar Azam will be keen to find some inspiration and that exclusive piece of Pakistani magic when his team squares off against a formidable South Africa in a do-or-die game of the World Cup here on Friday. One more defeat and knock-out doors will be shut on Pakistan and Babar, who is already feeling the heat, might end up losing captaincy as it will be virtually impossible for his team to salvage the campaign in remaining three games even if it wins those. From here on, Pakistan needs to win all its matches and expect Australia to falter in at least two of their remaining four games. There's a saying in world cricket that one doesn't know which Pakistan team will turn up on a particular day. There could be a geniuses at work one day and on other days, they could even embarrass themselves leave alone their legion of fans. A gutsy Pakistan team is always necessary for a global tournament like World Cup and Babar would expect that against a rampaging South Africans, it would produce a world class performance. The gulf in performance between two teams has been huge despite Proteas' shock defeat against the Netherlands at Dharamsala. Quinton de Kock and Heinrich Klaasen has headlined the batting with timely contributions from others like Aiden Markram while Pakistan's archaic batting approach has left them in dire straits at the halfway of the league stage. The difference in approach is evident when one looks at the boundary count of the two sides. South African batters have hit 155 fours and 59 sixes while Pakistan managed only 24 sixes in five games and 136 boundaries. An embarrassing statistic is Pakistan batters hitting a six in Powerplay after consumption of 1200 deliveries across games in first six overs. While De Kock, Klaasen, Markram, David Miller, all-rounder Marco Jansen have all had a strike-rate of over 100, only Saud Shakeel and Iftikhar Ahmed, the two middle-order batters have barely crossed the three-figure strike-rate. In bowling, Shaheen Shah Afridi



hasn't been able to bowl his customary nip-backers consistently in opening spell and Harris Rauf's effectiveness in 50 over cricket has come under scanner. Rauf's back of length one dimensional bowling has hurt Pakistan as much as Naseem Shah's absence. Haseeb Ali isn't good enough for ODIs with distinct lack of penetration and it won't be bad to try out a Zaman Khan or Muhammad Wasim Junior to bring in some variety. However the biggest weakness for Pakistan at the Chepauk will

be lack of quality spinners. It is understandable that playing leg-spinner Usama Mir in both games has backfired and with an economy rate of over 8, he might not get another game. Shadab Khan has been equally ordinary and if one is honest, the Pakistan vice-captain would struggle to make it to any decent Indian first-class side. He is not even in the league of Mayank Markande, Rahul Chahar and Suyash Sharma, who are not even in India contention. Having a left-arm spinner like Mohammed Nawaz will hardly solve their problem as he is neither a restrictive option nor a wicket-taking one. The South Africans are in a better position compared to the Pakistanis, who are in a must-win situation in every clash hereon. A win for the former would put them firmly in contention to qualify for the semi-finals. On the other hand, for South Africa, everything has been going great for the side. With the bat, opener de Kock has been in flawless form, and being the tournament's top run-getter so far proves everything. As for their bowling, their pacers Kagiso Rabada, Jansen and Gerald Coetzee have simply ripped apart the batters in the competition so far, and the Pakistani batters have a tedious task at their hands to counter them, even on the slow Chepauk surface. Keshav Maharaj has been a calming influence in the middle overs with seven wickets but more importantly, economy rate of 4.60, which showed his control in the most important phase of the game. In head-to-head record, Proteas enjoy a 51-30 in 82 clashes.

OTHER SPORTS

India creates history in Asian Para Games

Sultan Johor Cup hockey: Indian Colts to face Pakistan in opener

PTI ■ HANGZHOU Indian para athletes on Thursday created history by winning the highest number of medals in the Asian Para Games, taking country's tally to 80, including 18 gold medals. India have now gone past the earlier best of 72 achieved in the 2018 edition in Indonesia. India's medal tally read 18 gold, 23 silver and 39 bronze, and the count will keep on increasing till the end of the fourth day of competitions. With two more days left in the Games, the country is on course to achieving its target of 100 medals in this Hangzhou edition. India had won 72 medals (15 gold, 24 silver, 33 bronze) in the last edition in Jakarta which was the best before this Hangzhou Games. Sachin Sarjearo Khilari won the first gold of the day in men's F46 shot put with a Games record throw of 16.03m while Rohit Kumar took the bronze with 14.56m. Para shooter Sidhartha Babu then bagged another gold in R6 mixed 50m rifle prone



SH1 event as he shot an Asian Para Games score of 247.7. The compound mixed team of Sheetal Devi and Rakesh Kumar won a gold after

defeating their Chinese counterparts Lin Yueshan and Ai Xinliang 151-149 in the final. India also won a bronze medal in archery

men's doubles W1 event with the pair of Adil Mohamed Nazir Ansari and Naveen Dalal defeating the Kazakh pair of Nurshat Toleukassym and Sagdat Duisembayev 125-120. Simran and Bhagyashri Madhavrao Jadhav won a silver each in women's T12 100m and women's F34 shot put respectively. Simran clocked 26.12 seconds while Jadhav cleared 7.54m. Narayan Thakur won a bronze in men's T35 100m with a time of 14.37 seconds. Shreyansh Trivedi also took a bronze in men's T37 100m with a time of 12.24 seconds. In para badminton, Sukant Indukant Kadam (men's singles SL4), Sivan Nithya Sumathy (women's singles SH6), Manisha Ramadass (women's singles SU5), Mandeep Kaur/Manisha Ramadass (women's doubles SL3-SU5), Krishna Nagar/Sivarajan Solaimalai (men's doubles SH6) and Pramod Bhagat/Sukant Indukant Kadam (men's doubles SL3-SL4) won a bronze medal each after losing their respective semifinal matches. In chess, Bhaveshkumar Rathi Himanshi picked up a bronze in women's individual standard VI-B1 event.

PTI ■ JOHOR (MALAYSIA)

Indian hockey colts, following their title-winning feat in the men's Junior Asia Cup earlier this year, will look to continue their fine run when they take on arch-rivals Pakistan in the Sultan of Johor Cup opener here on Friday. India are placed in Pool B along with Malaysia, Pakistan, and New Zealand, while Pool A features Germany, Australia, South Africa and Great Britain. The last time the Johor Cup defending champions India faced Pakistan was during the Junior Asia Cup in June, where they defeated the neighbours 2-1 to win the tournament a record fourth time. India will face Malaysia and New Zealand on October 28 and 30 respectively in the group stage. The team must ensure a top-two finish in the pool to secure qualification for the semifinals. "We will aim for a strong start to our campaign



with a win against Pakistan and maintain consistency in our performances, all the way to the finals," said captain Uttam Singh. "We will look to execute the game plan in every single match to the best of our abilities." The colts have had a successful year, where they won the last edition of the Sultan of Johor Cup, the Junior Asia Cup, followed by good performances in the U21 four-nations tournament in Germany recently. The tournament will provide the team with an opportunity to test its combinations and also assess the rival teams, who will also feature in the FIH Hockey Junior World Cup 2023. "This tournament will also be a chance to gauge our standing against some of the top sides that are participating in the Junior World Cup as well. So, the Johor Cup will also help us fine-tune our tactics before a major tournament and put us in the best position to compete in the Junior World Cup," added Singh.