MONTEK SINGH AHLUWALIA: PACE OF **ECONOMIC RECOVERY REMAINS UNCERTAIN**

THE WEEK CAMPAIGN NITIN GADKARI ON ROAD SAFETY

JOURNALISM WITH A HUMAN TOUCH | www.theweek.in |

JANUARY 31, 2021

① TheWeekMag | ② TheWeekLive | ₹60

SUBSCRIBE NOW

YEDDY AND THE CD REBELS TARGET KARNATAKA CM

ENTERTAINMENT INDIA'S KOREA **FAN CLUB**

DOCUMENTARY WHAT REALLY KILLED MARADONA





> 1 & 2 BHK Apartments close to Metro Station

Price starts from ₹29.95 lakhs* onwards



1.4 kms to Nearest Metro Station (Silk Institute)



1% GST on select units



Close to NICE Road

PRESTIGE PRIMROSE HILLS

BANASHANKARI 6TH STAGE OFF KANAKAPURA ROAD

A PLACE CALLED HOME

15.32 Acres | Smart Floor Plans | Modern Amenities & Facilities | Lush Green Spaces

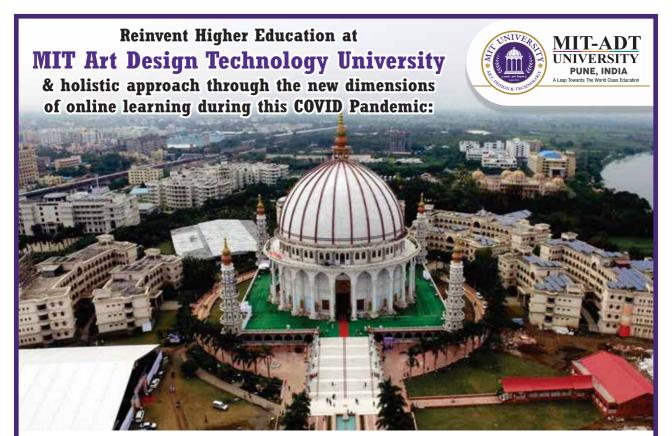




84960 84960 🕓 99011 66533

Approved by leading financial institutions | *Taxes & Additional Charges extra. | Terms & Conditions Apply





he COVID Pandemic has made entire university to rethink the way we impart education to our students. To ensure that our students begin the academic year without further delay. Notably, the Entire semester for undergraduate and post-graduate courses is scheduled to begin in July as per the regular University calendar schedule every year.

MIT Art Design Technology University was established in the Year 2016 as per the UGC act as per the private state University Act, of State Govt. of Maharashtra. Hon'ble Dr. Mangesh Karad, Secretory MAEER's MIT Group of Institution, man behind conceptualizing this University to offer education in the most unconventional fields and in the most unorthodox formats.

MIT Art Design Technology University is an Initiative of MAEER's MIT Group of Institutions who are pioneer in privatization of engineering education in Maharashtra. Dr. Vishwanath Karad, Father - Founder & Director General of the MAEER's MIT Group of Institutions is one who has made this possible in Maharashtra and launched the first Private Engineering college Maharashtra



Institute of technology in the year 1983. Today the Group represent more than 4 Universities and 15+schools with the name **Vishwashanti Gurukul, CBSE** and IB pattern schools, spread across India.

The university campus is spread over sprawling 120 acres, previously owned by Late Legendary Bollywood Actor Raj Kapoor.

The MIT-ADT University was recently awarded the 'Best University Campus 2017' by the Associated Chambers of Commerce India (ASSOCHAM). In the 2018 the said University is been awarded as a Best Private State University 2018 by Better India Education award. This spectacular campus offers state-of-the-art infrastructure, extensive library, hostels, playgrounds, tennis courts, basketball courts, swimming pool, cricket and football grounds, indoor sports facilities and a theatre.

MIT ADT offers multiple courses at Under Graduate, Post graduate and Doctorate levels in Fine Art Design, Management, Marine engineering, Bioscience Engineering, Food Technology, Film and Television, Broadcasting and Journalism, Vedic Science & Education and Literature studies.

Preparing for future after this pandemic situation of COVID-19 entire world is suffering MIT ADT University is ready to evaluate as well as to support private state University Education System:

After this Pandemic situation Entire University education is live via video



lecturing using the University learning management system along with the live streaming facility as well as the through the virtual lab establishment to all the core engineering as well as design Nish programs. All the assignments and Practical's are demonstrated using virtual lab establishment online tutorial mode helps the students to evaluate regularly along with the delivery of the subject. MIT ADT University is pioneer in the privatization of University education it also established the proctored evaluation system for the entire university students and declared it's almost all the results on time.

Also Initiative of PERA Foundation by the Association of the Private state university leads the university admission process on time to all the private state universities in Maharashtra as well as in India. Lot of Private state university admission process will be streamlined through this to start their academic on time.

MIT Art, Design and Technology University, Pune.

Contact at: 95951 24234

Railway station, Solapur - Pune Hwy, near Bharat Petrol Pump, Loni Kalbhor, Maharashtra-412201.

Website: www.mituniversity.edu.in

contents

FOR THE WEEK JANUARY 25 - JANUARY 31

16



Nirmala Sitharaman will have to do a tightrope walk to bring out a budget "like never before"

54



Cabinet rejig triggers revolt in Karnataka BJP, with rebels accusing Chief Minister Yediyurappa of corruption 63



The appeal of Korean dramas peaked in India during the pandemic



COLUMNS

- 10 POWER POINT
 Sachidananda Murthy
- **12 MANI-FESTO**Mani Shankar Aiyar
- 25 PMO BEAT R. Prasannan
- **57 IVORY TOWER** Sanjaya Baru
- 70 BITTER CHOCOLATE Swara Bhasker
- 74 LAST WORD
 Bibek Debroy

THE GABBA SAGA

Team India scripted history in Test cricket by defeating the mighty Aussies at their fortress Gabba, Brisbane, and clinching the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. THE WEEK explores how a battered and bruised India defeated a fullstrength Australian side against all odds

PLUS

- The dilemma around Gabba hero Rishabh Pant's subpar glove-work
- Mohammed Siraj's family on how he overcame grief to deliver a fine performance
- Years-long efforts of Shardul Thakur are finally bearing fruit

26 TIBET

Much to China's chagrin, Joe Biden plans to step up US support for Tibet. India, too, has its own role to play

58 DRIVE TO LIVE

THE WEEK kicks off a road-safety awareness campaign

 Be attentive, save your life: Nitin Gadkari, Union minister of road transport and highways

60 INDUSTRY

How Uttar Pradesh is leading the revival of khadi fabric in the country

COVER PHOTO AFP / COVER DESIGN BINESH SREEDHARAN

Printed at Malayala Manorama Press, Kottayam, Print House India Pvt Ltd, Mumbai, M P Printers, Noida, and Rajhans Enterprises, Bengaluru, and published from Manorama Buildings, Panampilly Nagar, Kochi-682 036, by **Jacob Mathew**, on behalf of the Malayala Manorama Company Private Ltd., Kottayam-686 001. Editor **Philip Mathew**

· Focus/Infocus features are paid marketing/PR initiatives

4 THE WEEK • JANUARY 31, 2021

BECAUSE YOU NEED TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THE AFTER-EFFECTS OF COVID.

Visit Apollo ReCOVer Clinics today.

Exclusive Clinics for post-covid care

To book an appointment call

1860 500 0202













More about Bodhidharma

Reading your cover story on the Shaolin Temple was like having a feast. It was heartening to read about Bodhidharma, about whom there is very little information ('Where India meets China,' January 17).

It is unfortunate that Bodhidharma's exact birthplace is still not located. But, as a Malayali, I feel proud when they say that Shaolin kung fu has some resemblance to kalaripayat.

The first time I saw the film, The 36th chamber of Shaolin, I was astonished to see the tough lives that the monks of the Shaolin Temple lead.

> P.D. Joseph, On email.

Spot on, Aiyar

Perhaps Mani Shankar Aiyar is right in advising the Congress to consider a nationwide confederal electoral alliance as an alternative to the BJP-led Union government ('Mani-festo, January 17).

Hats off to Aiyar's loud, clear and sagacious forethought and vision, and societal consciousness. He is perhaps the unique luminary in THE WEEK's galaxy of columnists.

J. Antony Pitchai, Chennai.

I loved it

I enjoyed immensely

your anniversary special double issue (December 31). I see it as a reference

I, particularly, enjoyed the cover story on India's eventful maritime past and the story on how a radical new theory redefines money.

A very special mention for enlightening us about Rani Abbakka, India's first female freedom fighter. Kudos for bringing such little known facts to public attention. Keep up the good work.

> Premchand Lengade, Belgaum, Karnataka.

Editor Chief Associate Editor & Director Editor-in-Charge Senior News Editor **News Editor Deputy News Editors**

Resident Editor, Delhi Chief of Bureau, Delhi Chief of Bureau, Mumbai Deputy Chief of Bureau, Delhi **Chief Subeditors**

Senior Subeditors

Subeditors

Philip Mathew Riyad Mathew V.S. Jayaschandran Stanley Thomas Lukose Mathew Mathew T. George, Maijo Abraham, Ajish P. Joy K.S. Sachidananda Murthy R. Prasannan Dovanesh V. Jathar Neeru Bhatia Susamma Kurian, Navin I. Antony Anirudha Karindalam, Anirudh Madhavan

SENIOR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS

Delhi: Rekha Dixit, Mandira Nayar, Namrata Biji Ahuja, Soni Mishra, K. Sunil Thomas Srinagar: Tariq Ahmad Bhat Lucknow: Puja Awasthi Kolkata: Rabi Banerjee

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS

Delhi: Pratul Sharma, Namita Kohli, Pradip R. Sagar Bengaluru: Prathima Nandakumar Thiruvananthapuram: Cithara Paul Mumbai: Nachiket Kelkar Chennai Lakshmi Subramanian Bhopal: Sravani Sarkar Ahmedabad: Nandini Gunavantrai Oza

Photo Editor: Sanjoy Ghosh **Deputy Photo Editors** Bhanu Prakash Chandra, Salil Bera **Chief Photographers**

Delhi: Arvind Jain, Sanjay Ahlawat Mumbai: Amey Suhas Mansabdar Photographer

Delhi: Aayush Goel **Chief Picture Coordinator** Rimal Nath C.

Research: Jomy M. Joseph Photo Archivist: Deepak Joy T. Reuben Joe Joseph, Nirmal Jovial PRINCIPAL CORRESPONDENTS

Diya Mathew, Karthik Ravindranath,

Hyderabad: Rahul Devulapalli Kochi: Anjuly Mathai

SENIOR CORRESPONDENTS Bengaluru: Mini P. Thomas, Abhinav Singh

Delhi: Sneha Bhura Mumbai: Pooja Biraia Jaiswal

CHIEF REPORTER UAE: Raju Mathew, Dubai

Art Editor: Jayakrishnan M.T. Assistant Art Editor: Binesh Sreedharan

Senior Infographic Designer: Sreemanikandan S. Illustrator: B. Bhaskaran Layout Artist: B. Manojkumar Designers: Deni Lal, Job P.K. Graphic Designer: Syam Krishnan Artists: Rajesh A.S., Sumesh C.N., Sujesh K., Ajeesh Kumar M., Jairaj T.G.

Senior Researcher: Rani G.S.

THEWEEK.IN

New Media Coordinator Deputy New Media Coordinator Senior Subeditors

Subeditors

Senior Researcher Multimedia Neeraj Krishnan Sarath Ramesh Kuniyl Hazeeda Vijayakumar, Sumitra Nair, Vaisakh E. Hari, Ancy K. Sunny, Jose K. George, Justin Paul George Vinod V.K., Anita Babu, Varun Ramesh Balan, Oshin Grace Daniell Saju C. Daniel Rahul J. Mohan, Vipin Das P.

Executive Director Vice President, Marketing, Advertising Sales Vice President, Circulation Senior General Manager, Sales MUMBAI Resident Chief General Manager CHENNAI Regional Chief General Manager

BENGALURU Regional Chief General Manager **NEW DELHI**

Chief Marketing Officer (North) & Head, Special Projects George Jacob

Varghese Chandy M. Rajagopalan Nair Hari M. Varrier

Shree Kumar Menon

K.C. Suresh

Ranjit Kurien

R. Rajmohan

Lokmanya Tilak Jankalyan Shikshan Sanstha





PRIYADARSHINI INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

DTE CODE: 4171

NAAC ACCREDITED &
NBA ACCREDITED*

Active MoUs with 20+ World Class Universities

from Europe, Israel, Nepal & Kyrgyzstan





PIET is the recipient of Excellent

Upcoming Engineering Institute

in India for The year 2017

at National Education Summit

PIET is the recipient of National

Award for Innovation in Building

Academics and Industry

Interface for the

*Accredited Courses

PIET is the recipient of

Outstanding

Private Institute

in Maharashtra

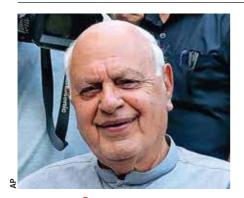
2019

Computer Science & Engineering,
Chemical Engineering
Bio Technology
Electrical Engineering
by
National Board of Accreditation (NBA)
New Delhi

HED

2020-2021

POINT BLANK



I can't even kiss my wife. Who knows! There is no question of a hug, though the heart wants it. I am sincere in my words.

Farooq Abdullah, former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, on life after Covid-19

The competition is intense [in Bollywood], and the sort of money that goes into creating each film is massive. In this situation, I don't believe that nepotism is a factor. Instead, it has been replaced by a system of merit, that sees the best and most deserving people assigned any given job.

Subhash Ghai, filmmaker

The Congress is not for negotiating ambition, but a platform for service. Elections are important, but democracy is more than elections.... Congress is like a foster mother. It is (a) feeling, not (a) transaction.

Salman Khurshid, Congress leader, on Twitter

The BJP is more dangerous than the Maoists. It is like a venomous snake, which will finish you off in a single bite and devour everything that comes its way.

Mamata Banerjee, West Bengal chief minister



In all circumstances, I ask every American to be an ambassador of Be Best [her public awareness campaign]. To focus on what unites us. To rise above what divides us. To always choose love over hatred, peace over violence, and others before yourself.

> Melania Trump, former US first lady

WORD PLAY

Maskholes should be considered as a subset of covidiots. A maskhole is an individual who wears a mask in such a way that it does not protect against the Covid-19 virus. Maskholes usually keep their mask below the nose, under the chin or on the back of the head. OK, now check for yourself on the mirror. Are you seeing a maskhole there?

MILESTONES

ROAD TO RECORD

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways created a record by constructing 534km of national highways in a single week-in the week commenced on January 8. The ministry has constructed 8,169km of NHs in the current financial year.



CHESS PRODIGY

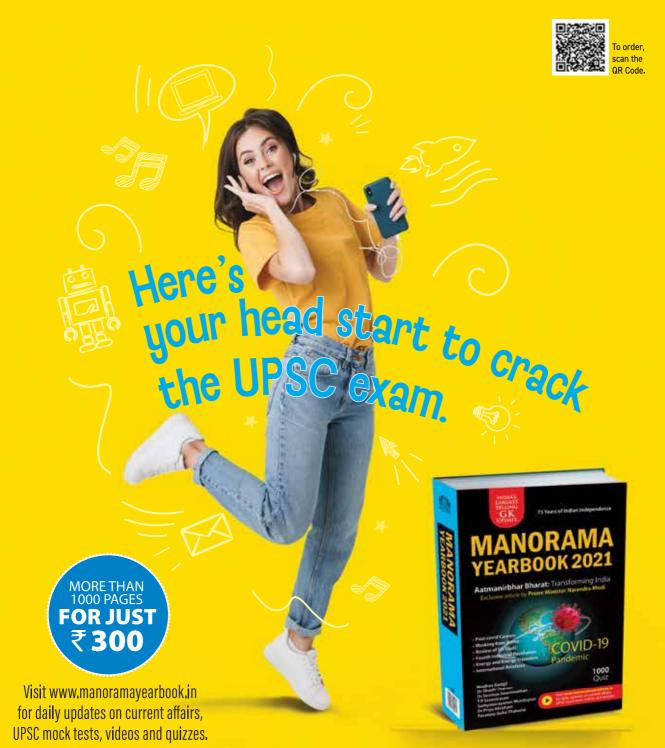
Indian chess star Nihal Sarin, 16, won the Gazprom Brilliancy Prize, a special trophy awarded to the best game from the FIDE Online World Cadets and Youth Championship played in December. Sarin's victory against Italian player Francesco Sonis received votes of five of the nine judges.



SPEEDY TEST

Cambridge researchers have developed a DNA test that can quickly identify secondary infections in Covid-19 patients, who are at high risk of developing pneumonia while ventilated. Until now, the pneumonia diagnosis required a time-consuming method of bacteria culture test.





HIGHLIGHTS

Exclusive Article by Prime Minister Narendra Modi: Aatmanirbhar Bharat: Transforming India

Covid-19 Learning about a Pandemic by Dr. Soumya Swaminathan. The Post-Covid World: An Era of Deglobalisation by Dr. Shashi Tharoor. Current Affairs: India and the World. Calendar of Events. Environment: Review of Status of Sustainable Development in India; Information Technology: Digital Strike and Digital Evidence. Quiztival: 1000 questions on History, Geography, General Knowledge. Youth: Unemployment in India; Careers for a Post-Covid World; Skill Development: Employability Skillsets. Gender Equality and Social Justice. Economic Survey 2019-20: An Overview, India and the Fourth Industrial Revolution; State of the Economy. Polity: Governance and Ethics, International Relations.

SACHIDANANDA MURTHY



Age of marriage

ealed envelopes, whether given to the Supreme Court or to the government, often cause much expectation and speculation. The report of a 10-member task force on raising the age of marriage for women submitted to the prime minister's office, however, seems to point in one direction—a move upwards from the current limit of 18 years. But the committee headed by activist and handicraft curator Jaya Jaitly has been silent about its recommendations, as per the advice of the government.

The committee was tasked to decide whether the age of legal consent for marriage for women should

go up to 21, like in the case of men. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had spoken last year on the urgency to revisit the age limit, which was raised in 1978 from 15 to 18 for women and 18 to 21 for men.

The increasing educational and career opportunities, the need to further reduce maternal mortality rates, improvements in nutritional values for mother and child.

and the end of discrimination between genders have been the main reasons mentioned in petitions before courts on the issue. But activists and rights groups worry that raising the age limit could be used as a "coercive" weapon to prevent love marriages.

Status quoists point out that love affairs are more common among teenagers, which culminate in marriage once the boy and girl reach the eligible age. They say the 2006 law against child marriage has largely been used by parents who are opposed to love marriages to file police complaints and court cases, arguing that their ward was underage. The law is also used to annul failed marriages, with 'family honour' being saved by a decree of annulment, rather than a divorce. The young women who were brought to police stations and courts suffered more

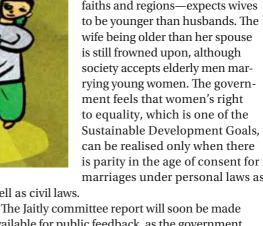
trauma, it was argued.

Some have voiced suspicions that the new proposal is a subtle attempt to control population growth, as women tend to produce less number of children if the first conception does not happen before they turn 20. India has recorded a drop in maternal mortality rates in urban areas, but it is three times higher in rural areas, although teenage pregnancies are more prevalent in urban areas.

Three years ago, the Law Commission of India had noted that gender-based discrepancy in the lower age for marriage was against Articles 14 and 21 of the

> Constitution, which guaranteed equality and liberty to all. Even now the Indian society-across faiths and regions—expects wives to be younger than husbands. The wife being older than her spouse is still frowned upon, although society accepts elderly men marrying young women. The government feels that women's right to equality, which is one of the Sustainable Development Goals, can be realised only when there is parity in the age of consent for marriages under personal laws as

well as civil laws.



available for public feedback, as the government wants to reconcile its proposals with religious, familial and tribal viewpoints, and also with modernistic demands of education and health. When the British colonial government raised the age of marriage in India in the early 20th century from 10 to 12 years, freedom fighter Bal Gangadhar Tilak argued that only Indians could decide on their religious practices. Yet, he added that he would support a far more revolutionary step of raising the age of consent to 16. A century later, the Modi government hopes to create a consensus on the issue, which affects not just women, but families and communities across the country.

sachi@theweek.in ILLUSTRATION BHASKARAN

NOW ON THE STANDS CATCH THE JANUARY 2021 ISSUE



THE BROTHERS
SALIMSULAIMAN
GO BACK TO
THEIR ROOTS
WHILE BLAZING
FORWARD TO
ESTABLISH A
LEGACY

MERCHANTS OF MUSIC & MELODY

+ Of Goals, Gallops and a Game

A Marine Commando for 10 years, Neil Andrew Egerton's new passion is to shoot pictures of horses on polo field from around the world. Don't miss his stunning images



INDIA'S ONLY UBER LUXURY MONTHLY FOR MEI LUXURY | FINE LIVING | DESIGN | ART | FASHION

MANI SHANKAR AIYAR



Presidential largesse

plashed across our media are photographs and videos of President Ram Nath Kovind presenting a Vishva Hindu Parishad delegation with a cheque for the munificent sum of ₹5,00,100 from his "personal funds" towards the construction of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya. Rashtrapati Bhavan has not vouchsafed to the general public whether a similar or even larger donation will be made to the mosque complex in Dhannipur village, about 5km from Ayodhya.

Readers will recall that after deploring the "egregious violence" and "barbarism" that led to the destruction of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992, the Supreme Court had rewarded the vandals by granting them the right to build a temple at the site

of the Ram Janmabhoomi while ordering the Uttar Pradesh government to find five acres for the Muslim community to build their mosque complex elsewhere.

There was a failed challenge in the Supreme Court from two non-Muslim busybodies to secure government nominees to the mosque trust. A Supreme Court bench happily ruled that "the petition does not hold water", leaving the Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation (IICF) free to

move ahead unimpeded. Accordingly, the mosque complex will house a place of worship but also include a 200-bed multispeciality hospital equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, a pharmacy for dispensing free medicines to the poor, a school, a museum, an Indo-Islamic research centre and a library, besides a community kitchen, nominally priced for the poor, that will serve 365 varieties of the finest Awadhi cuisine, both non-vegetarian and vegetarian. The complex will embody "the true spirit of India in its multicultural fabric that we call the 'Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb." These facilities will be open to all communities. The temple will, of course, be open only to avowed Hindus.

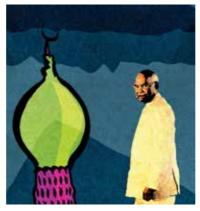
S.M. Akhtar, founder faculty of the School of Architecture at Jamia Millia Islamia—says the "design will be contemporary" even as it serves the Islamic tradition of "khidmat-e-khalq (serving the society)", adding "I do not live in the past". This is in striking contrast to the rigidly orthodox conception of the temple grounded in tradition.

A non-Muslim, Pushpesh Pant, has been appointed the consultant curator for the complex. No Muslim is part of the project for the temple. Pant has been quoted as saying, "There has been an injustice. No punishment for those involved in the demolition." Yet, he conceives the archives/ museum as a "holistic experience of Awadh". "Islam's influence on Indians, irrespective of

> them being Muslims or non-Muslims, our intertwined food, culture, architecture, customs, everything that speaks to our collective heritage, will be showcased at the museum," he says. The temple will exclude all traces of anything that does not derive from the sanatana dharma and the epics.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, the first contribution to the building of the mosque complex came from a Hindu staffer at Lucknow

University, Rohit Srivastava, who said, "I come from a generation which is rooted in syncretism, where religious barriers blur.... This is not just about me. This is the story of crores of Hindus and Muslims in India." Athar Hussain, secretary-general of the IICF that is undertaking the conception, design and building of the mosque complex, exults that 60 per cent of the donations so far received are from Hindus. Hussain has informed anyone who cares to listen that, "We have opened accounts in ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank in Lucknow for this purpose." So, no one, from the respected rashtrapatiji down to anyone humbler, needs to wait for the foundation to solicit funds from them. Will they rise to the occasion?



The architect chosen for designing the mosque—

Aiyar is a former Union minister and social commentator.



SUBSCRIBE TO THE WEEK. SAVE UP TO 65% AND GET FABULOUS ASSURED PRIZES.

Amazon.in Email Gift Card







Wildcraft **Backpack**



UCB Leather Wallet & Card Holder







Tell Me Why Magazine for Children

Yes! I would like to subscribe to THE WEEK.					
Term	No of issues	News-stand Price	You Pay Only*	Mega Savings	Your Free Prize
■ 5 years	260	₹15,600/-	₹ 5,500/-	₹10,100/-	■ Rs 1500 Amazon.in Email Gift Card OR ■ US Polo Wheeler Bag OR ■ Sheaffer Pen & Wallet Offer
☐ 3 years	156	₹ 9,360/-	₹ 4,000/-	₹ 5,360/-	□ Rs 1000 Amazon.in Email Gift Card OR □ 3 year subscription of Tell Me Why OR □ Wildcraft Backpack
☐ 1 year	52	₹ 3,120/-	₹ 1,400/-	₹ 1,720/-	 □ United Colors of Benetton Leather Wallet & Card Holder OR □ Rs 500 Amazon.in Email Gift Card OR □ 1 year subscription of Tell Me Why
Name: Mr./Ms			Date of B	irth:	Current Subscription Number (If renewing):
Address:					
Post Office		City/District:_		State:	PIN (essential):
Phone:(Mobile)_		(Res)	Code	Em	nail:
		gift card, email id &	mobile number	•	ag, Wildcraft Backpack and THE WEEK Travel Bag will be sent respectively.
Cheque/DD No.:			_ dated:	f	or [] ₹ 5500 [] ₹ 4000 [] ₹ 1400 favouring THE WEEK
Bank Name:					

I agree to inform any changes in the postal address/contact numbers to which the publication is sent, as and when any such changes happen, and also to receive any details regarding the subscription. THE WEEK magazine/Malayala Manorama group of publications may also contact the email-id/contact numbers given by you for information/upgradation of THE WEEK magazine/Malayala Manorama group of publications and offer promotions. In case you are not interested to receive any such information please tick the box

For terms and conditions please refer www.theweek.in *On a cover price of ₹ 60/- website: theweek.in ₹ facebook.com/theweekmag 😨 google.com/+TheWeekMag 💟 @theweeklive



BROTHERLY BRAWL

The Jarkiholi brothers of Belagavi in Karnataka are known for their sibling rivalry. Recently, Water Resources Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi, who quit the Congress and joined the BJP in 2019, said his family had originally been supporters of the Jan Sangh and that he used to wear the RSS cap. His younger brother and state Congress working president Satish Jarkiholi, however, soon contested the claim, saying he had never seen his brother wear an RSS chaddi (shorts) or topi (cap). "I have seen Ramesh wear a Muslim cap, as my family served dalits, Muslims and the poor," he said, showing journalists a photograph of a young Ramesh wearing a skullcap. "He is free to enjoy power in the BJP, but I hope he does not forget his roots and secular credentials."

ILLUSTRATIONS IAIRALT.G.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Annabel Mehta, activist and Sachin Tendulkar's mother-in-law, is coming out with a memoir. My Passage to India will tell the story of how she fell in love with her future husband, Anand Mehta, at the London School of Economics, arrived at the Gateway of India on a boat in the 1960s, made India her home, and dedicated her life to helping the poor in Mumbai. The book, which will be published by Westland later this year, will also have an "intimate portrait of the Little Master".

VICTORY ON THE CARDS

With the assembly elections in Tamil Nadu due in May, the ruling AIADMK and the opposition DMK are on edge. The AIADMK is especially in a spot, as the BJP and other allies are yet to officially accept Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palanisamy as the leader of the coalition. Eager to find out whether Palanisamy would finally receive support from the allies, Transport Minister M.R. Vijayabhaskar recently sought the help of a parrot astrologer. As is the practice, the astrologer took his parrot out of the cage and nudged it towards a stack of tarot cards. The parrot picked a card for Vijayabhaskar, and the astrologer showed it to him. It had the image of a beaming Lord Shiva with his family, which apparently meant that things were looking up for Palanisamy.



WAITING FOR WINDFALL

Vishnu Dutt Sharma, president of the BJP's Madhya Pradesh unit, recently rejigged the party's state executive committee. There is only one supporter of Jyotiraditya Scindia in the new 35-member committee—a little known former legislator who is now reportedly closer to Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar than Scindia.

As expected, this has led to murmurs that Scindia and his group of former Congress leaders have been kept away from the BJP's core leadership. Sharma, however, says the committee's composition reflects a unified party. Interestingly, sources say Scindia loyalists who have not been able to become ministers would rather be appointed as chiefs of various government-run boards and corporations than be assigned organisational roles.

GIFT OF THE JAB

The government has limited the first phase of Covid-19 vaccination to frontline health care workers, but that did not stop a Trinamool Congress MLA in West Bengal from receiving a welcome jab. Katwa MLA Rabindranath Chatterjee was administered the vaccine apparently because he is the chairperson of the patient welfare association of the subdivisional hospital in his constituency. The allegedly out-of-turn vaccination, however, sparked a war of words, with Kailash Vijayvargiya of the BJP calling the Trinamool a party of vaccine thieves. Urban Development Minister Firhad Hakim soon hit back saying the vaccine was not anyone's family property.





A nudge and a wink

From nudge theory principles to hard realities of an economy flying on a wing and a prayer, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will have to do a tightrope walk to bring out a budget "like never before"

BY PRATUL SHARMA AND K. SUNIL THOMAS

BC may sound as easy as 1,2,3... but not when you are Narendra Modi, and ABC forms a crucial pivot on which you are basing your blueprint for the future of India's economy.

The prime minister's penchant for catchy acronyms is well-known, and the business and financial sectors have come up with a new one, which they feel will be the focus area of the upcoming budget—ABC, or

capital expenditure."

Given the ravages of the pandemic, the budget that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present on February 1 needs to attract money—a lot of it—in the form of investment, and 'nudge' citizens, companies and foreign investors to spend big. The wish list is clear, and long. "The budget is expected to give a roadmap of fiscal consolidation as we had a revenue shortfall and had huge expenditure because of the lockdown," said Syed Zafar the BJP's expert on economic affairs. "These are also industry expectations. Many (also) expect some announcements on the demand side, as many (of the earlier) announcements were on the supply side."

The rope trick

His eighth Union budget will be a tall order for Modi and his sparse exchequer. India's economy is officially in recession, with contraction in the first quarter during the lockdown at a whopping 23.9 per cent. The pandemic has clearly affected India more than most other major economies. The budget deficit is estimated



to be above 5 per cent (3 per cent is the ideal permissible limit). Add an additional deficit of 4.5 per cent, if you count in the precarious economic status of the states. Core sectors' output is yet to revive, and crores of people are still suffering from the aftermath of the pandemic, ranging from job losses to salary cuts. Individuals and businesses have both tightened their purse strings, while industry captains, even those from sectors like automobiles and electronics that saw robust pickup during the festive season, are worried whether it was real recovery or just 'pent-up demand'.

Politically, Modi has a tricky tightrope to walk. All his key constituencies have felt the pinch of the pandemic. Assembly elections in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Assam are up in three months. Bengal is particularly crucial for the BJP's long-term political plans.

It has not helped that many of Modi's pet projects, especially the agriculture reforms, have been challenged. As an interim measure, the Supreme Court has stayed the implementation of the farm laws. Modi had batted firmly for these laws aimed at opening up the sector

> to private players. The budget may try to allay the fears of farmers by increasing the payout under the PM Kisan programme.



The budget is expected to give a roadmap of fiscal consolidation as we had a revenue shortfall and had huge expenditure because of the lockdown.

> -Syed Zafar Islam, Rajya Sabha member

But the need of the hour, farm bill or not, is to push growth. And the solution?

Money, money, money

"There is a lot of spending to be undertaken, but the kitty is extremely limited. So, whatever spending the government does has to have a force multiplier (effect) on private investments," said Arindam Guha, who leads the government and public services practice in Deloitte India.

agrees that infrastructure (from roads and urban facilities to power, health and education) will be where spending could have the best trickle-down effect, a look at the National Infrastructure Pipeline shows that the government granted just ₹4.5 lakh crore this financial year, while the total proposed spending till 2025 was ₹110 lakh crore. Going by this, it is clear that the government can at best afford just 25 per cent of the total cost (state governments are supposed to spend 20 per cent, though that is highly unlikely in the current conditions). "There is still a 60 per cent gap in funding. That is what we expect the budget to address," said Guha.

This is where ABC comes in. The budget can provide a roadmap for infrastructure spending that can attract money from not only private investors, but also sovereign and wealth funds of foreign governments. And, if you need to push ABC, investment in attracting global manufacturers could sow the seeds of future recovery. "Infrastructure has to be scaled up," said Guha. "Logistics and utility costs in our country are higher than in China or Vietnam. No country is going to sacrifice its global competitiveness to invest in India. We need last mile connectivity, logistics parks, port and airport infrastructure and facilities for trade."

Economist Sethurathnam Ravi. former chairman of the Bombay Stock Exchange, said the budget





would focus on capital, because growth could not happen without capital expenditure. "All FDI limits (including insurance) will be revisited so that foreign capital comes in. And a 'bad assets bank' could help in making the financial system robust again," he said.

Aniket Doegar, CEO and co-founder of Haqdarshak, a platform that links people to welfare schemes, wants the government to increase spending without worrying much about the fiscal deficit. "For the next few years it is important that the central government not only matches but also doubles up its spending on key programmes, (including) increase in government spending on social security, especially health."

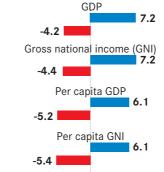
Yet, Sitharaman will no doubt look for ways to augment the coffers. The easiest way will be disinvestment of public sector entities, including monetising the government's shares in banks. The move towards setting up a 'bad bank' where loans and non-performing assets are parked so that banks and financial institutions become attractive to investors could be seen in that context.

However, she could face many a stumbling block. The political opposition would be vociferous, and there would be the long list of asks from the BJP itself. In fact, the party has collected budget recommendations and given them to Sitharaman. "Inflation is an issue which affects the middle class. The middle class needs some incentives to increase investments," said Gopal Krishna Agarwal, the BJP's economic affairs expert. "Raw material costs are running high: that need to be addressed to help the MSME sector. Even some of the sections within the unorganised sector also needs support."

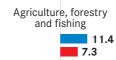
Gentle nudges, in the form of financial instruments or affordable housing, to lure the middle classes to invest their money could also be on the way.

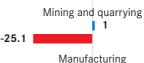
FREE FALL











-4.2

Electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services

0.3



Trade, hotels, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting



-12.4

Financial, real estate and professional services

6.1 1.4

Public administration, defence and other services

15.7 1.7

NOTE: GDP, GNI AND GVA AT CURRENT PRICES

Nudge

Ironically, big schemes and policy announcements from the government have come from Modi himself, outside the budget. And the budgets subsequent to such announcements have made a case to nudge people to adopt those choices. This 'nudge theory' draws from the behavioural economics popularised by Americans Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein. Thaler received the Nobel Prize for this theory. It is a political and behavioural economics concept which propounds indirect suggestions as a way to influence and change the behaviour and decision-making of people. It has been adopted at the international level by the United Nations and World Bank, and has influenced politicians and decision makers. Countries like the UK, Germany and Japan have 'nudge units' at the national level.

"Nudge policies gently steer people towards desirable behaviour even while preserving their liberty to choose," said the 2019 Economic Survey. In the 2020 budget, Sitharaman gave tax payers a choice to adopt a new regime, which was a nudge towards a single slab tax structure, but they had to give up available exemptions like savings on housing loans and provident fund. What she had done was to nudge the country to move towards an era where there are no exemptions.

That nudge has been the government's guiding principle as it brought in agriculture reforms. Here the farmers were given a choice to sell their produce to anyone in the open market. This nudge would have allowed the government to withdraw from grain procurement, and thus unbundling the mammoth Food Corporation of India.

The behavioural economics paid the government dividends as it led to success of programmes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and

Swachh Bharat. A recent University of Cambridge study found out that India used nudge theory across 14 key policy areas to influence people's behaviour, including government employees, health professionals, manufacturers and food suppliers, to help fight Covid-19 through the prime minister's appeals.

Can we expect more reforms, gentle nudges towards structural changes in the economy?

"The government is already undertaking many reforms," said Agarwal. "The government is working on industry-related policy, retail trade, e-commerce, logistics policy, but all these things happen at the ministerial level. There may not be reform announcements in the budget, but as far as disinvestment of PSUs is concerned that may happen as part of the reforms."



As more and more global companies look at sourcing from India, the budget should incentivise companies that are making capital expenditure.

-Gaurav Bhagat, business coach and founder of GB Academy

Islam said the government had indicated that it would continue to undertake reforms. "More reforms and legislation have been undertaken in the last few months. This will continue. PLI (production-linked incentive) scheme is a very good policy reform. Labour reforms and privatisation of PSUs will continue," he said.

What remains to be seen is what policy or scheme will Sitharaman announce that would act as a subtle push towards a particular outcome. The finance ministry had linked its additional financial assistance to the states if they undertook three out of the four reforms—One Nation One Ration Card, ease of doing business reform, urban local body and power sector reform. This nudge worked for some states, especially those ruled by the BJP, that were desperately looking for some additional bucks. •

INFOCUS

St Joseph's Institute of Management (SJIM), Bangalore 52 Years of Legacy in Management Education

t. Joseph's Institute of Management (SJIM) is Karnataka's oldest business school, presently in its 52nd year. SJIM is consistently ranked among the top 100 business schools in India. The institute offers a two-year fulltime AICTE-approved postgraduate diploma in management, equivalent to an MBA.

SJIM's pedagogy blends a strong theoretical foundation with hands-on management exposure. Faculty are drawn from top schools such as Boston College, IIM Bangalore, IISc, NITIE, IIT Madras, and University of London, and have published and won awards in prestigious international outlets. At the same time, alumni of the institute fondly note that faculty members take a personal interest in students' academic and

professional lives.

Students also co-create knowledge with industry experts through conclaves, workshops and live projects.

The reputation of the institute attracts many top speakers to it; in the past few years, former President of India Pranab Mukherjee, Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, sportsperson Rahul Dravid, and numerous CXOs of Fortune 500 companies have addressed and interacted with our students and staff.

The institute has international exchanges with several reputed international b-schools, including in the USA, Germany, Malaysia and Taiwan. Cocurricular activities are encouraged, and students have shone in national and international sport and cultural events

SJIM also encourages social responsibility, and many events such as walkathons and blood donation drives are initiated by its students. Additionally, students spend a week in rural India, so that they gain hands-on experience of its cultural and economic set-up.

SJIM's state-of-the-art campus is in the heart of Bangalore, off MG Road: it even offers hostel facilities to both boys and girls. Moreover, the school offers personalised training and placement services for all students. Students are coached in various aspects of the recruitment process, and most SJIM students go on to occupy good positions in large Indian and multinational organizations. Yet, unlike many of its peers, SJIM's fees remain pleasantly affordable, and scholarships are available for deserving students.



Rev. Dr. Manoj D'Souza Director, SJIM

When asked what sets SJIM apart, SJIM's director, Rev. Dr. Manoj D'Souza S.J. opined, "SJIM is run by the same Jesuit Fathers who run XLRI, Georgetown University and several prestigious educational institutes worldwide.

We train our students so that the businesses they lead not only create stakeholder value, but also address fundamental societal issues such as inclusion and human dignity."



The finance minister claims the economy is in recovery mode. Do you agree?

The economy is clearly recovering from the very sharp contraction caused by the lockdown. However, the pace of recovery remains uncertain and it is not even across sectors. Some sectors such as the MSMEs and the informal sector in manufacturing, and also the hotels, trade and travel sector remain badly hit. According to the CSO (Central Statistics Office), the GDP dropped by about 15 per cent in the first half of 2020-21, but performance is expected to improve in the second half, and the contraction for the year as a whole will be 7.7 per cent in real terms. This is better than was feared earlier, but it will still be the largest decline in any of the major developing countries.

The pandemic seems to be slowing down, which augurs well for the economy in future, but uncertainty remains because we cannot rule out (secondary) spikes as happened elsewhere and there is the possibility of new strains. However, the commencement of vaccination is a good development which, combined with continued vigilance on preventive measures, may encourage a faster return to normalcy.

Was the stimulus package announced during the lockdown a step in the right direction?

A stimulus was certainly called for and all countries did it. Our stimulus was a combination of credit relaxation measures and direct fiscal stimulus via additional expenditure, both together amounting to 10 per cent of the GDP. While this looks large, the pure fiscal component, was only a little over 1 per cent of the GDP.

I think we could have incurred more additional expenditure to support consumption levels of the poorest groups who were the hardest hit. The government probably hesitated because it feared that with

INTERVIEW



Montek Singh Ahluwalia economist

No merit in continuing with dressed up numbers

BY ABHINAV SINGH

revenues expected to collapse, the fiscal deficit would rise, and additional expenditure would worsen the situation. I recognise that fiscal discipline is important, but there are circumstances where one has to accept a higher fiscal deficit to get the economy back to normal. We can then reduce the deficit in subsequent years to restore fiscal stability.

Interestingly, the CSO's expectation of an improved performance in the second half of the year itself depends upon the growth in government consumption being much faster in the second half than in the

first. The finance minister seems to have realised this and she has said she is going to spend to bolster the economy. This is good, but had the same approach been displayed earlier, it would perhaps have stimulated a stronger recovery.

What steps should be taken in the budget to revive the economy?

We have to see the revival issue in two different contexts. One is the short term objective of recovering from the contraction in output in the aftermath of the lockdown. The other is the longer term objective of getting back to an acceptable growth trajectory once the short term recovery is achieved.

As far as the short term objective is concerned, I think if government expenditures are stepped up in the remaining part of the fiscal year as the finance minister has promised, it will put the economy in a position to recover strongly in 2021-22, bringing GDP in that year back to the 2019-20 level or a little higher. In other words, having contracted by 7.7 per cent in the current year, the economy could grow by 8 per cent or so in 2021-22.

The fiscal deficit in the current year will be much higher than the budgeted 3.5 per cent of GDP. It could be as high as 6.5 per cent of GDP, and this does not include off-budget items. Including these items could raise it to 7.5 per cent. Personally, I think this is an opportune time for the finance minister to reveal the full extent of the fiscal deficit (including offbudget items). There is no merit in continuing with dressed up numbers which everyone knows do not reflect reality. It is much better to acknowledge the facts and then try to present a credible picture of how we plan to get back to a better situation over the next few years.

If real GDP growth next year is 8 per cent or a little more, over the depressed base of the current year, this could mean growth in nominal terms of about 14 per cent, with a similar increase in revenues. This should make it possible to show an improvement in the fiscal deficit from 7.5 per cent in 2020-21 to say 6 per cent in 2021-22. This is still high, but I think weak demand conditions, especially uncertainty about the revival of private investment, justify avoiding a sharp fiscal contraction next year. A further reduction in the fiscal deficit to say 3 per cent could be planned over the next three years.

The challenge before the finance minister is not the achievement of a high growth in 2021-22. That will come simply because of the low base in the current year. The real challenge is how to get on a high growth path from 2022-23 onwards. We entered the pandemic with growth down to 4.2 per cent per year. Will the economy only get back to this sort of performance or can we get back to 7 plus per cent which we did achieve over a long period? I hope the budget for 2021-22 puts in place measures that will help get back to 7 plus per cent growth after the recovery is complete. That is the kind of growth rate we need if we want to generate employment in the economy.

What would you look for in the budget from that point of view?

The finance minister has consulted with representatives of different sectors and this would have thrown up many specific suggestions for change. However, these specific suggestions are typically less important than their advocates believe in determining the longer term growth outcome. I would look for some key reforms that will contribute to restoring faster growth over a longer period.

Structural reform in tax policy and tax administration, which would lay the basis for a robust growth in revenues, is an important area in which to act. India's tax ratio is much

Fixing the GST should have top priority. This was a major tax reform, but the way it was implemented has deprived it of its revenue generating potential.

lower than it should be, given our per capita income, and we cannot deliver the public services and finance the infrastructure development we need without raising the tax ratio.

Fixing the GST should have top priority. This was a major tax reform, but the way it was implemented has deprived it of its revenue generating potential. The agenda is well known: we need to bring into the GST the items that are still outside and reduce the number of rates. This can be done by drastically reducing the list of exempted goods, having a common rate of say 14 per cent on most goods, and a special higher rate of say 24 per cent on a range of luxury goods. The present rate of 28 per cent is too high and applies to too many goods including some that are intermediates.

These changes cannot be implemented through the budget and they have to be made by the GST Council. However, a clear statement by the finance minister indicating an intention to take the matter to the GST Council, combined with political effort to mobilise support from BJP-ruled states, should enable the changes to go through.

We also need immediate action to fix problems in the banking sector. There is no chance of strong economic growth if banks remain reluctant to lend despite high liquidity, because of their high levels of NPAs and perceptions of risk. The problem will intensify next year since many accounts are expected to turn NPA once the moratorium introduced to deal with the problems posed by the pandemic comes to an end. If recognition of NPAs is further delayed by regulatory forbearance, it will undermine the credibility of the regulatory system. If the new NPAs are recognised, banks have to make provisions to reduce their capital adequacy. This raises the issue of recapitalisation of the public sector banks which should be explicitly dealt with in the budget. •



Digging deep

Subdued revenues give the finance minister little room to play around

BY NACHIKET KELKAR

inance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has promised a budget like "never before". Hyperboles apart, the economy, ravaged by the pandemic, needs an extraordinary effort from her part to get back to any semblance of normalcy. The gross domestic product contracted a record 23.9 per cent in the April-June quarter and the unemployment rate in December was at a six-month-high of 9.1 per cent. The expectation is that the government will go big on spending in infrastructure and other critical sectors, while also injecting a stimulus to the worst-hit sectors.

The crucial question, however, is, where is the money?

The Centre's fiscal deficit (the difference between its income and expenditure) was ₹10.75 lakh crore at the end of November 2020, which is 135 per cent of the estimate for 2020-21. Till November end, the government's total receipts stood at ₹8.31 lakh crore, which is just 37 per cent of the estimates for the financial year ending on March 31. The tax collection revenue was just 42.1 per cent of the estimates.

In the last budget, the government had set a lofty target of raising ₹2.1 lakh crore by selling stakes in public sector enterprises. A large chunk of it was expected to come from stake sales in the Life Insurance Corporation of India,



The scope for revenue will be better in 2021-22 as the economy will rebound and tax collections will pick up.

> -Dharmakirti Joshi, chief economist, CRISIL



A well-calibrated plan is required, which will be a big opportunity to push the Make in India initiative.

-Arun Singh, global chief economist, **Dun and Bradstreet**

IDBI Bank, Air India and Bharat Petroleum (BPCL). However, it has managed to raise only ₹13,844 crore. While the process of LIC going public is under way and expressions of interest have been invited for Air India's sale, they are unlikely to happen by March.

The Indian economy had slowed down even before the pandemic hit, which had constrained the government's ability to provide a huge stimulus. But it announced measures worth ₹30 lakh crore in the last nine months. A large part of it, however, was on credit guarantees and measures like giving option to government employees to encash their leave travel allowance for the year. With the GDP expected to contract 7-8 per cent this year, clearly there is a need to do much more.

"The scope for revenue will be better in 2021-22 as the economy will rebound and tax collections will pick up," said Dharmakirti Joshi, chief economist at the ratings agency CRISIL. "Still the scope for a very strong stimulus is not there. So, you have to do more with less. It essentially means, focus on areas that require the most attention and where you get the maximum multiplier effect for the economy."

In the current fiscal, duties on petrol and diesel were raised by ₹10 and ₹13 a litre, respectively. An increase of one rupee in excise duty on auto fuels results in an additional revenue of ₹12.000 crore a year for the government. The share



Arthroplasty (Joint Replacement) in Young: A New Hope!

rthopedic implants and prostheses date back to 3.000 Egyptian mummies years ago, however this technology was rudimentary.

Due to arthritis or injuries, joints irreversibly damaged, people are left crippled and in pain. Joint replacement gives freedom from pain and ability to enjoy a quality life.

Today, we can replace multiple joints in the body-hip and knee replacements are gold standard.

People used to feel joint replacement surgery is only for the elderly. Not anymore. Now there's hope for the young.

The evolution of joint replacements is interesting.

Hip is a ball-socket joint, connecting our legs to the body. Ivory, acrylic, glass, etc. were tried to mimic the joint, failing miserably. These materials were incompatible with human body, not wearresistant. Glass was brittle and would eventually shatter or prosthesis wouldn't anchor in bone leading to loosening.

First breakthrough came after introduction of cobalt chrome alloy in medical devices; it's smooth, strong and hardwearing. In 1930s Moore and Thompson (USA) separately designed cobalt chrome hip replacements to give decent long-term results.

In 50s Charney devised first successful hip replacement using high-grade stainless steel, high density polyethylene (HDPE) and acrylic cement. He got the perfect materials - bone cement, HDPE socket and steel stem, making it unbeaten until next millennium.

Muller (Swiss) and Ling (UK) devised successful hip replacements around the same time. McKee and Farrar (UK) laid foundations for the famous "metal on metal hip". It's the most robust hardware ever to be designed to go in human body lasting decades.

This is when hope was presented for the young suffering with arthritis. A 25-year-old arthritic could have a hip replacement lasting few decades.

Arthritis affects at any age-youngsters can be crippled with rheumatoid arthritis. They need a joint replacement lasting decades hence the need for a joint lasting a lifetime.

Titanium alloys were developed around 2nd World War time; being light, strong, especially bone-friendly, gained popularity as a prosthetic design, staying there because of its longevity.

Further advances came with ceramics: ceramic balls and sockets never wear

Classic Charnley hip joint used acrylic cement, found to be good for elderly. Methods were devised to coat the titanium joints with "calcium hydroxyapatite" or titanium wire mesh making it bone-friendly.

These coated joints with ceramic bearingsaregoldstandardforyoungsters needing a joint replacement. The joints' coating evolved after introduction of "tantalum" (trabecular metal) that literally blends with bone having potential to last

Gunston and Insall (USA) developed first successful knee replacement in 70s. Knee joint is complicated compared to the hip hence it took time before knee replacements could be offered to youngsters.

Advances of titanium alloys, ceramic and tantalum coatings were adapted for knee replacements to give new life to young arthritics.

Elderly people with joint replacements enjoyagood life but there's a difference they are low demand individuals while youngsters have a high demanding lifestyle, they are sporty and active. It's a matter of pride that modern customised joint replacements allow them most of





Dr SACHIN BHONSLE MS (Ortho), FRCS (Glasgow UK) Senior Consultant - Orthopedics & Joint Replacement Surgery Fortis Hospital, Mulund, Mumbai, Call: 022 4365 4365

these activities.

While the materials evolved, our understanding of the anatomy improved and joint replacement designs could be enhanced.

Computerised navigation of joint replacements proved to be a huge step as information was exchanged with a PC using infra-red beams providing lasersharp precision.

With computerised arthroplasty, patient's CT images got fed into the computer, allowing surgery to be planned while we sat in office, a day earlier, eliminating human errors!

Combination of computer technology and 'customized joint' gave birth to robotic joint replacements-a robotic arm controlled by surgeon's hand to perform a hip/knee replacement with impeccable precision and flexibility.

It's been quite a journey over the last century.

Perfect understanding of anatomy evolved ideally designed prostheses. We undertook training to keep ourselves abreast with technology and the surgical handicraft.

Today, I won't hesitate to offer a hip or knee replacement to a 25-year-old badly needing that smile! •



of excise duties in gross revenue is likely to rise to 18 per cent in 2020-21, from 12 per cent in 2019-20.

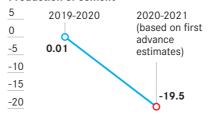
According to M. Govinda Rao, member of the fourteenth finance commission, the improved Goods and Services Tax collection (a record ₹1.15 lakh crore in December and more than ₹1 lakh crore in every month since October) do offer some hope about revenue. Yet, he said, the tax revenue collection would remain subdued in the current financial year and a substantial part of the next year. "Unfortunately, the government does not have enough resources to pump prime the economy by increasing public spending. Next year will present greater opportunities to fast-track strategic disinvestment not merely to raise resources for revival, but also to vacate the government's involvement in non-strategic areas," he said.

Even as the government pushes for privatisation, experts call for a focused approach on increasing foreign investment limits in various sectors. The production-linked incentive scheme recently announced by the government has seen a lot of takers. "India has a cost advantage," said Arun Singh, global chief economist at Dun and Bradstreet. "Government support is there, labour support is there, cost efficiency is there and global companies are able to get a big domestic consumption market for their goods. So, a well-calibrated plan is required, which will be a big opportunity to push the Make in India initiative. You can increase the FDI cap to get additional funds."

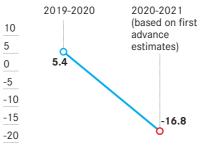
Investment as a percentage of the GDP is expected to fall sharply in the current financial year, and experts say the private sector needs to be encouraged to invest more. "The government needs to revive investment, particularly in infrastructure, because infra investment

% CHANGE IN INDICATORS

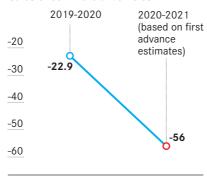
Production of cement



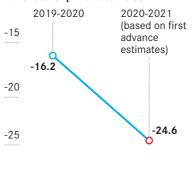
Consumption of steel



Sales of commercial vehicles



Purchase of private vehicles



SOURCE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

> GRAPHICS SREEMANIKANDAN S. RESEARCH KARTHIK RAVINDRANATH

is largely supported by the government and private sector generally is not enthusiastic in participating in it," said Joshi. He said this could be changed by reforms that would help private players raise funds easier and balance the risk of long gestation periods in the infra sector.

The government had increased the borrowing target to ₹12 lakh crore this year, and had raised ₹9.05 lakh crore till December. Globally, interest rates are at record lows, as governments and central banks pumped in billions of dollars in fiscal and monetary stimuli. It is an opportunity for India. "They can raise funds at lower costs given excess liquidity in many of the markets, and interest rates are also low. At the same time, it will leave room for the states and private enterprises to borrow funds from the local market," said Singh.

The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act mandates that revenue deficit. fiscal deficit, tax revenue and the total outstanding liabilities must be projected as a percentage of the GDP in the medium-term policy statement. The set targets could be exceeded only in case of a calamity or national security issue. In the current financial year, the wider expectation is that the fiscal deficit will be significantly higher than the 3.8 per cent in the previous fiscal. Rao expects it to be in the 7.5-8 per cent range in the year ending March 2021, against the budget estimate of 3.5 per cent.

With the budget expected to focus on stimulus and boosting investment, fiscal consolidation is likely to take a back seat. "You need to keep the FRBM on the side right now," said Joshi. "But at the same time, give a medium-term direction on how you intend to correct the fiscal imbalance. That need not be done in 2021-22, because you do need to spend more." •

R. PRASANNAN



Why not a jawan-kisan parade?

arendra Modi missed a golden chance to reach out to the farmers. When they threatened to hold a tractor rally on the Republic Day, Modi should have said—aayiye mere kisan-bhaiyon; miliye aapke jawan beton se, Raipath pe.

Rendered into plain Hinglish: most welcome, my farmer-brothers; join your soldier-sons on the Raipath.

That would have been an offer like 'Godfather' Vito Corleone's—one that the other side can't refuse.

Instead, look at what the government's babus and sleuths have done. They slapped sedition cases on the farmer leaders. The farmers had better sense.

They said they wouldn't spoil the state show on the Rajpath, but would hold their parade on Delhi's Ring Road. Yet the state's vakils went to court, asking the judges what to do. Ask the police, not us-said the judges.

Not that the farmers, who populate the other side of the political Rajpath, would have given up their struggle after a

parade, and gone back to their homes, hearths and barns. They would still have sat in siege on Delhi's borders, insisting on repeal of the farm laws.

All the same, an invite to join on the Rajpath would have taken the sting out of the protest. Indeed, true-blue traditionalists would have said: Tuttu-tut! Tractors riding alongside tanks? You can't let a sacred ceremony of the state be soiled by a bunch of rustics riding tractors.

But let us look at the plus side.

ILLUSTRATION BHASKARAN

As it is, R-Day 2021 is going to be remembered for all the wrong things. A pandemic overhang, smaller crowds, fewer contingents, shorter march and no chief guest. Boris Johnson of Great Britain had agreed to come, but backed off at the last minute citing more and severe covid cases at home. (Not that we haven't had parades without chief guests. None turned up in 1952, 1953 and

1966 for varying reasons.)

Not that there is nothing new in this year's parade. There will be Bangladeshi troops marching as a guest-contingent, and there will be the brand new Rafales showing stunts in the sky.

All the same, an invite to the farmers would have made a bigger difference, and made this year's parade the most cherished one. The charm of the Indian R-Day parade is not just the military and their marching contingents, but also the several tableaux depicting the cultural and ethnic mosaic of India that is Bharat. The sight of a convoy of well-painted tractors, driven by a few colourfully-clad and brightly-turbaned tillers (carefully picked by the parade

> commanders), would have added to the grandeur of the parade which is billed as the world's grandest state show.

Two, such a gesture on the government's part would have been hailed as politically sagacious. As it is, there is much bitterness between the government and the protesters, especially with several ruling party elders calling them

Khalistanis and Maoists, and the sleuths slapping sedition cases. An invitation to the farmers to join the parade would have broken the ice, watered down the bitterness, and the talks would have been more cordial.

Wise men in the PMO, please rethink! There are still a few days left for the parade.

Tailpiece: Going by an RSS claim, Jawaharlal Nehru did something like this in 1963. Though his government had once banned the RSS, Nehru was so impressed with their social work in China-threatened Assam during the war of 1962 that he invited them to join the R-Day parade of 1963.

It is another matter that this claim is still not confirmed. The defence ministry has responded to RTI queries on the matter that no record of the composition of the 1963 parade exists!

prasannan@theweek.in



Tibet's on the table

Much to China's chagrin, Joe Biden plans to step up US support for Tibet. India, too, has its own role to play

BY NAMRATA BIJI AHUJA

elations between world powers US and China have entered a turbulent phase in 2021. If Beijing was thinking that it has cornered New Delhi with continued aggression on the Line of Actual Control since April 2020, the Dalai Lama has proved that China will first have to deal with Tibet before it can cross the Himalayas. Chinese President Xi Jinping's concerns have been escalating after US President Joe Biden expressed his desire to meet the Dalai Lama and the US Senate passed the Tibet Policy and Support Act (TPSA).

In September 2020, Biden criticised his predecessor, Donald Trump, for focussing on "empty trade deals" with Beijing and protecting his "very good friendship" with Xi.

"It is disgraceful, though not surprising, that Trump is the first American president in three decades who has not met or spoken with His Holiness the Dalai Lama," said Biden. As senator, Biden had met the Dalai Lama in 2003 during a meeting of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Now, both are looking forward to a renewed engagement.

Biden said he would meet the Dalai Lama, appoint a new special coordinator for Tibetan issues, and insist that the Chinese government restore access to Tibet for U.S. citizens, including diplomats and journalists.

For India, this is good news. "China is afraid of the Dalai Lama," said a senior government official. "For Beijing, his stature is of a king and not a saint. They want to be sure the next Dalai Lama will be a Chinese puppet."

With the US becoming the biggest stumbling block in China's reincarnation dream, both literally and figuratively, the Dragon is breathing heavily.

On December 27, 2020, Trump signed the TPSA, placing restrictions on new Chinese consulates in America until a US consulate has been established in Lhasa. The law also mandates the US government to slap sanctions, including travel bans on senior Chinese officials who are "responsible, complicit or have directly or indirectly engaged in the identification or installation of a candidate chosen by China as the future 15th Dalai Lama of Tibetan Buddhism".

To Beijing's horror, a copy of the bill had been hand-delivered to the Dalai Lama at his exile home in Dharamshala on October 1. 2019. Matteo Mecacci, president of International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), led a Senate staff delegation to Dharamshala. "We are making some progress in the US Congress



in particular," Mecacci informed the Dalai Lama.

Although Tibetan Americans are a small community, numbering around 27,000, their struggle against China has been recognised and supported by the US.

"The Dalai Lama has been travelling around the world for almost five decades, meeting different peopleacademicians, public representatives and government leaders—which has created a tremendous amount of goodwill for the people of Tibet and also made the public more aware of the actual situation in Tibet and the facts relating to the issue, contrary to the propaganda of the Chinese government," said Tempa Tsering, board member of the ICT. "Many other governments will take heed of what has happened in the USA."

Speaking to THE WEEK from Washington, Ngodup Tsering, representative of the Dalai Lama in North America, said Tibet has many friends



in Capitol Hill. "I always say next to India, the US is the most generous country for Tibet," he said.

He explained that the idea for updating the Tibet Policy Act (2002) was tossed around for some time during the annual Tibet strategy meetings led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Then in 2018, by passing the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, the US Congress took direct aim at China's unfair policy of restricting America's access to Tibet even though Chinese citizens are free to travel throughout the US. This further re-energised Tibetans' support in the US Congress, which culminated in the landmark Tibet policy of the United States. "The US Congress has passed several legislations and resolutions... supporting the 'middle-way' policy to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict," said Ngodup.

It has been a decade since the Dalai Lama devolved his "political authority", paving way for a democratically elected government-in-exile

that would pursue the cause of Tibet. In March 2011, Lobsang Sangay became the first president (Sikyong) of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) for a five-year term: the US citizen was re-elected in 2016. Predictably enough, he has been directly involved in the framing of the TPSA.



The Chinese Communist Party is an entity never to be trusted. Tibetans have lived under the CCP for seven decades now.

-Ngodup Tsering, representative of the Dalai Lama in North America

GLOBAL ICON

The Dalai Lama at Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, after receiving the US Congressional Gold Medal in 2007

In November 2020, he became the first Sikyong to be formally invited to the US State Department. His second term ends this year, and cannot contest elections a third time. This paves way for the election of a new Tibetan government in exile.

The next five years will be crucial. A close aide of the Dalai Lama said that even though the 85-year-old spiritual leader has conveyed that he will live for over 100 years, his advanced age is a matter of concern. When the Dalai Lama gave up his political charge, he based his decision on his desire to only pursue a spiritual role, but the move was also seen as an attempt to prepare the coming generations for a future without him. This future has a belligerent China showing outward aggression on India's northern borders, which is being matched internally by increasing repression in regions like Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong.

Ngodup says that though the border aggression was unfortunate, it was to happen "sooner or later". "The Chinese Communist Party is an entity never to be trusted," he said. "Tibetans have lived under the CCP for seven decades now."

On China interfering with the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, Tempa says it is not just a religious issue but a more complex one because the current Dalai Lama is an international icon with wide support. "In any case, Buddhists will neither recognise nor accept any interference in a religious matter by a communist regime that considers religion as poison," he said.

India's multiculturalism should be reason enough for it to be more forthright in supporting the cause of the Tibetans, said Tempa. "Wherever the Dalai Lama goes, he is always talking of India's history and culture



of ahimsa and karuna. I hope that the Indian government will express their views on reincarnation... and on the larger issue of Tibet," he said.

Claude Arpi, well-known author and Tibetologist, said that the new Sikyong will have an important role to play, particularly in coordinating the next moves with Delhi.

Currently, the Tibetans are in the two-phase process of elections that will conclude in April. The front runners for the post of Sikyong are Penpa Tsering, former speaker of the Tibetan parliament in exile, and Kelsang Dorjee Aukatsang (Kaydor). Both of them are former representatives of the Dalai Lama in Washing-

While Penpa is leading by a huge margin, Kelsang is second, closely followed by Dolma Gyari, former deputy speaker of the parliament in exile—the highest position held by a woman in the Tibetan government.

Nearly 80,000 Tibetan voters around the world, including 55,000 in India, Nepal and Bhutan, will elect their Sikyong in April. Insiders said that Covid-19 and the gradual migration of Tibetans to other countries has brought down the number of voters in India this time. But the recent developments in the US in support of the Dalai Lama have invigorated their spirit and also raised their hopes of continued support from the Indian government.

Speaking to THE WEEK, Penpa expressed concern about the belligerent moves by the Chinese army on India's borders. "As Tibetans, we do not have a diverse view on this point," he said. "I am sure policies are being reviewed by all sides. I would expect India to be more assertive."

Kelsang said it was time India upgrades its policy towards Tibetans and Tibet by making the resolution of Tibet a core issue in its relationship with China. He also added that a tangible way of acknowledging the Dalai Lama's support for India would be to

GARNERING SUPPORT

Board member of the International Campaign for Tibet Tempa Tsering during a meeting with former US president Barack Obama

confer on him the Bharat Ratna.

Dolma Gvari said there is a growing public sentiment in India that the government should take a stronger stand in recognising Tibet as an occupied nation. "India does not share a border with China-India and Tibet share a boundary," she said. "Tibet is an occupied nation, but the non-acknowledgement of this fact is to a large extent the reason why the border talks between India and China have been so unsuccessful till date."

Whether New Delhi reacts or not, it certainly cannot dismiss the fact that it is drawn into a geopolitical issue that has put the US and China at loggerheads.

Srikanth Kondapalli, a leading Chinese expert, said that New Delhi must be cautious not to think the Dragon will be tamed by the US alone. "While the threat of sanctions of the US may not work, given the rising clout of China and its full occupation of Tibet, China's image could take a beating if it intervenes in



Wherever the Dalai Lama goes, he talks of India's history and culture of ahimsa and karuna. I hope the Indian government will express their views on reincarnation.

> -Tempa Tsering, board member, ICT



the religious processes of the Tibetans in the future," he said. "Already its restrictions in Tibet have led to more than 150 people committing self-immolation and a loss of face for Beijing."

The choices are narrowing and the time may have arrived for India to start preparing for the future. With the US expressing its intention to open a consulate general in Lhasa, Arpi said all eyes are on India which used to have a full-fledged diplomatic mission in Lhasa till 1952



and a consulate general in Tibet till December 1962. "One can hope that in the following years, Delhi will put pressure on China to reopen this mission in Tibet, which is vital if Beijing is interested to reopen the Ancient Silk Roads through the Himalayas," said Arpi.

What New Delhi may also need to spell out in unambiguous terms to the Dalai Lama is that he will be a most honoured guest, once again, if he decides to "come back" to India as the 15th Dalai Lama. •

INTERVIEW



Penpa Tsering, presidential candidate, Central Tibetan Administration

Ironic that atheist China is intervening in Dalai Lama's succession

BY NAMRATA BIJI AHUJA

How do you plan to pursue the 'middle-way' approach of Dalai Lama?

Our task is not only to work towards alleviation of suffering of Tibetans inside Tibet, but to also bring peace and stability in the region through non-violent means. We must deepen and strengthen the Tibetan democratic polity, thereby fulfilling the farsighted vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for the Tibetans to be able to govern themselves in a free, fair and transparent manner.

There is unprecedented Chinese aggression on borders as well as the Dalai Lama reincarnation issue.

I am extremely concerned about the Chinese Army's belligerent moves on the border with India. As Tibetans, we do not have much of a diverse view in this point, and hence this was not a major issue during the elections. It is true, His Holiness the Dalai Lama is ageing. However, we are constantly comforted by the reassurance of His Holiness to live beyond 113 years of age. Reincarnation is a purely religious matter, and His Holiness is the final authority on his reincarnation.

The succession of the Dalai Lama has become a geopolitical issue. Do you agree?

China has brought this upon itself. State intervention in religious issues exacerbated the situation and that too coming from an atheist government.

Nothing can be more ironic than that!

Since the Dalai Lama has a following beyond the Buddhist world, all peace-loving leaders and people are alarmed at China's strong-arm tactics. The international community has not remained immune to the new developments. I hope China realises the counter productiveness of such measures.

What are your expectations from India?

All of us realise that the national interest of India will be first and we respect India's position in that aspect. The Indian government knows exactly what to do. I would expect India to be more assertive, and on an equal footing with China. The ecological and environmental conditions in Tibet and river waters that flows out of Tibet has implications not only on the region but globally. I am sure there will be many areas that will need resetting or fine-tuning.

How do you plan to help Tibetans in exile facing persecution in Nepal and other places?

We will use every means to reach out to the government of Nepal. The Nepalese leadership is well aware of the implications of their relationships with both the neighbouring giants, and struggle to keep their sovereignty intact. If you cannot help a historical neighbour now, then when would that time be? We will also reach out to the Bhutanese government on matters related to several hundred Tibetan refugees there. •



Glass Manak Cutwork Tealight Holder & Vase

Hand-blown and hand-cut using Rusa Technique with cut work outside & natural finish.

10 Lucky Winners



Jia Vase in Brass

"Cymbal-shaped 'Jia' vase crafted in spun-brass.

10 Lucky Winners







ANANTAYA & AKFD

The Kanota Courtyard, Narain Niwas Palace Hotel, Narain Singh Circle, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India-302004 anantayadecor.in, akfdstudio.com

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

AND GET 35% OFF ON YOUR FAVOURITE HOMES MAGAZINE

WITH LIVINGETC INDIA EDITION, BE IT 1, 2, OR 3 YEARS, YOUR HOME WILL CONTINUE TO INSPIRE

Livingetc, the No.1 modern homes magazine in the UK, has been capturing the imagination of homemakers around the world. With the latest in modern interior design, unique decoration ideas, décor shopping and more. And now, Livingetc India Edition comes to you with an irresistible offer. Subscribe now and save up to 35% on the cover price. Hurry! Limited period offer.



YES! I would like to subscribe to Livingetc India Edition!

Term	No of issues	News-stand price	You pay only*	Mega Savings	Discount%
3 years	36	₹ 5400/-	₹ 3510/-	₹ 1890/-	35 Best Offe
2 years	24	₹ 3600/-	₹ 2520/-	₹ 1080/-	30
1 years	12	₹ 1800/-	₹ 1350/-	₹ 450/-	25

Name: Mr/Ms	Date of Birth:		
Audi (53).		City/District:	
State: [Res] STO Code	PIN (essential):	Phone: [Mobile][essential] Email [essential]:	
Enclosed is the DO/Cheque**		dated:	[] ₹3510 [] ₹2520 [] ₹1350 favouring Livingetc India Edition

I agree to be contacted on my contact numbers/e-mail ID given by me for information/updation of my subscription of Livingetc India Edition magazine/ Malayala Manorama group of publications and other promotions. I also agree to inform any change in the postal address/telephone number to which the publication is sent, as and when any such changes happen. \square YES \square NO

*On a cover price of ₹150/- **Please add ₹15/- for outstation cheques.

Signature:

Fill in, enclose your payment and send to Livingetc India Edition, Manorama Buildings, P. O. Box No. 4278, Panampilly Nagar, Kochi-682 036

Rates and offer valid in India and for Indian citizens only •This offer will be valid for a limited period only • Conditions apply • Selection of lucky winners will be based on a random draw. •Please allow at least 4-0 weeks to start your subscriptions • Please write your name and address on the reverse of the cheque/ID • Do not send cash. Non MicCNNon CTS cheques will not be accepted • We may disclose your personal identificable information to companies not owned by Livinget: India Edition who want to market products or services to you unless you specifically refuse to entertain any mail from companies not owned by us • Copies will be delivered by ordinary post only • Livinget: India Edition will be the responsible for any damage of subscription gifts during transit - Livingete India Edition mile Edition will not be responsible for any motion • Subscription gifts during transit - Livingete India Edition will be subscription gifts of the su





GOBSMACKED ATTHE GABA

The injury-ridden Indians stormed Fortress Gabba, beat Australia in one of the greatest Test series wins ever and proved that the country's bench strength was no accident

BY NEERU BHATIA









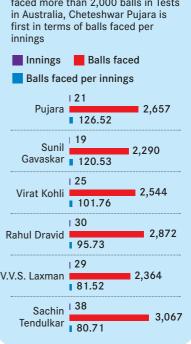
go away. Just enjoy! The courage, resolve, spirit you have shown is... unreal. I have tears in my eyes." This was Ravi

Shastri, chief coach of the Indian cricket team, talking to his wards following the victory lap, the award ceremony and the mandatory television interviews. The Border-Gavaskar trophy was back in the Indian dressing room after India beat Australia 2-1 in the four-match series. There was no jumping or yelling; just exhausted faces with tired smiles. The feeling of having played a role in one of India's greatest ever Test series wins was yet to sink in. Suddenly, those hellish

five months in a bio-bubble, away from their families, felt worth it.

Rishabh Pant—the hero of day five in Brisbane—grinned wryly as Shastri told him, "You were simply outstanding! While you were batting, you gave us heart attacks every moment, but what you have done is amazing!" Pant rubbed his eyes and looked down.

For a player who was under scrutiny for his glove work throughout the series, Pant also got high praise from Sachin Tendulkar. "He is a threatening player and the Australians were



worried. They were restless when Rishabh was around," Tendulkar said on his app, 100MB.

The fairy tale tour of hard knocks came to an end with India slaving Australia at their fortress-the Gabba. Some even call it the Gabbatoir. for it is a place sacrificial touring teams are taken for slaughter. Australia had not lost a Test there since 1988. That is, till January 19, 2021. India beat the Aussies by three wickets, ending a 31-Test winning streak.

Sure. India had won the series the last time they toured Australia, in 2018-19, but this win surpasses that by a lot. Not only does this rank alongside India's greatest Test achievements—the 1971 series win in England, the historic chase of 406 at Port of Spain in 1976, and the home series win against a rampaging Australia in 2001—this was also a series that threw up unlikely, unknown heroes. It was a month-long advertisement for Test cricket.

Tendulkar considered this India's best Test series win ever. "Every time there was a blow, somebody stood tall and competed hard," he said. "They were bruised and battered, but nobody gave up. It was incredible. [Have to] credit the team management—Ravi, Ajinkya [Rahane]. This is without any doubt the top series India has ever played. I don't remember any series victory where there were so many injuries; in spite of this, we won."

Former Australia coach John Buchanan told THE WEEK: "[It was] an epic result and an enthralling series, one which should help emphasise that to produce a Test series of this calibre, Test cricket must be five days, and must not be, for the most part, played under lights with a pink ball."

His counterpart John Wright, who was coach of the Indian team that beat Australia in 2000-01 and drew with them in 2003-04, told THE WEEK: "Every true cricket fan anywhere must have celebrated

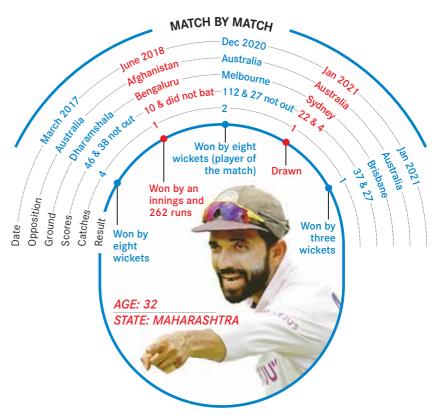
TEST TOPPERS

AJINKYA RAHANE

EST RECORD	
MATCHES	69
UNS	4,471
IIGH SCORE	188
VERAGE	42.58
00s	12
CATCHES	87

AS CAPTAIN

MATCHES	5
RUNS	320
HIGH SCORE	112
AVERAGE	45.71
100s	1
CATCHES	9



INDIA'S STARS OF THE SERIES

MOST RUNS

RISHABH PANT: 274 (FIVE INNINGS)

Pant became the fastest Indian wicketkeeper to score 1,000 Test runs (27 innings), breaking M.S. Dhoni's record (32 innings)

MOST CATCHES (EXCLUDING WICKETKEEPERS)

RAHANE: 6 (EIGHT INNINGS)

MOST WICKETS

MOHAMMED SIRAJ: 13 (SIX INNINGS)

His father passed away shortly after Team India landed in Australia; he missed the funeral, keeping in mind the Covid-19

HIGHEST PARTNERSHIP

CHETESHWAR PUIARA AND PANT: 148 (THIRD TEST, SECOND INNINGS)

> GRAPHICS SREEMANIKANDAN S. RESEARCH KARTHIK RAVINDRANATH

COVER STORY —

CRICKET

the victory. It was such a boost for the five-day game. Heroic in every respect. It was a master stroke to play five bowlers. It was a true team effort; one only has to look at the batting card of India's first innings. This may well not be the team that takes the field for India's next Test, but it deserves to be. Wonderful!"

Shastri described the series win as "unreal" and the "toughest tour" he had seen. Speaking after the victory, he said, "To be in a lockdown for four months, [then] go to the IPL in a bio-bubble... Jasprit Bumrah was the only bowler in the squad to have bowled 64 overs [in Australia]. None of the others had bowled as many going into [this] series. Then coming to Australia, being in quarantine, getting bowled out for 36 in the first Test and then coming back and playing like champions. The penny has still not dropped. It is unimaginable, unreal and simply superb."

Buchanan admitted that he believed it was advantage Australia from the outset. "With Kohli leaving after the first Test, Ishant [Sharma] and Rohit [Sharma] not touring (there was doubt about their inclusion). I believed it would be difficult for India to draw the series, let alone win it," he said.

Analysing where India had outthought and outplayed the hosts, he said, "Australia won three tosses, so it was their batsmen who were responsible for making first and second innings totals that were both large enough and quick enough to place India under huge pressure to defend in the fourth innings. Australia looked like they were in this position in Sydney (third Test), but crucial fielding errors made it difficult to force the result.

"The vigil of [Ravichandran] Ashwin and Hanuma Vihari for some 43 overs [was] a series-turning effort; however, this was on the back of a very defiant top order and an aggressive Pant. More injuries to India's bowling line-up for the fourth Test definitely favoured Australia. But as both teams found out, India to their liking and Australia to their frustration, the Gabba wicket had been tamed by this time of year. It was not the hostile November, first Test wicket that visiting teams have come to dread (touring teams usually play at the Gabba first). The so-called

'second string' Indian bowling attack relished the Gabba and once again contained the batting line-up in both innings. India found a way to not only survive the final day, but also to score the 328 runs needed for victory."

As Pant carried the tricolour along with his teammates during the victory lap, the members of the support staff walked beside them. They deserved the lap, too. With a

jumbo squad to take care of and a slew of injuries to key players throughout the tour, their workload had increased dramatically. Shastri thanked each member of the support staff individually in the dressing room after the last Test. The team of Shastri, batting coach Vikram Rathour, bowling coach Bharat Arun, fielding coach R. Sridhar, team physiologist Dr Nitin Patel, masseurs Arun Kanade and

Rajiv Kumar, conditioning coach Soham Desai, trainer Nick Webb and throw-down specialists Nuwan and Raghu, had lifted the body, mind and spirits of the players, especially after the Adelaide hiding and the pile of injuries.

And what about the stand-in captain, Ajinkya Rahane? It was an unenviable task, especially after Adelaide. But Rahane epitomises the word khadoos, which refers to the doggedness of Mumbai and its cricketers. Though not aggressive by way of expression, he did use aggression in his strategies. Rahane had earlier used his cricketing nous to defeat Australia in Dharamshala in 2017. but this was a different kettle of fish.

Shastri, who has a fantastic rapport with the expressive and aggressive Kohli, described Rahane thus: "[He was] calm and composed, not ruffled by anything. He was taking everything in his stride."

In the tense closing moments at the Gabba, Rahane sat with his deputy Rohit Sharma, his face revealing



little. When the match was won, he asked Pant to lead the victory lap. "It was really tough," he said after the match. "It was all about character, [we were] not thinking too much. Credit to each individual, it was a team effort."

At the individual level, Rahane's 112 in Melbourne helped turn the tide India's way. The team won and the series was 1-1. Predictably, the captain underplayed his efforts. "I looked good because everyone contributed," he said.

His senior partner Cheteshwar Pujara was also, expectedly, a standout. While thanking him in the dressing room, Shastri said, "Puji, you will be known as

you will be known as the ultimate warrior." Pujara acknowledged it with a sweet smile and a raised hand. No other player had

No other player had it as tough as him. The architect of the 2018-19 series victory (he scored more than 500 runs and batted for hours), could manage only 271 runs and three half centuries this time. But, he faced 928 balls. Said Tendulkar: "People keep talking about his strike rate, not being able to rotate strike; I would tell Pujara [to] ignore those guys! They are not at the same level as you are. I hold him in extremely high regard, [he is a] world-class player."

Said Buchanan: "Australia looked like they had Pujara's measure after the first two Tests, but then he proceeded to score 50 (176) and 77 (205) in Sydney to lay the benchmark for an incredible draw. He followed this with 25 (94) and a heroic 56 (211) in Brisbane to be the rock around which Pant and the others were able to craft victory."

Pujara protected the young guns; he took the blows and ground down the bowlers so that his junior partners could play freely. In Brisbane, he was hit 11 times as Pat Cummins



COVER STORY —

CRICKET



and company peppered him with short balls and bowled into his body. "Nasty," said Australian legend Shane Warne on air.

The series, perhaps above all else, will be remembered for the exploits of the newcomers—Shubman Gill, Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, T. Natarajan and Washington Sundar. They got their chances because of the injured players and, in Gill's case, because of Prithvi Shaw's poor form.

From his maiden Test innings, Gill looked the part. He became the second highest run scorer for India in the series, scoring 259 runs in three matches. His 91 in the second innings at the Gabba laid the platform for India to chase boldly. "He batted exceptionally well," said Tendulkar. "He looked very compact and he was opportunistic—whenever he found the chance, he scored a boundary."

Another young man who made the most of his opportunity was Sundar. The 21-year-old off-spinner, known

The five Indian bowlers who played

in the Brisbane Test-Mohammed Siraj, Navdeep Saini, Shardul Thakur, Washington Sundar and T. Natarajan-had a combined Test record of 117.1 overs and 11 wickets, coming into the match. This made them the least experienced bowling attack in Team India's history. Three members of the bowling attack which played India's second Test in 1933-Amar Singh, Mohammad Nissar and C.K. Nayudu-had a combined Test record of 149.1 overs and 12 wickets from the first match in 1932.

for his performances in the IPL and the Tamil Nadu Premier League, last played a First-Class match three years ago! He was told of his inclusion in the side only two days ahead of the Gabba Test. Not only did he bowl with discipline, taking 3/89 and 1/80 in the two innings, he also shone with the bat. He batted with Shardul Thakur for 36 overs to score 62, thwarting Australia's plans to mop up the tail, and played a quick

cameo of 22 in the second innings to take India close to the target.

Thakur himself scored a fighting 67 and took seven wickets in the match. His bowling partner Siraj got his first five-wicket haul in the second innings. It was an emotional moment.

And then there was Thangarasu Natarajan. He was taken to Australia as a net bowler, but 'Nattu' got a dream opportunity after others fell to injuries. He picked up three wickets in the first innings, including that of Marnus Labuschagne. Hailing from a poor background, he was spotted playing tennis ball cricket in the dusty fields of Chinnappampatti in Tamil Nadu's Salem district. He played with a cricket ball for the first time in 2010, when district cricket officials spotted and drafted him in the district league.

Years later, the IPL brought in hefty pay cheques and the Gabba gave him his dream. However, the immediate future is certain. The selectors have not picked him for the upcoming home series against England. Yet, he remains stoic. "He did not look out of place in the Test. He knew what he was doing. There was maturity there," said Tendulkar.

The Indian bench strength is no accident. There has been careful planning and monitoring by the BCCI and former India A coach and head of the National Cricket Academy Rahul Dravid. Since 2010, India A have played 52 First-Class matches, the most by any team. Siraj has played 16 A-team matches, Navdeep Saini 14, Vihari 12, Mayank Agarwal 10, Gill eight, Shaw five and Pant four. They have toured South Africa, Australia, the West Indies and New Zealand. They were thrown into the deep end in this series, but they knew how to swim. Australia head coach Justin Langer, his shoulders dropping in resignation, said: "Never ever underestimate the Indians. To have 1.5 billion people... if you play in the XI, you have got to be really tough." •

SEE-SAW SERIES

A series that was decided in the last hour of the last day of the last match. A few key on-field moments that swung momentum to both the sides

BY ANIRUDH MADHAVAN



Day 1

Pink-ball Test. Ball two. Mitchell Starc castles Prithvi Shaw, setting the tone for the match. Ominous signs for the touring side

Men around the bat. Virat Kohli steps out to hit Nathan Lyon straight for four. An indication of how Indian batsmen would play Lyon for the rest of the series. They used their feet to neutralise the off-spinner.

Kohli, on 74, called for a single and then was sent back by his deputy Ajinkya Rahane. Kohli departs with India at 188/3. Captain gone, momentum arrested, seeds of doubt sown.

Day 2

Jasprit Bumrah drops Marnus Labuschagne on 12 at backward square-leg. Sets in motion a catching crisis for India.

Day 3

More a session than a moment, this. India edge everything and fold for 36, their lowest Test total ever. Mohammed Shami retires hurt after being struck on his bowling arm; first of a series-defining slew of injuries for India. Rock bottom.





Steve Smith ensnared in the leg-side trap; falls to Ravichandran Ashwin on a duck. Bumrah clips Smith's leg stump in the second innings. He made 8. Leg side follies claim Smith.

Starc bowls perhaps the best over of the series, traps Mayank Agarwal LBW on the sixth ball. Demons of Adelaide resurrected.

Debutant Shubman Gill dropped on 4 by Labuschagne. He made 45. Aussies drop a few more.

Day 2

Rahane dropped on 73; goes on to make match-winning 112.





Mohammed Siraj claims returning David Warner on 5; destructive opener removed. Rishabh Pant drops debutant Will Pucovski on 26 and 32; he makes 62.

In-touch Matthew Wade tries to go over the top, gets caught on 13. Australia were 232-3 then and could have amassed a huge Ravindra Jadeja pulls off magical run-andthrow to dismiss Steve Smith on 131.

Brilliant direct hit by Josh Hazlewood ends Hanuma Vihari's stint (4); India were 142-3. Two more run outs in the innings.

Day 4

Siraj alleges racial abuse by some spectators. Play halted and the accused ejected. While not strictly cricket-related, the moment defined the young Indian team's decision to not take any abuse.

Day 5

Game-changing decision to send Pant in instead of Vihari. Pant dropped on 3 by Tim Paine. Makes 97.

Vihari tears his hamstring. India revise their ambitions; play for a draw instead of going for the target.

Paine sledges Ashwin and then drops a catch. Vihari (23*) and Ashwin (39*) battle hard to deny the Aussies and script a memorable draw.



BRISBANE

Day 1

Rahane drops Labuschagne on 37; he ends up with 108.

Day 2

Rohit Sharma gifts the Aussies his wicket after looking solid for 44.

Day 3

Another moment that was a session; Shardul Thakur and Washington Sundar put on 123 to save India.

Day 5

Cheteshwar Pujara survives a barrage of body blows to hold on.

Rahane hoists Lyon for six over long on; shows that India are going for the win.

Paine misses stumping; Pant on 16. He goes on to win India the match and series with 89*. Australia lose at the Gabba for the first time since 1988.

Is he 'a keeper'?

Rishabh Pant's exploits with the bat are accompanied by subpar glove-work, and this puts the team management in a dilemma

BY NEERU BHATIA

piderman, Spiderman... Rishabh Pant was heard singing from behind the stumps on the fourth day of Brisbane Test match. He was not randomly humming the Spiderman theme, but was egging on off-spinner Washington Sundar. Aise web pheko web, aise karke phishh... (catch them in a web of spin) was his advice to the debutant bowler. Pant was back in his element; chirpy and spirited right up till he hit the winning runs at the Gabba to help India retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

But, till the second Test in Melbourne, the baby-faced wicketkeeper batsman had little to cheer about. His Indian Premier League season with the Delhi Capitals was subpar; he was dropped from India's white-ball squads, and senior wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha was preferred in the first Test in Adelaide. Pant played the second Test in Melbourne and-apart from dropping Pat Cummins off R. Ashwin in the second inningsthe match went without major mishaps for the 23-year-old.

The third Test in Sydney, however, was a horror show from Pant the wicketkeeper. He dropped debutant Will Pucovski twice (the

Aussie made a half century) during the rain-affected session on day one. First off Ashwin (on 26) and then in a botched-up juggling effort three overs later (on 32) to deny pacer Mohammed Siraj a wicket. Pant redeemed himself with the bat in the second innings. Sent in by captain Ajinkya Rahane at No 5, Pant scored a counterattacking 97 which helped India draw the match from a disadvantageous position. He took it a step further with his 89 not out in Brisbane.

Ricky Ponting, former Australia captain and Pant's coach at Delhi Capitals, summed it up well when he said that Pant's batting was always going to outweigh his keeping issues. "Since his debut in Test cricket, he's dropped more catches than any other keeper in the world. That highlights he has got some work to do with his keeping," he told the Cricket Australia website. Ponting had called for Pant to be picked ahead of Saha post the first Test. The same man later said that the catches Pant dropped in Sydney "were two that should be taken, simple as that".

Coach Ravi Shastri was all smiles when asked about Pant's batting after the historic win. "You

can't change his cricket! He is a good listener, understands that he has to strike a balance between caution and recklessness," said Shastri. "He learnt a lot from the Sydney match. The story could have been different had he stayed on for 45 minutes more." Skipper Ajinkya Rahane revealed that the message to the batsmen on the fifth day of the Gabba Test was simple: Fight till the end, do not think of the result, take it session by session. But Pant, being Pant, had a different plan. "Around tea time. Rishabh decided to take matters into his own hands; he was looking to chase down the total," said Rahane.

The Australia series perfectly encapsulated the story of Pant's three-year long Test career—Dr Jekyll, the batsman, and Mr Hyde, the wicketkeeper. Former India wicketkeeper and chief selector Kiran More told THE WEEK: "His glove-work has really gone down in the last one year. Before that he had about 12 matches, 62 victims—the percentage was high."

When the training camps for the IPL started and Team India support staff got in touch with the regulars in the national squad, it was reportedly found that Pant



had put on weight. During the IPL, Pant is said to have focused on shedding the extra kilos and retaining fitness. By the time he landed in Australia, he was 10kg to 15kg lighter. However, the focus on fitness reportedly led to lesser work on wicketkeeping.

Vijay Dahiya, Delhi Capitals head talent scout and former India stumper, said: "In white-ball cricket, we are always looking for a batsman who can also keep, but Pant is a genuine wicketkeeper." He added that though Indian players mature fast thanks to the large number of matches they play till the under-19 level, there is still a transition period at senior level, especially in Tests. He added that Pant left the domestic grind early to be an international player. "I saw Pant closely during IPL," said Dahiya. "If he works a little more on the mental side, I think you will see him surpassing all wicketkeeping records in India."

Dahiya pointed out that though Saha, too, has dropped catches, no one has questioned his wicketkeeping technique (Pant's technique has been called faulty). "Somewhere down the line, you need to be at peace with yourself to keep wickets well," said Dahiya. "It is a thankless job. Somewhere, he was fighting with himself, because he was sensitive to all the talk about weight gain. He changed his diet to lose weight and was so focused on it."

Acknowledging the quandary over selecting Pant, More said that he was a key player who could provide balance to the batting line-up. "He can do what Adam Gilchrist did at No 7 for Australia," said More. "He can change the game in any situation. That is what he did in Sydney, too. He is a match winner at the end of the day. I like his intent every time he goes out to bat, his approach to his batting."

Pant came through the ranks of the Sonnet Club in Delhi, which has produced India internationals like Manoj Prabhakar, Akash Chopra, Atul Wassan, Raman Lamba, Anjum Chopra, Ashish Nehra and Shikhar Dhawan. Coach Tarak Sinha, who runs the club, said that the lockdown and the lack of any competition for about eight months resulted in Pant's wicketkeeping skills going downhill. "He was at home in Roorkee during lockdown, where he was unable to practise. All cricket facilities, even in Delhi, were shut," said Sinha. "In T20, you can get away with below par glove-work, but in Test cricket it needs to be very good. I am sure he will improve. He has kept abroad in previous series and his keeping was okay. None of the issues he has with his wicketkeeping are ones that cannot be sorted out. We will work on it when he gets time."

But others point out that wicketkeeping work can be

CRICKET CRICKET

done on one's terrace if need be. Dahiya said if Pant focuses solely on wicketkeeping skills for a few weeks, it could really help his case. "He needs to figure it out, where he wants to work," he said. "From what I have seen during the IPL, he has keeping skills; the more you work on them, the better you become. Let us start with simple things. Don't go for first slip catches, catch those coming towards you. And if he makes a few more runs consistently, he will become more confident in both departments."

Meanwhile, Sinha rues his ward's missed centuries more. "I expected him to score a century—he also missed two centuries against West Indies at home in 2018," he said. "[At Sydney,] he could have won the match for India. But, it doesn't matter. He played a role in India drawing the match. It was important for Rishabh personally, since he was being criticised for his wicketkeeping. He had to do something."

More said the issue with Pant's keeping seems to be both technical and a result of the lack of time spent on it. "I think he is not working enough; if he is, it is not in the right direction," he said. "His hand position is very poor, stance is wrong, he is falling back; when he gets up he gets up very upright and his hands

THE WEEK - JANUARY 31, 2021

are too far off from his eye and head position. That's why he tries to push the ball down." More has worked with Pant in the past, but recently it has only been for a day or two at a time. It will take time to iron out the issues, said More. "It is a process," he said, adding that he needed Pant to spend more time with him.

On returning from Australia, India is scheduled to face a visiting England. Both Pant and Saha are in the squad for the series. The team management has generally gone with Saha at home (on low, turning wickets) and Pant abroad (on more bouncy pitches). With Pant having an advantage over Saha with respect to

Both Pant and Saha are in the squad for the England series. The team management has generally gone with Saha at home (on low, turning wickets) and Pant abroad (on more bouncy pitches).

batting, it remains to be seen which way the Indian think-tank will go. Sinha said the onus was on Pant to improve his keeping. "He has to work harder, if he wants to cement his place he will have to," he said.

More is backing Pant ahead of Saha, even at home, for the England series. "I will still punt on Pant against England," he said. "When you play on turning tracks in India, there will be lots of chances. The problem in Australia is that the odd ball turns, that's why he is grabbing at the ball. You are in the game in India all the time. In Australia, I sometimes felt he was not in the game at all."

Pant's heroics with the bat at Sydney and Brisbane may have given him a new lease of life, but it will take real effort to resurrect his India career fully. With the likes of Sanju Samson and Ishan Kishan waiting in the wings in the shorter formats, Pant has to spruce up his wicketkeeping skills and fast. More feels a wicketkeeping coach who will track all India hopefuls is a must. "You need specialist coaches to work with wicketkeepers like Samson, Kishan and Pant," he said. "Someone needs to tell the wicketkeepers that run-making is fine, but you need to keep wickets well. You cannot carry on like that. That message needs to go to all young keepers." •





The Deccan charger

Mohammed Siraj scripts a fairy-tale in Australia, but cementing his place in the Test squad will still be a challenge

BY RAHUL DEVULAPALLI

arely does a single overseas tour showcase different shades of a cricketer's character at a microscopic level. The Test, ODI and T20 series against Australia did exactly that for Hyderabadi pace bowler Mohammed Siraj. On January 7. while the Indian national anthem was being played at the Sydney Cricket Ground on the first day of the third Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series, Siraj got emotional. The video of tears rolling down his cheeks went viral, laying bare before millions of viewers the emotions of the 26-year-old.

A few days before that, when young Australian all-rounder Cameron Green was hit on the head by a Jasprit Bumrah shot during a practice game at the SCG, Siraj was at the non-striker's end. He immediately dropped his bat and rushed towards the bowler, without even thinking of a run. That video, too, went viral, bringing Siraj's compassion and sportsmanship to the fore. During the fourth Test match at the Gabba, Siraj showcased his sublime skills with the ball and breached the Aussie citadel, even as he braved racist taunts from the stands. Leading

the inexperienced Indian bowling attack, he scalped five wickets in the second innings, setting up the game for India. But the high point of Siraj's young career came at one of the most difficult phases of his life. He lost his father to a lung ailment while he was away on national duty. Resolute and focused in the face of adversity, he went about playing matches and taking wickets.

"He is a strong boy. They say tough situations make you stronger. That is what happened to Siraj. He overcame grief and delivered an excellent performance," said Mohammed Ismail, his elder brother. Siraj's family stays in Toli Chowki, a middle-class locality in Hyderabad. They shifted to a new, bigger house a few years ago after Siraj made it big, but the family did not leave the locality.

Siraj's father, Mohammed Ghouse, who once drove an autorickshaw to feed his family, was his biggest supporter. Ismail said Siraj used to skip classes and even exams to play

COVER STORY —

CRICKET



cricket. It made the whole family angry, but the ever-supportive father trusted his son's instincts. After Siraj was picked up by the Indian Premier League team Sunrisers Hyderabad in 2017 for a whopping ₹2.6 crore, he never let his father go back to work.

Siraj's biggest source of strength after his father's death is his mother, Shabana Begum. Ismail said she quickly slipped into their father's role of supporting and motivating Siraj. "The credit goes to her," he said. "She talks to him four to five times a day. He could face our father's loss as she motivated him."

Siraj's friends, too, are proud of him. Some of them visited the family home and spoke to the media right after India's victory in Brisbane. "Siraj's life is a lesson on how to conduct yourself in life," said one of them.

As a cricketer, Siraj's growth trajectory has been unconventional. He was not part of the BCCI's age-group cricket and he continued to play "gully cricket" with tennis balls, even into his early 20s. Sudheer Mahavadi, a sports analyst from Hyderabad, said he had seen Siraj playing with

tennis balls in local tournaments all across the state, season after season. "He used to go to Manthani (a town in north Telangana) to play tennis ball tournaments till a few years ago," said Mahavadi. "Playing with tennis balls actually helped him improve his strength. Later, he could play some good cricket at the domestic level and show his strength as a bowler."

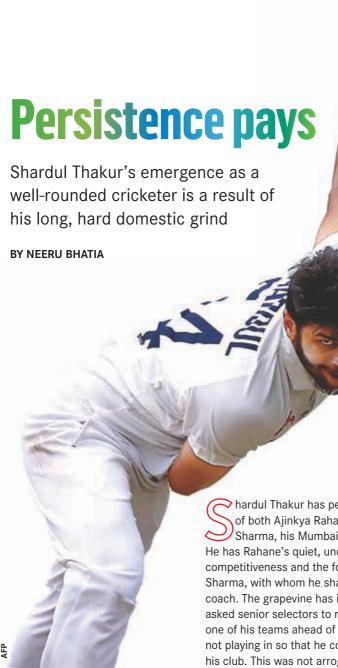
It was Mahboob Ahmed, secretary of the Hyderabad-based Charminar Cricket Club, who first noticed Siraj and offered him a place in his team. Siraj made his Ranji Trophy debut for Hyderabad in 2015. He was encouraged and mentored by former cricketer and selector P. Jyothi Prasad, who had also spotted Mithali Raj, captain of the women's ODI team. In the 2016-17 Ranji season, Siraj was the highest wicket taker for Hyderabad, with 41 scalps. Siraj's exploits impressed Bharat Arun, who was coaching the Hyderabad Ranji team; Arun is now the bowling coach of the national team. "He (Arun) is like an angel to me. He gave me the confidence that I can achieve anything," Siraj had said in a video.

Siraj celebrating his fifth wicket with Mayank Agarwal on day four at the Gabba

A year after his IPL debut, Siraj was bought by Royal Challengers Bangalore. He made his national debut in 2017 in a T20 International against New Zealand in Rajkot. His only ODI game was in January 2019 against Australia at the Adelaide Oval. His Test debut, too, came against Australia in the 2020 Boxing Day Test, just a month after his father's death.

For Hyderabadis, Siraj is a special talent. Though the city can boast of legendary batsmen like Mohammed Azharuddin and V.V.S. Laxman, it has not had a pace bowler after Syed Abid Ali, who last played for India in 1975. For Siraj, however, the road ahead may not be smooth, despite his impressive debut. The immediate challenge for him is to cement a place in the national team and bowl consistently well on Indian pitches.

"In Australia, Siraj swung the ball nicely and troubled the batsmen," said Mahavadi. "His fitness level was outstanding and he looked exuberant throughout. No doubt, he has a great future in Indian cricket." •



Shardul Thakur's

domestic grind has stood him in

good stead

hardul Thakur has personality traits of both Ajinkya Rahane and Rohit Sharma, his Mumbai teammates. He has Rahane's quiet, understated competitiveness and the forthrightness of Sharma, with whom he shares a childhood coach. The grapevine has it that he once asked senior selectors to release him from one of his teams ahead of a match he was not playing in so that he could play for his club. This was not arrogance; all he wanted to do was play.

So, when he got the opportunity to play in the final Test of India's Australia tour, the bowling all-rounder grabbed it. In only his second Test, Thakur, 29, took seven wickets. The bonus was his batting. In the first innings, he scored 67 and forged a 123-run seventh wicket partnership with debutant Washington Sundar (the duo batted for 36 overs on day three), which turned the tide against the hosts.

As the world waxed eloquent about the discovery of all-rounder Thakur, in Mumbai, his coaches-childhood coach Dinesh Lad and former Ranii Trophy side coach Chandrakant Pandit-were not surprised. "He performed like a [seasoned] professional," said Lad. "He always used to bowl well, but I am happy with his batting temperament." Pandit, a former India stumper, said: "He always had the potential as an all-rounder. He is a player who has the courage to go into [any] situation and get the job done."

Thakur said that he was only thinking that the longer he batted, the smaller Australia's lead would be. "I just wanted to spend time on the pitch," he said. There was no extravagant celebration after getting a wicket or scoring his maiden Test 50. He had waited more than two years for this

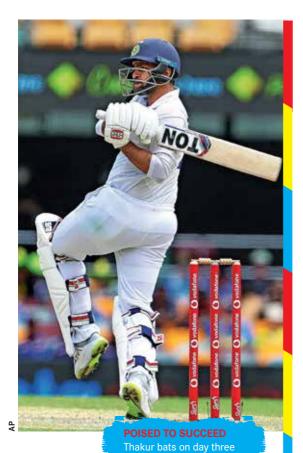
second chance. His Test debut in 2018 against the West Indies at Hyderabad only lasted 1.4 overs because of an injury. "It wasn't easy to go back and

grind it out in domestic cricket," he said. Then, getting a wicket off the first ball on his Test return was like a dream come true, he said.

Thakur hails from a middle-class family in Palghar, 87km and two-anda-half hours by train from Mumbai. He was spotted during an under-15 tournament; in one match, he took six wickets and hit six sixes in an over. Lad approached his parents to have him transferred to the school in Mumbai where he was coaching. But his father, Narender, a farmer, refused as Thakur would be in class 10 the next year and travelling for five hours daily was not feasible. But, Lad eventually convinced Thakur Sr to allow his son to stay with him in Mumbai. "I told his dad that if he moved to Mumbai, he would play a high level of cricket," said Lad. "In his age group, he looked the fastest to me."

Thakur rose steadily through the ranks, playing for India A, Board President's XI and Rest of India. In 2014, the Indian Premier League beckoned with Kings XI Punjab signing him for

COVER STORY CRICKET



at the Gabba

₹20lakh. But, he got just one match in his first two IPL seasons. He moved to Mumbai Indians and then Chennai Super Kings. His journey to establish himself in white-ball cricket continues, but Lad said the domestic grind of over eight years has helped Thakur play as per team requirements and match situations. Pandit said the key to him looking the part was his mental and physical strength. He added that Thakur had good temperament and was willing to bowl at any time. "Even in the last over, he will bowl with pace," he said. "He is a very good fielder, too. He is the full package as a cricketer." Pandit added that it was apparent that Thakur had worked a lot on his fitness.

Thakur has been selected for the four-Test series against England. But, he may have to wait on the sidelines as Hardik Pandya returns to the side. Lad said that he felt Thakur had done enough for the team management to keep faith in him. "A good all-rounder can always get the chance," he said. "I am confident he will get a sustained run in the team." •

Bubble-trapped life

The bio-secure pockets have brought out the best and worst in the Indian side

BY REUBEN IOE IOSEPH

ike soldiers returning from war, a physically drained Indian contingent returns home with a majority of them having spent five months overseas. From the Indian Premier League bio-secure bubble to the strict restrictions of Australia, the Indians were physically cut off from the outside world. The bubble played no small part in the outcome of the historic Test series victory.

As the Indians hobbled off one by one over the course of the tour, mostly because of soft-tissue injuries, the onus was on team physio Nitin Patel and conditioning coach Nick Webb to stitch them up. Ahead of the tour, experts had warned that the schedule would take a toll on the players.

Australian head coach Justin Langer blamed the IPL for the injuries, saying it was too close to a big tour. Ramji Srinivasan, former strength and conditioning coach of the Indian team, told a newspaper that such injuries happen because of the difference in mechanics between running on a treadmill and suddenly switching to outdoors training.

Moreover, the mental fortitude of the players in isolation was also put to the test. As psychologists have pointed out over the last year, the mental fatigue in a sports bubble can have adverse outcomes. Hence, it came as no surprise when pictures of Indian players "breaching the bubble" to dine and shop were revealed on social media.

On a side note, Australia's strict quarantine rules have frustrated others, too. Tennis stars who arrived for the Australian Open are raising hell over it. Most players will be stuck in their hotel rooms until days before the tournament starts on February 8; the inability to train has them fuming.

But, all things considered, the bubble may have also played its part in the Indian victory. The restrictions meant that India had to take its largest contingent of players ever as back up for possible injuries and the lack of access to local Australian net bowlers. Thirty players, including four net bowlers, landed in Australia. And if it was not for that provision, we may never have seen T. Natarajan and Washington Sundar play and win hearts on their debuts.

The backup players in the squad had acclimatised to the conditions, ready to be called into action, as against shipping in players from India on short notice to fill in for those who were ruled out.

The returning players will get little time with their families before they are bundled off into the next bio-bubble for the England tour, which runs from February 5 to March 28. And from there to the next for the IPL in April-May. Time to bubble-wrap the bubble-trapped? •



SAVE, WITH THE SMART MOVES

There are multiple investment avenues for you to save tax

n recent years, tax planning has become a buzz word, thanks to increasing advertising by mutual funds, insurance companies and even banks. Growing number of financial planners and a distribution community that continues to expand across India has also helped.

However, financial planning is a tricky affair. As India's financial services industry has grown exponentially over the last few years, the basket of offerings has also gone up. There are insurance policies, they offer annuity or pension plans; asset management companies also offer pension funds, apart from tax saver mutual funds; the government in recent years has been pushing the national pension system. Then there is the traditional and always favoured public provident fund. It is literally a maze out there, enough for a common tax payer to get lost in.

So where do you put your hard earned money to save tax? The answer will depend on how much you can save, your appetite for risk taking and your patience. For instance, tax saver mutual funds come with market risk. pension funds are good to save for the retirement, but have a long holding period, typically till you retire, a fixed deposit like national savings certificate has shorter duration, but interest rates on deposits have been generally moving southwards. So, what do you do?

Ifyouare willing to take the marketrisk, then tax saver mutual funds, or what are called equity-linked savings schemes are great. These funds, like the Canara Robeco Equity Tax Saver Fund, aim to provide long term capital appreciation by predominantly investing in equities and to facilitate the subscribers to seek tax benefits as provided under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act. Every

investment you make in these funds, will be locked in for three years. If you invest in these funds every year, you could be left with a sizeable corpus over the medium-to-long term, helped by the power of compounding returns. Several funds in this category have also given good returns. Data from Value Research shows three year returns of some of the ELSS funds have been as high as 15-16 per cent. But, there are also funds in this category that have given just 6-7 per cent returns for the same period. So, you will have to choose the fund wisely. Canara Robeco's ELSS fund has returned 28 per cent in the last one year, while since inception it has given 20 per cent compounded returns.

Also, very important to remember is that equity markets have surged over the last 8-9 months and current valuations are certainly not cheap. Since the market crash in March, benchmark



Tax savings ke saath returns bhi milte hain. Kya baat hai!



eLSS Funds help you save tax on your hard-earned money, while providing an opportunity for wealth creation through exposure to Equities. There are many such facts about Mutual Funds that will surprise you. Know more about Mutual Funds and plan your smart tomorrow.

#smarTomorrows

www.canararobeco.com/smartomorrows

An Investor education and awareness initiative

CANARA ROBECO
Mutual Fund

Mutual fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

Investors should deal only with registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified on the SEBI website (https://www.sebi.gov.in) under 'Intermediaries/Market Infrastructure Institutions'. Please visit http://bit.ly/cr-mandatory-disclosures to know about the process for completing one-time KYC (Know Your Customer) including process for change in address, phone number, bank details, etc. Investors may lodge complaints on the SCORES portal (https://www.scores.gov.in) against registered Mutual Funds if they are unsatisfied with their responses. Subject to current Tax laws. For personal tax implication, investors are requested to consult their tax advisors before investing.



indices have rallied a huge 88 per cent. Don't expect another bumper year like that and through 2021, returns are expected to moderate; estimates by several brokerages suggest the benchmark Nifty 50 and Sensex index are only likely to rise 5-6 per cent by December 2021-end.

If you are willing to hold on for a longterm, then National Pension System (NPS), a voluntary retirement scheme. could be a good way to accumulate wealth for retirement. Under NPS, you can choose the percentage you want to invest in a mix of equity, government securities and corporate bonds. So, depending on your risk appetite, you can choose to spread your investments. Another major advantage of NPS is that it allows you to save tax over and above the limits under section 80C of the Income Tax act. Under the Section 80CCD, you could get savings up to ₹50,000 by investing in NPS. Also at 0.01 per cent annually, charges on NPS funds management are among the lowest compared with other market linked instruments. The returns across equity, corporate debt and government securities categories across fund houses have also been strong.

For instance, the equity portion of

ICICI Prudential Pension Fund has delivered 12 per cent compounded returns over five years. In the same period, returns in the corporate debt portion are 10 per cent and government securities portion has returned close to 11 per cent CAGR. Over a longer-period too returns have been in the 10-12 per cent range. So, staying invested in NPS will leave you with a sizeable corpus at retirement.

But, do remember, a large part of the investment stays locked in till you retire or attain the age of 60, with only partial withdrawals allowed for certain emergencies before that. Also, 40 per cent of the corpus that the subscriber is left with post retirement has to be mandatorily invested in annuity plans of insurance companies for regular post retirement income. The annuity income is also taxable as per the subscrber's

Another market-linked instrument that can help you save tax is ULIP. In a Unit-Linked Insurance plan, part of the premium is invested in equity and debt funds, while a part of it goes towards insurance premium. So, if you are looking at investment as well as insurance in one go, then ULIPs are the way for you. However, do remember,

ULIPs tend to be more expensive than mutual funds, although over time, their costs have reduced than in the past. Also, while you can switch between mutual fund providers as well as the pension fund managers in NPS if you are not satisfied with the returns, you can only switch between various fund categories like equity, balanced, government securities and corporate bonds and not switch to another insurance provider, when it comes to ULIPs.

If you are not comfortable with the market risk involved in ELSS or NPS or ULIPs, then the public provident could be your go to instrument for long-term savings. PPF accounts could be opened through post offices or several stateowned and private banks. You can invest up to ₹1.50 lakh each year and get income tax benefits under Section 80C. The interest rates are set quarterly by the government. But do remember that the PPF account matures after 15 years since making the first investment. It can then be renewed for five years at a time. In the latest review the interest rate was left unchanged at 7.10 per cent. In 2017, the interest rate was 8 per cent. Given the state backing, from an investment perspective, its an extremely safe investment. But, do remember, that the interest rates generally have been falling and you will have to hold your initial investment for long.

Similar to PPF, the Narendra Modi government launched Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY). While any Indian citizen can open a PPF account, SSY is clearly aimed at parents of a girl child. A parent or a guardian can open a SSY account with authorised branch of a commercial bank or a post office in the name of the girl child till she attains the age of 10 years. Like PPF and other small savings investments, the interest rate on SSY account is notified by the government from time to time. Currently SSY account holders get an interest of 7.6 per cent. Opening an SSY account early can help accumulate a sizeable corpus for the girl child. But, annual

JODI KAMAAL KI

Just like Tax Savings and Wealth Creation







- Invest upto ₹1,50,000 and save upto ₹46,800[^]
- Gain from potential wealth creation through investments in the equity markets
- Short lock-in period of 3 years only

To invest, contact your Mutual Fund Distributor



ICICI Prudential Long Term Equity Fund (Tax Saving) (An open ended equity linked saving scheme with a statutory lock in period of 3 years and tax benefit) is suitable for investors who are seeking*:

- · Long term wealth creation solution
- An equity-linked savings scheme that aims to generate long term capital appreciation by primarily investing in equity and related securities and provide tax benefit under Section 80C of Income Tax Act, 1961
- *Investors should consult their financial advisers if in doubt about whether the product is suitable for them



^ Calculated at the highest tax slab rate for FY20-21 applicable on investments u/s 80C. Surcharge has been ignored for ease of calculation, The Risk-o-meter(s) specified above will be evaluated and updated on a monthly basis. Please refer https://www.icicipruamc.com/news-and-updates/all-news for more details.

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.



investments in this account are capped at ₹1.50 lakh, which some may find as a limitation. Also, to note is that the account will mature only after 21 years from the date of opening of the account or marriage of the account holder, whichever is earlier.

Senior citizens can park their funds safely in senior citizens savings scheme in a commercial bank or post office. The interest rate here is slightly higher than the PPF rate: currently its at 7.4 per cent. But, being a scheme targeted at seniors, the entry age is 60 years of age, which can be relaxed to 58 in case the person has taken a voluntary retirement and has not taken up any other work. The overall investments are capped at ₹15 lakh and has a lock-in of five years. If both, husband and wife, are senior citizens, then they could invest ₹30 lakh in SSY accounts (₹15 lakh individually). So, for seniors, who are essentially seeking safety of their money, this could well be the best investment option.

Talking about SCS scheme, several banks also offer special savings accounts for senior citizens, and they also get a higher interest rates on fixed

deposits. However, what should be noted is that there is a penalty of around 1 per cent that is charged on premature withdrawal of bank FDs.

Home prices have fallen in many markets and developers are also offering attractive promotions to boost sales hit by the pandemic. At the same time, interest rates currently are at record low. In 2020, the Reserve Bank slashed its benchmark Repo rate by 115 basis points in 2020 to the current 4 per cent. With the repo rate falling, banks, too, have reduced their external benchmark-linked interest rates. For instance, Union Bank's EBLR rate is at 6.80 per cent and its floating rate home loan rates range in EBLR plus 0.05 per cent to EBLR plus 0.55 per cent. If you are looking at buying a house, then this could be a good time to take the plunge.

Union Bank also has a smart save option, under which, over and above the EMI for the loan, you can deposit additional amount with an option to withdraw such excess amount at a later date as per their requirement. The excess funds help in reducing your loan outstanding. A lower interest is also

charged in the loan account till such excess funds are available.

Life insurance premiums also get tax benefits under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act. In India, life insurance penetration has been low (around 3.7 per cent in 2019). But, its been rising over the years and the COVID-19 pandemic has showed why its crucial to insure oneself, so that if anything were to happen to you, your family will be financially protected. The premiums that are charged on life insurance policies depend on your age. So, buying a cover early will help as the premiums will be lower. Also, considering inflation the future expenses that your family will incur will rise, than what the cost is today. So, ensure you buy a cover that will be sufficient to cover future costs.

Health care costs also continue to rise, which also makes it all the more important to buy a comprehensive health insurance cover. You can also avail tax deduction under Section 80D of the Income Tax Act, up to ₹25,000 for individuals under 60 or ₹50,000 for senior citizens. Today you can buy health insurance cover of even ₹1 crore. But, do your analysis of how much cover you need, based on your requirements and do study the terms and conditions properly to ensure that most of the important and necessary things are covered under the policy.

The budget in 2020 proposed a new tax structure, under which tax payers have the option to stick to the existing tax regime, where you can avail income tax exemptions and deduction, or shift to a new income tax structure, where the tax rates are low, but you don't get any income tax exemptions and

As we have seen, there are multiple avenues for you to invest and save tax from. Like we said earlier, it is a complex maze out there. But, that should not dissuade you. Do your own study, if not, find a financial planner who will help you at every step, do your goal setting and have a comprehensive life and health insurance cover. •

Conditions Apply

Save more with the smart investment option.



Union Easy Tax Saver Deposit Scheme comes with the dual benefit of tax exemption and attractive earnings on investment. It's the smart way to grow your savings.

- Minimum investment: ₹1000 and multiples thereof
 Monthly / Quarterly investment option from account on standing instruction • Lock-in-period: 5 years
 - Maximum eligibility for tax deduction ₹1,50,000/- per year
 - Nomination facility available
 Avail Tax Exemption under section 80 C







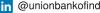
Helpline Nos.: 1800 208 2244 / 1800 425 1515 / 1800 425 3555 | www.unionbankofindia.co.in















Cabinet rejig triggers revolt in Karnataka BJP, with rebels accusing Chief Minister Yediyurappa of corruption and sleaze

BY PRATHIMA NANDAKUMAR

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold

-W.B. Yeats

EVEN A CENTURY after Yeats penned his famous lines, it still holds true in politics. The ruling BJP in Karnataka is once again witnessing anarchy after Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa recently inducted seven ministers to his cabinet. The expansion was expected to energise

the government, which was bogged down by dissent, corruption charges, floods, drought and the Covid-19 pandemic. But the move has brought the simmering dissent in the party to

Legislators who failed to make it to the cabinet said Yediyurappa picked "blackmailers" and the "corrupt". At least 20 MLAs have protested the chief minister's "unusual" decision to induct five MLCs (members of the

legislative council). Three of the new ministers were made MLCs after they lost the assembly elections.

The divisions within the party run deep. The mass migration of rebel MLAs from the Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular), which led to the collapse of their coalition government in July 2019, has created deep fissures within the BJP. But what has rattled party cadres and leaders alike is the vitriolic attack against Yediyurappa by Vijayapura MLA Basangouda Patil Yatnal and party hopper MLC A.H. Vishwanath. They said an objectionable CD of Yediyurappa was being used to blackmail him.

"Earlier, the BJP had quotas for loyalists, for castes and districts and for people who helped install its



government. But Yediyurappa has come up with a new quota for those who blackmail him with CDs and for those who bribe his son, Vijayendra," said Yatnal. "I am shocked to see that people who met me at a guest house in Nelamangala four months ago (saying they wanted) to pull down Yediyurappa have been made ministers. Had I joined them in blackmailing the CM with a CD, I could have become deputy chief minister."

It is not the first time that a CD is causing a flutter in Karnataka politics. A few months ago, Yediyurappa's grandnephew N.R. Santhosh, who is also his political secretary, had allegedly tried to commit suicide by consuming sleeping pills. State Congress chief D.K. Shivakumar

said the attempt was connected to a "leaked video" of Yediyurappa. "The CD has reached the BJP high command. This appears to be a case of blackmailing and needs to be probed," he said. Yatnal called the CD "unwatchable" and dared the Congress to make it public, like a responsible opposition party. "Congress leaders, too, have been getting more funds, and I suspect Yediyurappa has bought them," said Yatnal.

Opposition leader Siddaramaiah challenged Yediyurappa to sue the blackmailers, while Shivakumar demanded a probe by a sitting High Court judge. "The BJP is now officially the Blackmailers Janata Party, as its own MLAs and leaders allege that the chief minister is being blackmailed and is being paid bribes," Shivakumar said. "The Enforcement Directorate and the income tax department must suo motu register cases."

Siddaramaiah also demanded a probe into Water Resources Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi's claim that newly-inducted minister C.P. Yogeshwar had borrowed ₹9 crore from M.T.B. Nagaraj to help the BJP form the government in 2019. Nagaraj, perhaps the richest legislator in Karnataka, had made it to the cabinet via the legislative council route. "This is an admission that the BJP resorted to Operation Kamala to topple the coalition government," said Siddaramaiah.

Yediyurappa's critics said the chief minister made a big mistake by inducting five MLCs into the cabinet despite the BJP having 104 MLAs in the 224-member assembly. They said Yediyurappa went against the BJP tradition by making defeated leaders like Vishwanath, Laxman Savadi, Nagaraj, Yogeshwar and R. Shankar MLCs. All of them except Vishwanath are now ministers.

The regional divide, too, is glaring. Of the 31 districts in the state, only 16 are represented in the cabinet—Bengaluru got eight berths and Belagavi five. There are two ministers from Yediyurappa's home district, Shivamogga.

"The high command had not agreed to induct all 12 party hoppers and suggested that only six to eight should be accommodated. But Yediyurappa was adamant," said a party insider. "Even during the appointments to boards and corporations, he did not consult anyone. Party workers who toiled hard have been ignored. Moreover, the chief minister should not have publicly announced the cabinet expansion before getting the nod from Delhi. Now, legislators are making public statements against the CM and about the change of leadership. This is setting a wrong precedent in the party."

Yogeshwar's elevation, for instance, has met with stiff resistance from many legislators. Vishwanath said Yediyurappa had become Yogeshwar's puppet. "Why are you accommodating a fraud like Yogeshwar? The cabinet is dominated by Lingayats and Vokkaligas," he said. "Is this your concern for social justice? The Yediyur Siddalingeshwara (deity) will not forgive you."

Former minister S.A. Ramdas, who represents Krishnaraja in the assembly, tweeted to hint that a few people had entered the cabinet through wrongful means. Bommanahalli MLA Satish Reddy said Yediyurappa was ignoring party loyalists. "I have been part of the BJP since 1993. Today, I am feeling the void left behind by my mentor, the late Ananth Kumar," said Ramdas. "I would like to ask Yediyurappa what is the yardstick to become a minister in his cabinet?" Chitradurga MLA G.H. Thippareddy, too, slammed the chief minister for inducting Yogeshwar. "I feel like I have wasted 50 years of my political career," he said.





NO LOVE LOST Basangouda Patil Yatnal said Yediyurappa was "arm twisting" the central leadership by claiming the complete support of Lingayats

Siddaramaiah called out the BIP on family politics and said there were two chief ministers in the state, a de jure CM and a de facto CM. "The real power is in the hands of Yediyurappa's son," he said.

Yediyurappa, however, remains unfazed. He asked the aggrieved legislators to "approach" the party leadership instead of making public statements. And, he has found support from unlikely quarters. Rural Development Minister K.S. Eshwarappa—a Kuruba leader from Shivamogga who is engaged in a silent power tussle with Yediyurappa—told the dissidents that the BJP had a forum to express grievances and that going public only dented the party's image. Vijayapura MP Ramesh Jigajinagi, too, asked his colleagues to resolve their differences within the party. "I had warned Yediyurappa against inducting Yatnal into the party. He did not listen to my words," he said.

The central leadership of the BJP has been uncharacteristically silent on the issue, something intriguing and unusual for a party which claims to have a zero tolerance towards indiscipline. Some party insiders, however, suspect that Yatnal's frequent outbursts are part of a strategy to cut Yediyurappa down to size. But the central leadership is careful not to antagonise Yediyurappa and the Lingayat community. The last time it happened, the BJP suffered a major electoral reversal in Karnataka.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who was in Karnataka on January 16 and 17, praised Yediyurappa for his successful handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has quietened the voices of dissent for now. But Shah's message on the chief minister's future was cryptic. He said the BJP government in Karnataka would complete its full term. But he did not specify how long Yediyurappa will remain at the helm. •

The latest reshuffle has also upset the caste equilibrium in the cabinet. Lingayats have the highest representation with 11 ministers, Vokkaligas have seven, Kurubas and Scheduled Castes have four each, Brahmins and Scheduled Tribes two each, and Billavas, Marathas and Rajputs have one minister each.

Yatnal, who is also a Lingayat, said Yediyurappa was "arm twisting" the central leadership by claiming the complete support of the politically significant Lingayat community. Lingayat leaders across the parties have been trying to dislodge Yediyurappa as the tallest leader of the community. Congress veteran M.B. Patil spearheaded such a movement ahead of the 2018 assembly polls, but it backfired. BJP

leaders Murugesh Nirani and Yatnal have been backing the demand for including Panchamasalis (a Lingayat subsect) in the 2A category of backward classes, hoping that it will help them emerge as new leaders of the community. Yatnal said the Yediyurappa family had hijacked the BJP and the entire Lingayat community was forced to hang its head in shame because of the family's corruption. "Yediyurappa must step down immediately," he said.

This is not the first time Yatnal is targeting Yediyurappa. In October he said the BJP's central leadership was "fed up" with Yediyurappa, and that he would not last long in the CM's post. He even claimed that a Lingavat leader from north Karnataka would become chief minister.

SANIAYA BARU



Burnishing the Padmas

silver lining to the large and looming dark cloud of concern about institutional decay and falling standards is the revival in the status of the Padma awards. Instituted in the early 1950s, to recognise individual contribution to national development, social welfare and to the fields of culture, education, the sciences, business and economic development, the Padma awards have had a chequered career. While many distinguished awardees have helped elevate the status of the awards, some black sheep have brought disrepute to the award and the process by which nominees were chosen.

Some years ago, a major controversy erupted around the UPA government's decision to bestow upon a New York-based businessman, against whom various cases had been pending in law courts in the US and India, a Padma Bhushan. Less questionable but equally controversial have been awards to all manner of politicians, bureaucrats, journalists and economists by the governments of both Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh.

Even Bharat Ratna, the highest national award, has not been bereft of controversy. Many had ques-

tioned the posthumous award of Bharat Ratna to Tamil Nadu's M.G. Ramachandran in 1987, when no such award had been given to a B.R. Ambedkar or a Sardar Patel. It was prime minister V.P. Singh who named Ambedkar to a Bharat Ratna in 1990 and prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao who named Patel. Curiously, Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave Pranab Mukherjee a Bharat Ratna, but has so far denied it to Narasimha Rao despite demands from all around.

Given the controversial past of Bharat Ratna and Padma awards, Modi may be credited with at least trying to elevate the status of these awards by encouraging the government-appointed nominations committee to increasingly pick individuals who

have done worthy service to society. In the run-up to this year's Republic Day, and before the list of this year's awardees is made public, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has invited some of the awardees from the last few years to share their work with members of Parliament. Twenty Padma awardees are expected to make online presentations on best practices from various fields of social work. This is a welcome initiative. It should help curb the cynicism associated with the awards process and allow the lotus to bloom again.

This is not to deny that some undeserving or

controversial individuals still do manage to get their names listed. I must confess I became increasingly cynical about Padma awards after observing the kind of lobbying that used to go on. I cannot believe it has ceased completely.

In the end one must ask what national purpose such national awards serve. Apart from merely recognising good work, or gratifying friends and influencing people, the selectors must choose such individuals for these awards who may be regarded as national icons.

When an engineer like Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya or a scientist

like C.V. Raman was named a Bharat Ratna in the 1950s, they were also regarded as iconic heroes who have since inspired millions to excel in their fields. When Narasimha Rao named I.R.D. Tata to Bharat Ratna, and he is the only industrialist so far so named, he was holding JRD up as a national icon.

The Modi government's decision to honour individuals from the fields of social work and social development should be welcomed. However, India also needs icons in fields like science, engineering, medicine, architecture, teaching, municipal administration, farming, horticulture and rural development and so on, who can inspire others by becoming objects of national pride, regard and celebration.

Baru is an economist and a writer. He was adviser to former prime minister Manmohan Singh.



ROAD SAFETY

Be attentive, save your life

BY NITIN GADKARI

eaths and injuries from road accidents are a major and growing public health epidemic. Around 1.54 lakh people were killed in road crashes across the country in 2019 alone.

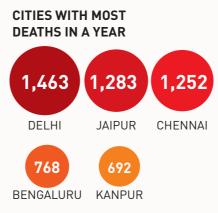
To prevent road accidents, India needs a collective effort by all stakeholders-Central, state and municipal governments, NGOs, corporate citizens and individuals-which can help develop the foundation of road safety in our country. Our aim is to reduce the burden of death and serious injuries, so as to meet our commitment to reduce fatalities by 50 per cent by 2030.

Significant improvements in road safety can only be achieved if we address road design, compliance of traffic rules, vehicle design and quality of drivers. Forming multi-stakeholder partnerships is essential not just for improving road infrastructure but also for educating and building awareness among drivers, riders and pedestrians.

Sixteen per cent of accident related fatalities in 2019 were linked to light motor vehicles. As road safety rests significantly on the shoulders of the drivers, increasing the capacity of commercial drivers through relevant training and workshops is a great initiative that should continue.

By being an attentive driver, you can preserve your life, the lives of fel30% Non-use of helmets. Non-use of seat belts. 14%

CAUSES OF DEATH ON ROADS



Source: Ministry of road transport and highways (2019)

low passengers, and all pedestrians and drivers who interact with you on the streets.

SANJAY AHLAWAT

I call upon the citizens to follow the newly amended Motor Vehicles Act and the Motor Vehicles Driving Regulations.

I appreciate that private ride-sharing companies like Uber are undertaking initiatives like eye checkups of drivers and raising public awareness. This is a great step.

I wish the road safety awareness campaign of THE WEEK all success. May it help in generating more awareness among people and sensitising them about road safety rules.

The writer is Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways.



people died on Indian roads in 2019.

1,48,968

people died of Covid-19 in India in 2020.

Tackle the deadlier virus.

Road safety campaign by THE WEEK: DRIVE TO LIVE







PIT **LOOMS** TO PRÉT

How Uttar Pradesh is leading the revival of khadi fabric in the country

BY PUJA AWASTHI



IF FABRICS WERE HEROES, khadi would be a superhero.

For how else does one describe a fabric which gets better with age, is skin friendly, adapts to the weather, does no harm to the environment and lasts a really long time?

Now the fabric, long overlooked in favour of its snootier cousin linen, is "going places", said Navneet Sehgal, additional chief secretary, Uttar Pradesh Khadi and Village Industries Board (UPKVIB).

It is a fabric that gets its name from khad—the Hindi/Punjabi for 'pit'. It was originally called khaddar—born of the pit loom on which its earliest versions were woven.

Even though the most popular identification of khadi is with Mahatma Gandhi and the freedom struggle (and thus the Gandhi ashrams which retail the fabric and other handmade products), in his autobiography, Gandhi writes that he had no

recollection of when he first saw a charkha. But by 1908 it was clear to him that the surest way to attain freedom was to climb out of poverty by harnessing traditional skills. Weaving was one such skill.

Yet, it took Gandhi's associates a long time to find charkhas—and when they finally did so in the Bijapur village of the erstwhile Gaekwad state, they discovered that these had been discarded for there was no one to pay for the labour of the weaver. And, thus, was born the push to spin one's own yarn as a marker of national pride. Self-reliance in clothing by assuring an income to weavers as against mills which spun fabric from foreign-acquired threads was just one of the many strands that went into fuelling the Swadeshi movement against the British. Its guiding light was "atmashakti" or self-reliance, cast now as 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

Thus, there is no time as favourable as now for a return to and reinvention of khadi-for what could be more local than a fabric that is spun across states.

And, Uttar Pradesh has taken the lead in this revival. During the pandemic the state became the first to produce khadi masks through self-help groups. At the last count, the UPKVIB had supplied 3.43 lakh metres of khadi which had been fashioned into some 27 lakh masks by 2,086 SHGs with 20,380 women. Total sales stood at ₹3.67 crore.

The khadi resurrection in the state began almost as soon as the current government led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath—himself an unwavering wearer of handmade fabric was installed. The first step was the introduction of the Pandit Deendayal Khadi Marketing Assistance Programme which provided, through the year, a rebate of 15 per cent on all





SPINNING A REVIVAL

Navneet Sehgal, additional chief secretary, Uttar Pradesh Khadi and Village Industries Board, works a charkha in Lucknow: (left) a khadi fashion show in Lucknow in 2019

khadi production. One third of this rebate is deposited directly in the bank accounts of the spinners and weavers. The rest is to be utilised, in equal parts by khadi institutions for sales and promotion, and management of resources and infrastructure. Till date, 217 institutions and 98,048 artisans have benefitted from the scheme.

The uptick of this scheme is that, unlike the rest of the country which offers a rebate on khadi products only for 100 days from October 2, Uttar Pradesh has a year-round rebate. This has translated into greater sales—from ₹590.16 crore in 2017-2018 to ₹950.79 crore in 2019-2020 and a steady rise in those employed by the sector from 4.50 lakh to 6.50 lakh.

Sehgal said the scheme also nixed a long-standing problem. "People were bringing khadi clothes from other states for sale in UP to claim

the subsidy on sale," he said. "As a result, most khadi units in the state had stopped production. It was a big racket which the production-based rebate system corrected."

Khadi, somewhat like religious affairs, has for the most part been a pushover department. But when given charge of it, Sehgal looked for ways to innovate. One of these innovations was to study how production costs of blankets could be brought down in the state's eight factories which produced these (khadi can be woven into cotton, silk and wool). "By minutely studying the production process we were able to bring down the cost from ₹800 to ₹499." he said. Seven such factories have been revived.

Another out-of-the-box idea was to introduce khadi into the fabric mix used to produce school uniforms. Thus, from 100 per cent polyester, the mix went to 70 per cent cotton and 30 per cent poly-khadi. So far 2,00,752 such uniforms have been provided under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

and have generated a revenue of ₹6.02 crore.

Sehgal, himself an ambassador of sorts, often clad in khadi, said, "The possibilities are immense. Just on the school uniform front, for instance, we could produce 10 times more".

Khadi has moved beyond traditional uses in the state. At Kanpur, a 23-year-old footwear and footwear component company, Arvind Footwear Private Limited, has started to use khadi to line its shoes. Rajendra Kumar Jalan, the CEO of this firm, said that the pandemic had forced him, like the rest of the world, to think of sustainable and eco-friendly products. "I read of a big shoe brand trying to make shoes from plastic bottles picked up from beaches," he said. "So, I thought, why not make shoes from what was locally handmade."

In May, the company started sampling materials and is now ready to export cowboy boots to the United States. The upper of the hand-sewn boots is made of power loom fabric, the sole of natural rubber and husk, and they come packaged in recycled paper. Jalan has set himself a unique challenge to ensure that his products are eco-friendly—he has buried a shoe on the factory premises. "In

KHADI



one year, it should all be gone. That is how we will know that it is completely biodegradable and sustainable," he said, adding that the company's demand for khadi was met by the government without delay.

Two years ago, the government mounted a glittering fashion show of khadi bridal wear. Rina Dhaka, a designer of international repute, was part of the show. Dhaka said she was "impressed with how the state government was pushing and pushing khadi".

"Khadi needs to be fashioned and marketed as a product desirable to the youth," she said. "The information that it is homegrown, handmade and beneficial to the skin needs to be aggressively promoted. We need to look at making hoodies, track pants, boxer shorts and the like."

Another state government initiative gets weavers to train at the Raebareli campus of the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT). Bharat Sah, the director of the institute, said that though the government did not have a written agreement with the institute, it had set aside an ever-increasing budget for such trainings which take artisans through all stages of fabric construction from surface designing to pattern making. For most weavers such training is their first time ever in an academic setting, and the NIFT's responsibilities extend to hand holding them after the training and getting constant feedback. So far, 300 artisans have been trained in batches of 30. "We had been showcasing khadi apparel even before this government, but now this has been pushed to a new level," said Sah. "We have been told to design projects without the fear that we will not get funds for them."

Manish Tripathi, a Lucknow-born designer aiming to make the world's largest fabric mask (of area 100 square metres), recently received 150m of khadi from the state government, sourced from all the 75 districts. Thus, what was to be a mask showcasing various fabrics and arts of India, will now essentially be a khadi mask with symbolic representation of other crafts such as Madhubani painting from Mithila.

Tripathi, who is designing a range of corporate wear from khadi, said, "Wearing khadi should make the statement, 'Hey, I am a responsible

INNOVATIVE USE

Shoes lined with khadi on display in a factory in Kanpur

citizen.' And the only way to do that is to educate people on what to expect from the fabric—to understand that its creases, folds and imperfections are essential to its beauty."

However, there remain knotty problems in the state's push for khadi. For one, the salaries of those who run the Gandhi ashram stores remain low. A manager at one such store in Lucknow said, "I was pushed into working here by my grandfather who was a freedom fighter and had an emotional bond with khadi. I earn less than ₹7.000 a month and am the only employee at this outlet. My daughter is of marriageable age, but I have to think a hundred times before I can pick up my motorcycle and fill it with petrol to go and look up any match for her. Gandhiji lives on through the Gandhi ashramsthrough us. Millions are spent on his birth anniversary celebrations. Why not spend some of that money to increase our wages?"

And, for khadi to be a life-saver. such concerns must be addressed. •

aleisure

FASHION • ART • BOOKS • MUSIC • THEATRE • LUXURY • FOOD • PEOPLE • REVIEWS • CINEMA • SERIES

The appeal of Korean dramas peaked in India during the pandemic

BY ANJULY MATHAI

BRIDGED BY LOVE A still from Crash Landing on You

JANUARY 31, 2021 • THE WEEK 63

■ @LEISURE **—**

CINEMA



hey say a society's humour reveals a lot about itself. If that is so, then the Korean drama, Crash Landing on You, which premiered on Netflix in December 2019, reflects a country that knows how to see the lighter side of things. Crash Landing on *You* is about the romance between a South Korean heiress, Yoon Se-ri, who crash lands in North Korea after a paragliding accident, and a North Korean soldier, Ri Jeong-hyeok, who gives her refuge.

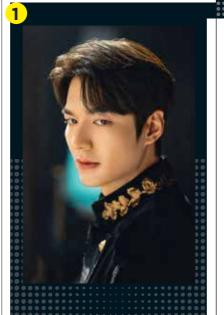
The series had the highest ever ratings in Korean cable history and featured on Netflix India's top 10 list. In a nuanced manner it shows the complex dynamics of the relationship between the two Koreas, and the gulf that divides them, without being moralistic or taking itself too seriously. You cannot help but smile when, despite the gravity of her situation, Yoon asks Captain Ri for "scented candles" for her bath. or when a North Korean lieutenant misses his commander's orders over radio because he is too engrossed in a South Korean soap. From the grim and graphic world of Hollywood, K-dramas offer a refreshing change.

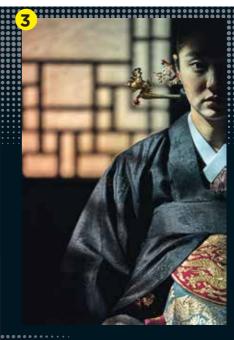
"I started watching K-dramas in college almost 10 years ago," says Anjitha Cherian, who works with the Indian Railways and is an avid fan of all things Korean. "We used to get it on pen drives from our seniors. They were so different from the excruciatingly dramatic saas-bahu shows from India. The synergy between different elements—the script, the casting and the soundtrack—is brilliant. Unlike

Indian shows, K-dramas are only 16 to 24 episodes long. Since I first started watching them, K-dramas have evolved a lot, especially the cinematography whose progression can be compared with that of the South Korean economy. From sci-fi to fantasy to noir, there are K-dramas in every genre."

Cherian says her favourite K-drama is Mr Sunshine, which is about Korean independence fighters in the early 1900s. She has been learning Korean for four years now because she feels it is a language that lets her express her emotions beautifully.

Korean culture started gaining popularity in India during the 1990s, as part of the Korean cultural wave called Hallyu, when the South Korean government aggressively promoted Korean music, art, cinema and food across the globe. Hallyu has had a tremendous impact on the South Korean economy, boosting it by \$12.3 billion in 2019. But Hallyu peaked during the pandemic in India, mainly due to two factors-South Korean filmmaker Bong Joon Ho's film, Parasite, becoming the first foreign-language film to win the Oscar for best picture and the







K-pop band BTS becoming the first since The Beatles to become number one on the Billboard 200 with five consecutive albums. According to an estimate cited by The New York Times, the seven-member boy band contributes \$3.5 billion annually to South Korea's economy.

Many K-dramas, including Kingdom (S2), Crash Landing on You, The King: Eternal Monarch and It's Okay to Not be Okay, have featured on Netflix India's trending lists since the lockdown began. The viewership for K-dramas on Netflix in India increased more than 370 per cent in 2020 over 2019. A Netflix spokesperson said they are "doubling down on



SOFT POWER

- 1) Kingdom 2) It's Okay to Not be Okay 3) The King: Eternal Monarch 4) My Holo Love

members. It grew especially during the lockdown, when many of my friends started exploring K-dramas in search of good content. They are all crazy about them now."

According to him, one of the appealing things about Korean entertainment is that there is no distinction between television and film actors. Everyone does everything, unlike in India, where you will never find an Amitabh Bachchan or a Shah Rukh Khan acting in television. "You will find some of the lead actors of Parasite in many

investment in Korean content". After English and local language content, Spanish, Korean and Japanese titles are most viewed on the platform.

The popularity of K-dramas has led to the flourishing of many Korean fandoms in India, like YouTuber Scherezade Shroff's K-Drama Club on Facebook, which has over 3,000 members. Or the K-Wave India Group. a K-pop and K-drama fandom founded by Korean interpreter Sanjay Ramjhi in Chennai.

"I started K-Wave India Group in 2010 with eight to 10 members," says Ramjhi. "Then, with the increasing popularity of all things Korean, it just blew up and now has over 1,000



KOREAN CULTURE STARTED GAINING **POPULARITY IN** INDIA DURING THE

1990S, AS PART OF THE KOREAN **CULTURAL WAVE** CALLED HALLYU.



K-dramas," he says. "Because of this, the acting quality is high and so are the technical skills. They also have higher production budgets." Ramjhi started by exploring Asian culture in 2006 and then got drawn into Korean. He was so fascinated by it that he studied in South Korea for a year. "It was a great experience," he says. "Once the Korean bug bites you, there is no going back."

Yoo-kem Anna Heo, a Busan girl who had been to India, says that there are many commonalities between South Korea and India. "Many of the storylines from K-dramas are used in Indian movies," she says. "Just like in India, we place a lot of importance on education and are family-oriented. Earlier, South Korea used to be a patriarchal society, but now that is changing. The younger generation is more straightforward. Unlike in India, though, arranged marriages are becoming rare, although divorce rates are going up. Marriageable ages, too, are much later than in India. We mostly get married only in our 30s. We are also not multicultural like India. We have one culture and language. As it is a small country, trends catch very fast."

Interestingly, Yoo-kem says that they are taught the Korean language through the Korean culture, so there are many pop culture references to K-pop and K-dramas in their textbooks. One trend that has been spreading in South Korea during the pandemic is the increasing popularity of a musical genre called trot.

"Trot is traditional Korean music that used to be popular among middle-aged Koreans," she says. "The lyrics are (filled with hope), straightforward and from the heart. Now, the vounger generation, too, has taken to trot. Trot auditions are held across South Korea." Considering how fast everything Korean trends in India, it is probably only a matter of time before you hear a Tiger Shroff or an Alia Bhatt humming a trot melody. •

I SPY A **SKELETON**

Why India needs to rake up the problem of human remains in museums

BY SNEHA BHURA

n September 26, 1935, F.H. Gravely, superintendent of the Government Museum in Madras, wrote to the secretary of the Australian Museum about an "aboriginal skull". Gravely was an acclaimed botanist, zoologist and a student of archaeology at the time and was known to have advanced the scientific study and preservation of the museum's collections. In exchange for this adult, male "aboriginal skull" from Newcastle in Australia, Gravely confirmed that the museum in south India would be sending a "fairly typical skull" of a "Male Telugu (one of the four main Dravidian speaking peoples), 30 years of age". There was no mention of the provenance of this Telugu skull.

Later in an internal mail of the Australian Museum on this exchange, dated October 31, 1935, the director rues the complete lack of upper teeth in the male Dravidian and how the "skull's usefulness is prejudiced" for researchers looking at "comparative dentition". The Australian skull was evidently better preserved. Be that as it may, both the museums got their share of the exchange. But like the aboriginal skull,

how many more such specimens of human remains exist in the storage vaults of the Government Museum in Chennai today? Or, in old Indian museums at large?

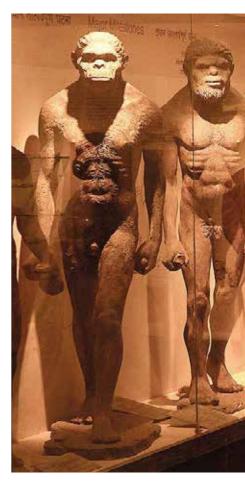
This question has vexed Indian-Australian museum expert Vinod Daniel for quite some time now. Associated with the Australian Museum for over 15 years, he first came across official letters on the cranium exchange when a set of Indian ritual objects-acquired by a missionary in Erode—was being repatriated by the Australian Museum in 2000. "That is when I came across information

> THE MOST **IMPORTANT HUMAN REMAINS** ON INDIAN SOIL **ARE THE** MUMMIES. WE HAVE SIX IN THE COUNTRY.

-Venu Vasudevan,

former director-general, National Museum, New Delhi





that there was this exchange done of human remains back in 1935," says Daniel. "There was some interest to see whether remains of the aboriginal person could also be arranged. But we worked on such short timeframes back then. The fact remains, though, that museums are no place for human remains anymore." Daniel is well apprised of the evolving museology discourse around repatriation of material heritage unjustly acquired, and by extension human remains which were once extensively procured for "scientific research".

Daniel pegs an approximately 70-year time period, from the late 1800s to the 1940s, when there was a great deal of movement on human remains like old skeletons, bones and bone parts. Sought after by anatomists, anthropologists and osteoarchaeologists to understand their



origins, old diets, ancient diseases and what not, colonial-era museums (often attached to university departments) became custodians of human remains. They were also displayed in glass cases for educational purposes. There are two schools of thought on the matter: the dualistic and materialistic institutions bent on advocating the cause of science, academicians who are alleged to have treated human remains as products, objects and things for their selfish ends. The other is more concerned with the animistic, indigenous communities who do not consider the dead any different from the living; they think that when ancestral remains are unfairly ripped out of their cultural contexts, there is "disconnection", disrespect and lack of closure.

The second school of thought has gained tremendous precedence in

recent years. The United States has the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990), which facilitates the mannerly return of Native American human remains, funerary and sacred objects, and other specimens of "cultural patrimony". In Australia, there is a government programme on the return and reburial of aboriginal remains called the International Repatriation Programme. The UK is believed to harbour a large collection of human remains in its institutions.

Under their Human Tissue Act (2004), nine national museums were once made to "deaccession" human remains from their collections, based on certain conditions. In October 2020, Booker-winning author Hilary Mantel called for the return of the bones of 18th century Irish "giant" Charles Byrne. At 7ft 7 inches

tall, Byrne had a genetic defect of gigantism. He wished to be buried at sea when he died, but his skeletal remains were acquired by surgeon and anatomist John Hunter, who displayed it in his museum. Two centuries later. Byrne's bones are still with the Hunterian Museum, London. In India, there has been no formal or informal survey undertaken to map the extent of human remains in museum collections. Daniel stresses for a policy change at the national level, which needs to endorsed by the states. "The first step is to do an analysis of how many museums have these remains by scanning old hardcopy records," says Daniel. "There must be storage spaces in the museum where they are rotting away. With this data, one can enact a law, so that it is illegal to collect and display human remains for museums, and that it is only appropriate to return the existing ones. A great deal of work is required in terms of finding the provenance of these remains. Who is alive from those cultures that can receive it? It is up to the community to put a closure according to their customs."

"The Indian Museum, Kolkata, and the Government Museum, Chennai, because of their antiquity, are places likely to have human remains," says Venu Vasudevan, former director-general of the National Museum, New Delhi. "The most important human remains on Indian soil are the mummies. We have six in the country, including a 4,000-year-old one in the Indian Museum. Egypt has already made a claim for all stolen mummies to be returned to their homeland."

Repeated calls and emails for a response on human remains in the Indian Museum went unanswered.

Interestingly, the only human remains considered ethically appropriate for display anywhere in the world are mummies. "You may question the how and why of it but that's a debate for another day," says Daniel. •



TORTURED GENIUS

The Discovery Plus documentary What Killed Maradona? investigates the issues in the legend's life without simplistic labelling

BY KARTHIK RAVINDRANATH

n Argentine truck driver who had a part-time job advising the local youth football team chanced upon a group of kids playing in an open field. He noticed a boy with mesmerising skill and a magical left foot. This is a gift from God, the driver said to himself, as he watched little Diego Maradona. It is a gift Maradona used to conquer the world. His rise from the slums of Buenos Aires to the pinnacle of the beautiful game is the stuff of dreams. But, Maradona, who died aged 60 in November 2020, had his share of nightmares, too.

His troubles are well documented. Perhaps a shade too well; so much so that as years go by, his genius may get overshadowed by the problemsranging from drug and alcohol addiction and "connections" to the Mafia to his temperamental nature and "gargantuan" ego. But, it would be grossly unjust to paint Maradona as a prima donna based on what is little more than hearsay. We need all the facts. And that is exactly what the new Discovery Plus documentary What Killed Maradona? offers. All the facts, painstakingly researched and concisely put together.

People who knew Maradona, those who followed his career closely and medical experts talk about fac-

FLAIR AND PAIN Diego Maradona is fouled during a 1986 World Cup match against South Korea

tors that contributed to Maradona's addiction and lifestyle and its effect on his health. His prodigious talent made him a target for fouls on the pitch and "dubious characters" off it. Maradona was 10 years old when he suffered his first major injury. He signed for Argentinos Juniors at 15 and became the youngest player to play in the first division; he was perhaps too young for the limelight.

As his career progressed, his income increased and so did the pressure to support a growing number of dependents. The teenager was already the head of the family and

THE DOCUMENTARY **REMINDS US OF THE IMPORTANCE OF**

SUPPORTING THOSE **STRUGGLING**





pursuit of footballing greatness. But, he was suffering at some level, says psychologist Dr Pippa Grange in the documentary. By 1982, Maradona had started to ascend from exciting prospect to global superstar.

As the pressure mounted, he coped by thinking of himself as two people. He kept Diego separate, as a place to retreat to. But, at that point, Diego had no inkling how big Maradona would become. As desperate opponents continued to foul him, injuries and the use of painkillers became more frequent. The painkillers may have made his injuries worse. But, more significantly, the path from dependence on painkillers to drug addiction is well established. This

has been explained in detail.

In 1982, Maradona signed up with Barcelona for a world record fee. It was a huge move for his career, but the 22-year-old was lonely in Spain. But, loneliness was not the worst of the problems he suffered at Barcelona. In 1983, Athletic Bilbao defender Andoni Goikoetxea. also known as the Butcher of Bilbao, found an easy way to deal with Maradona-break his left ankle. It was a different era in football and the flair players did not enjoy the protection they now get from the referees.

Maradona was out for three months, but he would suffer for the rest of his career and life. His left foot was never the same again, but the expectations of him continued to increase. Cocaine became a crutch. Maradona's former personal trainer, Fernando Signorini, says in the documentary: "He said one day, 'I was kicked to the top of the mountain, but they left me alone and nobody explained to me how to survive." In 1984, Napoli, then close to the bottom of the league, broke the world record again to sign him. The religious and football-loving people of Naples got a new saint, says the documentary.

The adulation lifted the lonely Maradona's spirits; he had a new family. Giuseppe Bruscolotti, who was Napoli's captain when Maradona arrived, says that the Argentine became one of the people. "He always fought for them against everybody," he says. "He defended the south against the [footballing] power of the north (Milan, Turin)." With drugs numbing his pain, the little genius fed off the love of the people and inspired his team to win the Italian league twice. But, the hero worship soon became so relentless that it put him under stress again and his substance abuse worsened.

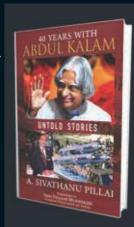
The Mafia also established a relationship with him. His life in Naples was defined by him having to make himself disappear from the suffocating atmosphere and then resurface to perform on the pitch. If the love in Italy was too much, the hate would destroy him. After singlehandedly winning the 1986 World Cup for Argentina, getting fouled 53 times in the process, he led his country to a second consecutive final at Italy 1990, knocking out the hosts along the way. Maradona's Italian fans lashed out against him. For a man who thrived on adulation, it was traumatic, says the documentary.

As he got older, Maradona's life became a vicious cycle of health problems, rehab and relapse. In a society which tends to oversimplify addiction, What Killed Maradona? reminds us of the importance of supporting those struggling to stay sober. It is a must watch, not only for football fans, but for anyone who wishes to understand an often underappreciated problem—the pitfalls of fame. For future generations of football fans, it is a comprehensive guide to the legend of Diego Maradona, without simplistic labelling. •

Inside Kalam's world

BY PRADIP R. SAGAR

fter the Kargil conflict in 1999, three service chiefs briefed prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee about the inadequacy of modern weapons and the delay in development of systems by the Defence Research and Development Organisation. This put Vajpayee under



40 Years with Abdul Kalam: Untold Stories By A. Sivathanu Pillai Published by **Pentagon Press** Price **₹795**; pages **230**

pressure to ask DRDO chief A.P.J. Abdul Kalam to step down. Vajpayee, who had great respect for Kalam, instead made him principal scientific advisor to the government.

Dr A. Sivathanu Pillai, architect of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, has narrated many such anecdotes in 40 Years with Abdul Kalam: Untold Stories. Pillai shared many iconic moments with the former president of India over the four decades they worked together. Besides stories about ISRO, DRDO and BrahMos, the book gives insight into the evolution of national security technologies over the years.

Pillai says Kalam was a man without ego and could adapt himself to any situation. Kalam once told Pillai that Vajpayee had even requested the president to travel less as he had become more popular than the prime minister.

While the first four chapters talk about Kalam's early days as a scientist, the chapter on strategic industries gives insight into how India has steadily progressed in the defence sector.

While assessing Kalam's life, Pillai counts the upsets, too. When Kalam failed in his ambition to become an IAF pilot, he landed up at Swami Sivananda's ashram in Rishikesh. He learnt to deal with the disappointment and the experience changed him. Kalam would go on to become commander-in-chief of the Indian armed forces.





Artiste as disruptor

famous dialogue from The Dirty Picture proclaimed that films were about "entertainment, entertainment, entertainment...". Similar points have been made about the larger purpose of art in general. This, in my mind, is not just a limiting view of the transformative power of art; it is also a safe view. A view that almost subconsciously recognises the transformative power of art, fears it and thus wants to limit it. Because art at its best does much more than merely entertain. It engages—with its context, with the society it was born in, with the world it wants to create. And art that engages will lay bare the fault lines that lie in any society. And that engagement challenges the audience to think and rethink. And that is where the danger lies because therein are the seeds that will challenge status quo and traditional structures of power.

We have recently witnessed this theory play out for real in a shocking and shameful incident from Indore. Gujarat-based comic Munawar Faruqui was arrested by the Indore police before his show even began! Superintendent of Police Vijay Khatri reportedly claimed that the arrest was made on a complaint by Eklavya Singh Gaur, chief of the Hind Rakshak Sangathan. Gaur said that he had overheard jokes during rehearsal. Khatri added that the lack of video evidence or the fact that Faruqui never actually cracked any joke did not matter because he was allegedly "going to" and had an "intention" to crack jokes about Hindu deities.

Faruqui has been in jail for over two weeks, his bail has been denied twice and latest reports suggest that the Uttar Pradesh Police is seeking his arrest for a similar complaint filed in Prayagraj. This case is a shameful reflection of the harassment of a Muslim citizen of India, quite obviously because of his religious identity, and a case of unconstitutional illegal confinement of a citizen. It also shines a light on an interesting contradiction specific to our time, between art, artiste and society. Not only is Faruqui's arrest a sign of the vulnerability of the artiste in a polarised society, but it also reflects how threatened power structures are by art that engages with its context. Power structures are scared of the 'power of art'.

Ours is an age where anyone can be an artiste, thanks to the digital revolution. The various filters and apps on our phones have turned humble selfies into something artistic. Instagram reels have made 15 seconds an acceptable duration for the performance of talent. And, the phenomenon of 'going viral' has given unlimited reach to artistes, innumerable possibilities of how far a work of art can travel and how many people it can influence. India today is ruled by a government that is blatantly pushing a very obvious ideological agenda, often to the detriment of the rule of law, and by sometimes illegally compromising constitutional provisions. Faruqui's arrest and continued detention is a case in point.

While artistes are vulnerable in any polarised society, they have never before had such scale of platform, so many means to create, such a large audience and the chance for their voice and vision to travel beyond any kind of border in a matter of seconds. The artiste has never been so powerful!

And this hyper-accessibility to one and all that now characterises any form of art in our world has made art an opponent of embedded status quoist power structures. The more power structures become totalitarian, invincible and all-encompassing, the more they become deeply insecure and liable to being deflated easily.

When power interacts with 'independent thought, it becomes vulnerable. Power is essentially that hot air balloon that feels omnipresent and invincible, until one prick by 'independent thought' causes the whole balloon and the percep-

One potential joke by a lone, young, unknown comic from Gujarat can deflate the all-powerful perception of an increasingly illiberal state, and remind audiences of what skeletons lie in the closet. And that is why Faruqui is in jail. Because art reminds power how power is not invincible.

The writer is an award-winning Bollywood actor and sometime writer and social commentator.





The new normal essential in women's wellness

he focus in the New Normal has shifted significantly to preventive measures in health care by way of early assessments to solve potential health issues. This also positively impacts affordability and gives a boost to self-care measures. The industry is being helped in this by advances in technology which are being used to save lives. Ganesh Prasad, MD & CEO, GenWorks says our focus is to provide such technology to every physician across India and build awareness about these solutions. GenWorks Health is a Wipro GE invested company with direct presence in 27 states and 120 locations.

In association with THE WEEK. Gen-Works is bringing out a series about innovative solutions to Health care that are transforming lives and perceptions about healthcare.

Women's health is an area of focus and it is very important to screen early to diagnose aberrations and prevent them from magnifying to adversely impact women wellness. Cancer of the cervix is one such life-threatening condition that can be prevented if we are able to identify the early onset of HPV infection in women. Dr Mallika Samuel, consultant gynaecologist, Apollo First Med Hospital says, "While this disease is very slow in progress it is important that we screen regularly as mandated by the MOH protocols which recommend that every woman over the age of 30 has to be screened for cervical health and a test repeated every three years."

Cervical Cancer happens when cells change in a woman's cervix. This cancer can affect the deeper tissues of their cervix and may spread to other parts of their body (metastasize); often the lungs, liver, bladder, vagina, and rectum. "It is the commonest cancer in rural areas as early marriages are still very rampant in the villages and rural women are not aware of cervical screening and diagnosis is either never made or if diagnosed, it is very late and they present with invasive cervical cancer" says Dr Leela Digumarti, Assistant Professor, Gynaecological Oncology, Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital & Research centre, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

The different methods of cervical cancer screening include Papanicolaou (Pap) smear, visual inspection of the cervix with acetic acid (VIA), HPV DNA test, and colposcopy. The EVA solution uses Colposcopy in its diagnosis.

A colposcope is a low-power, stereoscopic, binocular field microscope containing a powerful light source, used for magnified visual examination of the uterine cervix to help in the diagnosis of cervical neoplasia. This examination is not painful, has no side effects, and can be performed safely throughout pregnancy. However traditional colposcopy is bulky and is difficult to transport and is limited to use in large hospitals and diagnostic centres. EVA addresses this issue with its portability.

The World Health Organisation recommends a "See and Treat" approach. However, the traditional Cervical exam does not reveal the early stages of cervical cancer, which if detected, has a 92 per cent survival possibility. There was always a need for high resolution cameras and an expensive set up, making this screening limited to a handful of patients. Since it comes with an inbuilt smart phone, the Mobile ODT's EVA eliminates the use of multiple gadgets, and it's easy to set up system does away the need for an extra room for screening. Its mechanics magnify and annotate images while also saving them for quality

The Enhanced Visual Assessment (EVA) Systems addresses the challenges of lack of expertise and laboratory infrastructure in cervical cancer evaluation. The EVA System is infinitely smarter with many online features including an AI toolkit to support clinical decision making and service packages to optimize use based on the clinical scenarios.

The Automated Visual Examination (AVE) Al approach to cervical diagnosis,

validated by the NCI, can identify lesions with a greater reliability than traditional Pap cytology and HPV testing. In the words of David Levitz, Co- founder & Chief Scientist at Mobile ODT "We set out to create smart medical solutions by combining the computational power of smart mobile devices with advanced imaging algorithms and Artificial Intelligence. The outcome promises to be a revolution in cervical cancer screening."

The EVA VisualCheck is redefining cervical cancer diagnosis and treatment to bring about parity with developed countries. Women Technology is set for a revolution of sorts with the launch of this product. Like all Al supported gadgets, the data that is used to screen, annotate and classify information and provide directions for cure will herald a new era for women in the throes of Cervical Cancer.



- @LEISURE **-**

PEOPLE



DADDY COOL

welcomed their first son five years ago. On

Justin Timberlake and wife **Iessica Biel** have welcomed their second child. Phineas. "He's awesome and so cute," Timberlake said during a virtual appearance on The Ellen DeGeneres Show. "Nobody's sleeping. But we're thrilled.... We couldn't be happier. Very grateful." Timberlake married Biel in 2012 and

the work front, he had recently revealed the first look of his next film, Palmer. "This story is really important to me and I'm proud to be part of it," he had tweeted. The film, about the relationship of a former prisoner and an outcast boy, releases on January 29.





A HOMELY TOUCH

Now that they are expecting their second child, Saif Ali Khan and **Kareena Kapoor Khan** are moving from their home at Fortune Heights to a bigger one in Mumbai's Satguru Sharan. According to their interior designer Darshini Shah, the house has beautiful terraces, a swimming pool, outdoor areas and open, landscaped spaces. Inside, there is a library, many artworks and a collection of hand-picked antiques, each "with a memory attached to it". The décor is colonial style. Apparently, even with her pregnancy, Kareena has busied herself with setting up the house.



KAJOL, actor

GIRL POWER

ajol, who plays an Odissi dancer in Netflix's recently-released *Tribhanga*, a film about mother-daughter relationships, talks about her relationship with her own mother and daughter, and about what has changed in the film industry in the last two decades.

Q\ What kind of feedback have you got for Tribhanga?

A\ The reviews are good. At least, we feel we made a good film. I loved the script. Renuka (Shahane, the director) knew exactly what she wanted.



(Kajol's



mother in the film) is a very strong, individualistic and creative person. My mother is also like that. She makes unconventional choices and has strong opinions on everything. And so is Anu (Kajol), who is very clear about what she likes and what she does not. She is very passionate as well. So yes, there were a lot of parallels. But the relationship which they share [in the film] is different from the one I share with my mother. We have a fabulous relationship.

Q\ Are there any similarities between your reel daughter, Masha (Mithila Palkar), and your real daughter, Nysa? A\ I definitely see the similarity in their relationship, because Nysa and I have a great relationship; at least I think so. We chill and talk a lot. She is also the one who introduced me to social media and pushed me to be better than what I am. But as a person, she is very different from Masha.

Q\You look great in the film, but you have never been this conscious about your appearance. What changed?
A\I think in this day and age, there is so much emphasis on looks that you cannot ignore it. So yes, I do have an opinion today on what looks good on me and what does not, and how I would like to be seen and shown.

Q\ You have been part of the industry for over two decades. How have things changed?

A\ Today, there is so much emphasis on everything. We think and involve ourselves so much in the nitty-gritties that we tend to miss the bigger picture. On the sets, the biggest difference is that today there are many more people in specialised roles and people do not come to have fun anymore. They just come for work. Earlier, one person would do what ten people do now. So the more people there are, the more time it takes for everybody to get on together.

-Pooja Biraia Jaiswal

CONTRIBUTOR: **SNEHA BHURA** COMPILED BY **ANJULY MATHAI**

CRIME KING

French actor **Tahar Rahim** will play the criminal mastermind, Charles Sobhraj, in the latest BBC iteration of his life. In the

eight-episode TV series called *The Serpent*, the actor—previously seen in *A Prophet, The Past* and *The Kindness of Strangers*—will portray the serial killer's exploits in Thailand, which came to be dubbed the 'Bikini Murders'. The half-Sindhi and half-Vietnamese criminal, known for his mysterious charm and his notorious jailbreaks, including from Tihar, was last played by Randeep Hooda in the 2015 film, *Main aur Charles*.



GETY IMAGES

Freida Pinto is set to play World War II British spy Noor Inayat Khan in the limited series, Spy Princess, an adaptation of Shrabani Basu's book, Spy Princess: The Life of Noor Inayat Khan. "At a time in this world where we are all looking at leadership and courage to guide and lead us all back to some semblance of sanity and order, I take great comfort in the quiet strength, grace, intelligence and grit that Noor Inayat Khan possessed in the face of chaos during WW2," Pinto posted on Instagram. Anand Tucker will direct the film and Olivia Hetreed will write its script.



BIBEK DEBROY



All bees are not honeybees

ow many bees are there in India? India has a human census and a livestock census. not a bee census. There are bees and bees. Some are solitary, others live in colonies. When we use the word bee, we normally mean honeybee, and solitary bees do not make honey.

Out of 20,000 species of bees, only eight are honeybees. The ones you are likely to encounter are Apis dorsata, Apis mellifera and Apis cerana. Apis dorsata is the wild bee. It cannot be domesticated through proper apiculture. When it stings, it hurts badly. These are the colonies we see hanging from trees and rocks. When we buy honey gathered from forests, that is likely to be Apis dorsata. Apis

cerana is known as the eastern honeybee and a lot of bee farmers still use Apis cerana. In contrast, Apis mellifera is called the European or western honeybee. It is readily domesticated. It does not sting unless provoked and when it stings, it does not hurt badly.

Let me quote a directive issued by the European Union in 2001. "For the purposes of this directive, honey is the natural sweet substance produced by Apis mellifera bees from the

nectar of plants or from secretions of living parts of plants or excretions of plants-sucking insects on the living parts of plants, which the bees collect, transform by combining with specific substances of their own, deposit, dehydrate, store and leave in honeycombs to ripen and mature."

Should this not be contested? How can honey be defined as that which only comes from mellifera? also has stingless bee honey.) If exported, the EU will not accept this as honey. There is a difference

between hive and colony, though we often use the terms interchangeably. Hive is the structure, the home.

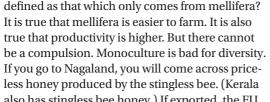
A colony consists of a queen, drones and female-worker bees. A bee-farmer may have an empty hive. We should ask him/her not about the number of hives he/she has, but about the number of colonies. How many bees are there in an average colony? This is impossible to answer.

Until we began to keep bees (not professionally, of course), I had not realised that bees control their population, depending on season and availability of flowers. Off-season, the number drops to 20,000. In-season, it shoots up to 80,000. This year,

> Covid-19 and lockdown disturbed spraying undertaken to control mosquitoes, and the number in our colony shot up to 2,00,000. (Spraying adversely affects bees. Plus, pollution was lower and there were more flowers.) We had to build another storey in our hive.

Thus, we cannot have a bee census. We can have a census of colonies. Some cross-country figures suggest India has 13 million colonies,

the most in the world, followed by China, Turkey and Iran. India's official figures suggest 3.4 million colonies, with a potential to increase to 200 million. The largest producers of honey are China, Turkey and Iran. Hence, (a) we do not firmly know how many colonies exist in India; (b) potential is far higher; (c) productivity levels of existing Indian colonies are low. Part of this is the familiar challenge of transiting from informal to formal, which extends also to marketing, branding and distribution issues. But Indian consumers, increasingly health-conscious, have started to consume more and more honey. Simultaneously, there is the phenomenon of adulteration of honey with sugar syrup, recently reported in papers.



Bibek Debroy is the chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the prime minister.

ILLUSTRATION BHASKARAN





http://licmf.com/knowledge_center/investor_education

A smart investment that's easy for one and all.





*(Systematic Investment Plan) SIP facility is generally available in Daily, Monthly & Quarterly frequency

"Visit here https://licmf.info/KYCredressal to learn more about KYC requirements, SEBI Registered Mutual Funds and Grievance redressal."

Connect with us:











