

**AUTO SPECIAL: THE
FUTURE CARS ARE HERE**

**MANIPUR: RETURN
OF MILITANCY**

**MAOISTS: STATES
STRIKE BACK**

www.indiatoday.in

NOVEMBER 29, 2021 ₹75



INDIA TODAY



CRYPTO MANIA

**WITH OVER 15 MILLION INDIANS BETTING BIG ON IT,
CRYPTOCURRENCY HAS BECOME A NEW RAGE IN INDIA.
BUT THE LACK OF REGULATION REMAINS A MAJOR CONCERN**

RNI NO. 28587/75 REGISTERED NO. DL (ND)-11/6068/2021-22-2023; LICENSED TO POST WPP NO. UIC -88/2021-23; FARIDABAD/05/2020-22

Published on every Friday of Advance Week. Posted at LPO Delhi - RMS - Delhi - 110006 on Every Friday & Saturday. Total number of Pages 120 (including cover pages)



ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS RECIPE BY TOP NUMEROLOGIST J C CHAUDHRY

**BY CALCULATING NUMERICAL VIBRATIONS/
VALUES OF NUMBERS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP**

It is truly liberating to start up your own business. It is your pride and joy, your dream, your vision come to life. However, sustaining it consistently and lucratively over a prolonged duration of time is challenging.

Many upcoming entrepreneurs take the plunge, unfortunately despite the hard work, dedication and investments, they are unable to achieve the success they aspire for. Numerology can give you answers to this. With the help of numerology, they can plan and can take precautions to avoid any chances of failure.

Every Planet/Number vibrates with some definite frequency. When frequency of vibration of planets are harmonious, they attract each other and show friendship and if their frequencies of vibration are not in harmony, they will behave indifferently & show enmity.

To explain it, let us presume, there are three persons who are joining hands & want to invest their time and money to make their start-up a profitable venture:

1. KARAN KAUSHIK, Date of Birth 24th July,1995
2. PREET GUPTA, Date of Birth 22nd April,1996
3. SATVINDER SINGH, Date of Birth 21st November,1997

The Name is very important and powerful. If 2 or 3 persons plan to join together, they must check the harmony between their Name numbers, their Psychic Numbers and their Destiny numbers.

(A) Compatibility of Initial Alphabet of Name

Every alphabet of the Name is assigned a Number. Each alphabet keeps vibrating with some definite frequency. The first alphabet of the name is most important, as it will take the leading role. So, first of all, we must see the first alphabets of partner's names. They should vibrate with similar frequencies. So, in this case we see the first alphabet of Karan Kaushik is 'K' having value as 2, Preet Gupta is 'P' having value 8 and Satvinder Singh is 'S' having value 3. So, we should see whether number 2 is in harmony with number 8 & 3. Yes, they are in harmony, so it is a good start.

Alphabets	Numbers Assigned
A, I, J, Q, Y	1
B, K, R	2
C, G, L, S	3
D, M, T	4
E, H, N, X	5
U, V, W	6
O, Z	7
F, P	8

(B) Secondly, we should calculate the complete Name number by putting value of each alphabet.

There are 26 alphabets in English language. These alphabets also keep vibrating with some definite frequency. Each alphabet has been assigned a definite number. Various numerologists have given different methods of assigning numbers to these alphabets. The most popular and widely accepted system of assigning numbers to these alphabets is given by CHALDEAN. So, we will follow the Chaldean system of nomenclature.

(C) Relationship between Planets/Numbers

Table 2

Alphabet	Ruling Number	Friendly Alphabet	Unfriendly Alphabet
A, I, J, Q, Y	1	A, I, J, Q, Y, B, K, R, C, G, L, S, D, M, T, E, H, N, X, O, Z	U, V, W, F, P
B, K, R	2	A, I, J, Q, Y, C, G, L, S, D, M, T, O, Z, F, P	B, K, R, E, H, N, X, U, V, W
C, G, L, S	3	A, I, J, Q, Y, B, K, R, C, G, L, S, E, H, N, X, U, V, W, F, P	D, M, T, O, Z
D, M, T	4	A, I, J, Q, Y, B, K, R, E, H, N, X, U, V, W, O, Z	C, G, L, S, D, M, T, F, P
E, H, N, X	5	A, I, J, Q, Y, C, G, L, S, D, M, T, E, H, N, X, U, V, W, O, Z, F, P	B, K, R
U, V, W	6	C, G, L, S, E, H, N, X, F, P, D, M, T	A, I, J, Q, Y, B, K, R, U, V, W, O, Z
F, P	8	B, K, R, C, G, L, S, E, H, N, X, U, V, W	A, I, J, Q, Y, D, M, T, O, Z, F, P
O, Z	7	A, I, J, Q, Y, B, K, R, D, M, T, E, H, N, X	C, G, L, S, U, V, W, O, Z, F, P

Name Number Calculation

Now, let us take-up names of partners & calculate their numbers.

1. KARAN KAUSHIK
 2 1 2 1 5 2 1 6 3 5 1 2
 = 11 = 2 = 20 = 2,
 So, Name Number will be 2+2 = 4

2. PREET GUPTA
 8 2 5 5 4 3 6 8 4 1
 = 24 = 6 = 22 = 4,
 So, Name Number will be 6+4 = 10 = 1

3. SATVINDER SINGH
 3 1 4 6 1 5 4 5 2 3 1 5 3 5
 = 31 = 4 = 17 = 8,
 So, Name Number will be 4+8 = 12 = 3

If we see the compatibility between these name numbers, we find Name number of Karan Kaushik (4) is in harmony with Preet Gupta (1) but not with Satvinder Singh (3), whereas Name number of Preet Gupta (1) is in harmony with both of them. Name number of Satvinder Singh (3) is in harmony with Preet Gupta (1) but not with Karan Kaushik (4). So, chances of Success will be low. One partner having name number 1 is friendly with rest of the two partners. So, he can go ahead with either of the two partners. But if they all want to work together; little obstacles will come; in adjusting and fast take-up of project because Number (3) Satvinder Singh and Number (4) Karan Kaushik are not compatible.

(D) Psychic Number Calculation

It is important to mention here that Date of the Birth is called Psychic number or Driver number. It can be single digit from 1 to 9 or compound number from 10 to 31, which has to be added and reduced to single number. In our daily life and day to day activity, we give more importance to Psychic number throughout the life and Destiny number remains more or less silent/dormant.

(E) Destiny Number Calculation

The Destiny number is calculated by adding Date, Month, Year. This number is used for long term projects like purchase of house, fixing marriage date of boy and girl etc. In fact, it denotes more to the karma done by a person in past.

1. Karan Kaushik: 24.07.1995

Psychic Number: $2+4 = 6$

Destiny Number: $2+4+7+1+9+9+5 = 37 = 3+7 = 10 = 1$

DOB = 6/1

2. Preet Gupta: 22.04.1996

Psychic Number: $2+2 = 4$

Destiny Number: $4+4+1+9+9+6 = 33 = 3+3 = 6$

DOB = 4/6

3. Satvinder Singh: 21.11.1997 Psychic Number: $2+1 = 3$

Destiny Number: $1+2+1+1+1+9+9+7 = 31 = 3+1 = 4$

DOB = 3/4

If we see the compatibility between their Psychic numbers, then we find Psychic number of Karan (6) is friendly with Preet (4) and Satvinder (3) and Psychic number of Preet (4) is friendly with Karan (6) but is unfriendly with Satvinder Singh (3).

Hence, business will be slow.

Similarly, If, we see the compatibility between their Destiny numbers, then we find Destiny number of Karan (1) is friendly with Satvinder's Destiny Numbers (4) but unfriendly with Destiny numbers of Preet (6). Hence, business will be slow.

(F) Brand Name Compatibility

Besides the harmonious relationship between the Name number, Psychic number and Destiny number of partners, the name of the Brand/Project should also be taken into consideration. By writing the values of each alphabet of brand/project name, we can find-out its number. It is very important that the name number and destiny number of partners should vibrate harmoniously to the number of Brand/Project name. If it is anti to each other then it may lead to failure.

To understand better, the relationship between various numbers and their ruling planets, Table 3 is given below, which will be helpful to understand their relationship:

Table 3

Planets	Number	Friendly	Unfriendly
Sun	1	1,2,3,4,5,7,9	6,8
Moon	2	1,3,4,7,8,9	2,5,6
Jupiter	3	1,2,3,5,6,8,9	4,7
Uranus	4	1,2,5,6,7,9	3,4,8
Mercury	5	1,3,4,5,6,7,8,9	2
Venus	6	3,4,5,8,9	1,2,6,7
Neptune	7	1,2,4,5	3,6,7,8,9
Saturn	8	2,3,5,6	1,4,7,8,9
Mars	9	1,2,3,4,5,6,9	7,8

(G) Psychic and Destiny Number Compatibility

It is also important to see whether the partners, who are joining are lucky or unlucky for themselves also. We see the relationship between their Psychic Number and Destiny Number. If relation/vibrational frequencies between Psychic number and Destiny number is

harmonious, then that person is said to be lucky, if it is otherwise, then he is less fortunate/unlucky. Here in this case Karan Kaushik DOB is 6/1 (Unlucky) Preet Gupta is 4/6 (lucky) and Satvinder Singh is 3/4 which is also unlucky. So, if two out of three partners are unlucky persons, the project is set up for failure.

(H) Launch Date of Project

Beside this, the Date of launch of project is also very important. In such cases, Psychic number should be considered because the start-ups are planned for 2-3 years i.e. short term. So, the Psychic number of the person should vibrate harmoniously with Date of the launch of project. If launching of brand/project is long term, then in that case the harmony needs to exist between Destiny number of partners and date of launch of project.

Let us say the project launch date is 8th March. So, we have to see how is the relationship of 8 with Psychic numbers of Partners. The Psychic number of Karan is 6, Preet is 4 and Satvinder is 3.

The relationship of Psychic number of Karan and date of launch is friendly, relationship of Psychic number of Preet and date of launch is unfriendly and relationship of Psychic number of Satvinder and date of launch is friendly.

(I) Address of building/plot

Where the project is to be launched also plays a significant role in success. The address number should vibrate harmoniously with the Psychic numbers of the partners of the project, if it is for short duration of 2-3 years.

In this way, we can summarize the parameters to be considered at the commencement of the Start-up:

1. First alphabet of Name
2. Name Number
3. Psychic Number
4. Destiny Number
5. Relationship between Psychic Number and Destiny Number
6. Relation between Name number of Brand/Company to be launched and Name number of partners.
7. Date of Inauguration should match with Psychic number of partners
8. Address of Building/place should match with Psychic number of partners

In Entrepreneurship, risk taking is necessary. One must possess the courage to embrace the factor of chance, however have the wisdom to implement numerology to facilitate a calculated risk.



**AUTO SPECIAL: THE
FUTURE CARS ARE HERE**

**MANIPUR: RETURN
OF MILITANCY**

**MAOISTS: STATES
STRIKE BACK**

www.indiatoday.in



NOVEMBER 29, 2021 ₹75

INDIA TODAY



CRYPTO MANIA

**WITH OVER 15 MILLION INDIANS BETTING BIG ON IT,
CRYPTOCURRENCY HAS BECOME A NEW RAGE IN INDIA.
BUT THE LACK OF REGULATION REMAINS A MAJOR CONCERN**

Published on every Friday of Advance Week, Posted at LFC Delhi - RMS - Delhi - 110006 on Every Friday & Saturday; Total number of Pages 120 (including cover pages)

OC

RNI NO. 28587/75 REGISTERED NO. DL (ND)-11/6068/2021-22-2023; LICENSED TO POST WPP NO. UIC -88/2021-23; FARIDABAD/05/2020-22

**DRIVE YOUR
STYLE**

INTRODUCING THE ALL-NEW
CELERIO

AND ITS 3D ORGANIC SCULPTED DESIGN



**INDIA'S MOST
FUEL-EFFICIENT
PETROL CAR***

26.68 km/l**



**ENERGETIC AND
SPACIOUS CABIN**



**ENGINE PUSH START-STOP BUTTON
WITH SMART KEY**



**12+ SAFETY FEATURES INCL.
FIRST-IN-SEGMENT HILL HOLD ASSIST**



**SMARTPLAY STUDIO WITH
SMARTPHONE NAVIGATION**

**NEXT GEN K-SERIES ENGINE
WITH IDLE START-STOP**

CELERIO



E-BOOK TODAY AT MARUTISUZUKI.COM OR VISIT YOUR NEAREST MARUTI SUZUKI DEALERSHIP.

*Accessories and features shown in the pictures may not be part of the standard equipment and may vary according to the variant. Images are for illustration purpose only. Colors shown may vary from actual body colors due to printing on paper. Terms and conditions apply. **Claim supported by independent research agency-JATO Dynamics Limited and is applicable in the petrol category. **As certified by Test Agency Under Rule 115 (G) of CMVR 1989.

If you are not a millennial or a member of Gen Z, the chances are that you must be confused about what cryptocurrency is. The pandemic has accelerated digital transformation worldwide. One of the beneficiaries has been cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin. Transactions are verified and records maintained by a decentralised system using online ledgers and encrypted data. This is called blockchain technology, commonly used in many financial transactions.

For decades, Indians chose to invest their savings in real estate and gold. The stock market boom of the past three decades added a third avenue. India's market capitalisation, the total value of all stocks being traded, will nearly double from the present \$3 trillion to \$5 trillion by 2024, predicts a recent report by investment bankers, Goldman Sachs. Low interest rates from fixed deposits and a sluggish real estate sector have seen investors gravitate towards a surging stock market through the pandemic.

The flush of liquidity in the market has also fuelled the rush into the cryptocurrency market. The reason is apparent. There has been an explosion in value over the past two years. When the pandemic first broke out in March 2020, a single Bitcoin cost \$6,483, or around Rs 4.8 lakh, apiece. It now costs \$64,862, or around Rs 48 lakh, apiece, a tenfold increase in value. Other cryptos, too, have recorded similar jumps in value. Cryptos have thus gained currency among millions of Indians looking to multiply their returns. Between 15 and 20 million Indians have invested around \$6 billion (Rs 44,400 crore) in cryptos like Bitcoin, Ethereum, Binance Coin, Solana, Tether, Cardano, XRP, Polkadot, Dogecoin and USD Coin. Interestingly, rather than just digital currency that can be bought and sold, Indians have begun seeing cryptocurrency as an asset class like real estate and gold.

The crypto tech industry now employs 50,000 persons, according to a recent Nasscom report. The industry is set to grow to \$241 million by 2030, with the potential to create over 800,000 jobs. Sixty per cent of Indian states have adopted crypto tech. In 2020, Tamil Nadu became the first state to present a blockchain infrastructure plan across government departments and agencies. In September, the Maharashtra government partnered with two Indian blockchain start-ups to fight frauds and track the results of RT-PCR tests.

Cryptocurrencies trace their origins to the mistrust in conventional financial instruments following the 2008 global economic crisis, which saw an anonymous developer launching the cryptocurrency now known as Bitcoin.

They have had to contend with crypto-scepticism for over a decade and were once regarded with suspicion in India. This is partly because they operate beyond the pale of the banking system and are beyond government control.

In 2018, the RBI had imposed a ban on trading in cryptocurrencies, but a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court overturned this ban in March last year. This has now led to a surge in cryptocurrency trading. At the India Today conclave this year, Kunal Nandwani, CEO and co-founder of a trading technology company, compared cryptocurrency to a seed—"the more you bury it, the more it grows."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a high-level meeting on November 13 in New Delhi, which, according to government sources, flagged the issue of "misleading, over-promising and non-transparent" advertising in cryptocurrency, and why "unregulated crypto markets cannot be allowed to become avenues for money laundering and terror financing".

The government has ruled out making cryptocurrencies legal tender or on par with regular currency. Instead, the discussion is about allowing crypto as an asset class and used in trading and how it should be regulated or taxed. The government is expected to announce new regulations soon. It might table a comprehensive bill on cryptocurrency in the winter session of Parliament.

Our cover story, 'Crypto Mania', written by Executive Editor M.G. Arun, looks at the nuts and bolts behind this buzz and the way ahead. Are we seeing a new digital dawn,

or will these currencies be vulnerable to a bubble-like burst? The government needs to regulate cryptocurrency to protect investors' interests. They must recall the Latin principle of *caveat emptor* (buyer beware) to guide their purchases.

On a personal note, I was always cynical about cryptocurrencies, thinking it was an incestuous game among techies. The question I always asked was: can cryptocurrency be converted into cash in your bank account? Recently, a young man gave me a live demonstration of this. That is when I said to myself, this is real, and decided to invest a small amount in two cryptocurrencies to better understand the phenomenon. If this is the future, I want to be a part of it.



Illustration by NILANJAN DAS

(Aroon Purie)

CHAIRMAN AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Aroon Purie
VICE CHAIRPERSON: Kalli Purie
GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Dinesh Bhatia
GROUP EDITORIAL DIRECTOR: Raj Chengappa
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Manoj Sharma

GROUP CREATIVE EDITOR: Nilanjan Das; **GROUP PHOTO EDITOR:** Bandeep Singh
EDITORS: Kai Jabir Friese (Features), Rajesh Jha (News)
MANAGING EDITOR: Sandeep Unnithan
EXECUTIVE EDITORS: S. Sahaya Ranjit, Manisha Sarcop; **MUMBAI:** M.G. Arun
SENIOR DEPUTY EDITOR: HYDERABAD: Amarnath K. Menon
DEPUTY EDITORS: Kaushik Deka, Shweta Punj, Sasi Nair;
JAIPUR: Rohit Parihar

SENIOR EDITORS: Anillesh S. Mahajan, Ashish Mukherjee; **MUMBAI:** Suhani Singh, Kiran Dinkar Tare; **PATNA:** Amitabh Srivastava
SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Sonali Acharjee; **KOLKATA:** Romita Sengupta; **BHOPAL:** Rahul Noronha

ASSISTANT EDITORS: Zinnia Ray Chaudhuri, Aditya Wig
PHOTO DEPARTMENT: Yasir Iqbal (Deputy Chief Photographer), Rajwant Singh Rawat, Chandra Deep Kumar (Principal Photographer), **MUMBAI:** Mandar Suresh Deodhar (Chief Photographer)
PHOTO RESEARCHERS: Prabhakar Tiwari (Chief Photo Researcher), Saloni Vaid (Principal Photo Researcher)

CHIEF OF GRAPHICS: Tanmoy Chakraborty
ART DEPARTMENT: Sanjay Piplani (Deputy Creative Editor), Angshuman De (Art Director), Siddhant Jumde (Chief Illustrator)
PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT: Harish Agarwal (Chief of Production), Naveen Gupta (Chief Coordinator)

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHERS
Vidya Menon (Impact)

IMPACT TEAM
National Head: Suparna Kumar (Government & PSU)
Senior General Manager: Jitendra Lad (West)
General Managers: Mayur Rastogi (North), Upendra Singh (Bangalore)
Deputy General Manager: Indranil Chatterjee (East)
GROUP CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER: Vivek Malhotra

SALES AND OPERATIONS
Deepak Bhatt, Senior General Manager (National Sales)
Vipin Bagga, General Manager (Operations)
Rajeev Gandhi, Deputy General Manager (North)
Yogesh Godhanlal Gautam, Deputy Regional Sales Manager (West)
S Paramasivam, Deputy Regional Sales Manager (South)
Piyush Ranjan Das, Senior Sales Manager (East)



Volume XLVI Number 48; For the week
November 23-29, 2021, published on every Friday

- Editorial/Corporate Office Living Media India Ltd., India Today Group Mediaplex, FC-8, Sector-16A, Film City, Noida - 201301; Phone: 0120-4807100
- Subscriptions: For assistance contact Customer Care India Today Group, C-9, Sector-10, Noida (UP)-201301; Phones: Toll-free number: 1800 1800 100 (from BSNL/MTNL lines); (95120) 2479900 from Delhi and Faridabad; (0120) 2479900 from Rest of India (Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.); Fax: (0120) 4078080, Mumbai: 022-66063411/3412, Kolkata: 033-40525327, Chennai: 044-2303200; e-mail: wecare@intoday.com
- Sales: Direct all trade enquiries to General Manager (Sales), Living Media India Limited, C-9, Sector-10, Noida-201301 (UP)
- Regd. Office: F-26, First Floor, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001.
- Impact Offices: 1201, 12th Floor, Tower 2 A, One Indiabulls Centre, (Uppiter Mills), S.B. Marg, Lower Parel (West), Mumbai-400013; Phone: 66063355; Fax: 66063226 • E-1, Ground Floor, Videocon Towers, Jhandewalan Extn, New Delhi • Guna Complex, 5th Floor, Main Building, No.443, Anna Salai, Chennai-600018. Phone: 2847 8525 • 201-204 Richmond Towers, 2nd Floor, 12, Richmond Road, Bangalore-560025; Phones: 22212448, 22213037, 22218343; Fax: 22218335; • 52, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, 4th Floor, Kolkata-700071; Phones: 22825398; Fax: 22827254; • G-3-885/7/B, Somajiguda, Hyderabad-500082; Phone: 23401657, 23400479, 23410100, 23402481, 23410982, 23411498; Fax: 23403484 • 39/1045, Karakatt Road, Kochi 682016; Phones: 2377057, 2377058 ; Fax: 2377059 • 2/C, "Suryarath Bldg", 2nd Floor, Behind White House, Panchwati, Office C.G. Road, Ahmedabad-380006; Phone: 26560393, 26560929; Fax: 26565293 • Copyright Living Media India Ltd. All rights reserved throughout the world. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited.

Printed and published by Manoj Sharma on behalf of Living Media India Limited. Printed at Thomson Press India Limited, 18-35 Milestone, Delhi Mathura Road, Faridabad-121007, (Haryana). Published at F-26, First Floor, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001.
Editor: Raj Chengappa.

• INDIA TODAY does not take the responsibility for returning unsolicited publication material.

All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only



For reprint rights and syndication enquiries, contact
syndication@intoday.com or call +91-120-4078000
www.syndicationtoday.in

UPFRONT
THE LONGER
TERM ROW PG 10

**BENGAL: MINING
A CONTROVERSY**
PG 20

INSIDE

LEISURE
THE IMPORTANCE OF
LOVING SRK PG 111

**Q&A WITH
KARTIK AARYAN**
PG 120



Illustration by NILANJAN DAS

28

CRYPTO MANIA

COVER STORY

With 15-20 million Indians betting big on it, cryptocurrency has become the new rage

MAOISTS

42 STRIKING AT THE TOP

A concerted effort by states takes off the top leadership of Maoists

MANIPUR ATTACK

48 GRIM WARNING

A strike on an army convoy sparks fears of a regrouping of insurgents

INTERVIEW

52 PANCHAMRIT DOCTRINE

Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav on the gains and misses of COP26

HARYANA

58 A NEW FAMILY ID

Haryana's Parivar Pehchan Patra ID aims to improve welfare delivery

AUTO REPORT

63 THE FUTURE OF CARS

What's new in the automobile sector and what the future holds

TOURISM AWARDS 2021

102 BACK ON ITS FEET

India Today Tourism Awards recognised the states' role in reviving the sector

Note to the reader From time to time, you will see pages titled 'An Impact Feature' or 'Focus' in India Today. This is not different from an advertisement and the magazine's editorial staff is not involved in its creation in any way.

Cover by NILANJAN DAS



Readers are recommended to make appropriate enquiries before sending money, incurring expenses or entering into commitments in relation to any advertisement appearing in this publication. The India Today Group does not vouch for any claims made by the advertisers of products and services. The printer, publisher, editor-in-chief and the editor of the India Today Group publications shall not be held liable for any consequences in the event of such claims not being honoured by the advertisers.

FOR SUBSCRIPTION ASSISTANCE, CONTACT: Customer Care, India Today Group, C-9, Sector-10, Noida (Uttar Pradesh)-201301. Phones: 2479900 from Noida, 95120-2479900 from Delhi and Faridabad, and 0120-2479900 from Rest of India. Toll Free No.: 1800 1800 100. Fax: 0120-4078080. E-mail: wecare@intoday.com

E-MAIL ✉️ to:
letters.editor@intoday.com or
log on 🖱️ to www.indiatoday.in

**THIS IS WHERE PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED,
AND BLESSINGS SHOWERED**

Full of bliss. Full of life.

Golden Temple, Amritsar

The holiest temple of the Sikh religion, Sri Harmandir Sahib Gurudwara, or the Golden Temple, is one of India's greatest attractions and spiritual hub. Devotees across the world come to take a dip in the holy Amrit sarovar, surrounding the magnificent Gurudwara Sahib, to purify their souls and feel the divinity around them.

Punjab is known for many sacred gurudwaras and other religious places. And for its culture, nature, traditions, food, festivals, faiths and above all warm, loving people full of life. Come visit Punjab to experience life like never before.



Nearest Railway Station - Amritsar Junction (2.3 km)



Nearest Airport - Amritsar Airport - (13 km)



Distance from New Delhi by Road - 465 km



FOLLOW US AT:



[/tourismboardpunjab](#)



[@Tourism_Punjab](#)



[@Punjabtourismofficial](#)



[/ThePunjabTourism](#)



Illustration by SIDDHANT JUMDE

BUREAUCRATIC EXTENSIONS

THE LONGER TERM ROW

By **Kaushik Deka**

Two weeks before commencement of the winter session of Parliament, the Union government, on November 14, passed an ordinance to extend the tenures of the directors of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) up to five years. Both posts had a fixed tenure of two years, irrespective of the retirement age of 60.

Apart from amending the Delhi Police Special Establishment (DPSE) Act and the Central Vigilance Act (CVC) to enable this, the Centre has also amended the Fundamental Rules of Central Civil Services, introduced in 2005, giving itself powers to extend the tenures of the defence secretary, home secretary, director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), and secretary of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) by up to two years. These officers too have a maximum tenure of two years.

Opposition leaders have cried foul over the timing of the government's move. "An ordinance to extend the tenures of the CBI and ED chiefs just before Parliament convenes raises doubts about the Centre's intentions," says Manoj Jha, Rajya Sabha leader of the RJD (Rashtriya Janata Dal). On November 17, Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra moved the Supreme Court, challenging the ordinance as a violation of the apex court's past judgments on the tenures of CBI and ED chiefs. The same day, the government extended the tenure of ED director Sanjay Kumar Mishra by a year. He was to retire on November 18.

Enchantingly Antique

Mystique of Darasuram

The transcendental Airavateshwara temple, housed in Kumbakonam, is one of the Great Living Chola Temples. It was built in the twelfth century by Rajaraja Chola II. The exquisite carvings on its pillars, which are modelled after celestial chariots, are considered the pinnacle of Dravidian architecture.

AIRAVATESVARA TEMPLE, KUMBAKONAM



www.tamilnadutourism.tn.gov.in



1800-425-31111 | 044-2333444



[/enchantingtamilnadu](https://www.instagram.com/enchantingtamilnadu)



[@tntourismofci](https://twitter.com/tntourismofci)



[/tnttdc](https://www.facebook.com/tnttdc)



[/TamilNaduTourismOnline](https://www.youtube.com/TamilNaduTourismOnline)



tamil nadu tourism

EXTENDED INNINGS

These positions in the bureaucracy have a fixed two-year tenure, irrespective of retirement age, which is 60 years. The new ordinances grant the ED/ CBI directors a maximum possible extension of 3 years, and the others 2 years

POST	NEW PERIOD OF MAXIMUM EXTENSION ALLOWED
Director, ED	Three years
Director, CBI	Three years
Director, Intelligence Bureau	Two years
Secretary, R&AW	Two years
Defence secretary	Two years
Home secretary	Two years

While government sources assert that such extensions are needed to maintain continuity in high-profile investigations, Congress communications in-charge Randeep Surjewala claims that the purpose of the three-year extension is to keep certain bureaucrats as heads of their departments till the 2024 Lok Sabha election so that probes against opposition leaders can be managed through pliable officers. “The ED has become the election department of the BJP and the CBI is now the ‘Compromised Bureau of Investigation,’” says Surjewala.

Among the opposition leaders facing ED probes are former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav (UP goes to polls early next year) besides former Haryana CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda, former Union minister P. Chidambaram, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee’s nephew Abhishek Banerjee and Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar.

The SC had, in August, expressed concern over inordinate delays in ED/ CBI cases against legislators. There are 121 CBI cases against 51 MPs and 112 MLAs, sitting or former. Charges have not been framed in 45 cases even though the alleged offences date back to several years ago. The ED is probing 122 cases against 51 sitting/ former MPs and 71 sitting/ former MLAs or MLCs.

The opposition parties also accuse the Narendra Modi government of giving extensions to its ‘favourite’ officers in every department. In May, the Centre extended by a year the tenures of IB chief Arvind Kumar and R&AW secretary Samant Kumar Goel. In August, Union home secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla was given a one-year extension. Cabinet secretary Rajiv Gauba, who was to retire on August 30, too got a year’s extension.

P.K. Sinha, appointed cabinet secretary in 2015, got three extensions to continue in that office till 2019—he is the longest serving cabinet secretary to date. The longest serving bureaucrat under Modi has been K. Kailashnathan, as principal secretary when the prime minister was Gujarat CM. After retiring

The Modi government has to brace itself for an attack by the Opposition in the upcoming Parliament session

in 2013, Kailashnathan has got seven extensions to continue as chief principal secretary to three Gujarat CMs, including incumbent Bhupendrabhai Patel.

The culture of extensions is, however, endemic to Indian states. In December 2020, Nilam Sawhney, who retired as Andhra Pradesh chief secretary after two extensions, was immediately appointed principal advisor to Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy. The same month, Odisha chief secretary Asit Kumar Tripathy, soon after his retirement, became principal advisor to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

This May, Mamata Banerjee appointed chief secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay as her chief advisor following his retirement. In Maharashtra, after two extensions as chief secretary, Ajoy Mehta was appointed principal advisor to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray in June.

While there have been demands for the CBI and ED chiefs to have

longer tenures, former bureaucrats say arbitrary extensions is no way to go about it. N.R. Wasan, former director general of the Bureau of Police Research and Development, feels longer tenures should come with a robust mechanism for appointment. “These decisions should not be taken in half-hour meetings between three individuals, as it happens now. There should also be a transparent system for removal of such officers given the instances of misdemeanour in the past,” says Wasan, who has also served in the CBI and National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Wasan agrees with many of his colleagues that governments of all parties have used the extension route to retain officers of their choice. During UPA rule, Manmohan Singh had appointed T.K.A. Nair as principal secretary for three years. He continued on the post for seven years through four extensions, and was then made advisor to the PMO. Similarly, national security advisor M.K. Narayanan, cabinet secretary K.M. Chandrasekhar and M.S. Prasad, secretary in the PMO, also had extended tenures.

Former Union home secretary G.K. Pillai is not against longer tenures for officers provided these are fixed terms and not handed as yearly extensions, since that would make the officer’s continuation in office dependent on the whims of political leaders. “The message is clear—you can remain longer in office and expect post-retirement benefits if you please [your] political masters. That has watered down the essence of the 1997 Supreme Court verdict (which set a minimum two-year tenure for the CBI director),” says Pillai. “More recently, we saw how the Central Board of Direct Taxes chief was given three extensions and, after retirement, made secretary general of the Rajya Sabha.”

Besides the row over the ethicality or expediency of these extensions, the changes in Fundamental Rules of Central Civil Services have caused much resentment among serving civil servants, who believe the chain of succession in the bureaucracy is likely to be affected. There are fears that this could lead to demoralisation in the cadre. For the Modi government, bracing for an opposition attack on the issue in the upcoming Parliament session, that is probably a bigger challenge to deal with. ■

Echoes *unlimited*

Mahabaleshwar

Tuck your soul away, in this nature's velvet coat, indulge in the blissful sanctity of peace. Or simply pamper your eye sight to the charming landscapes. With reasons unlimited, it's only fair to say one trip is just not enough.



AMBOLI



MATHERAN



LONAVALA



CHIKHALDARA

Just at

MAHARASHTRA

u n l i m i t e d



MAHARASHTRA TOURISM

www.maharashtratourism.gov.in | Toll Free No: 1800 - 229930

CAPTAIN AT SEA

Former Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh's project of teaching the Congress a lesson—having quit his old party in circumstances he described as “humiliating”—seems to have derailed. The BJP seems to have lost interest in his newly floated Punjab Lok Congress (PLC), and word is that Union home minister Amit Shah recently declined to meet him. The BJP feels the titular maharaja of Patiala may have overstated his influence over the agitating farmers' unions. The 18 MLAs and seven MPs who've thrown in their lot with the 79-year-old politician want Amarinder to be a mentor rather than leader in the state polls early next year. Amarinder has more worries: the application to register his party is still under process with the Election Commission. Rough weather ahead for the captain and his new ship?



Illustration by SIDDHANT JUMDE



Daring 'Public Sentiment'

At least one senior Congress Working Committee (CWC) member is unhappy with **Salman Khurshid's** new book where the former Union minister equates Hindutva (not Hinduism) with ISIS. The leader rued how 'highly educated individuals with little mass connect' are a liability for the party and that “Politics is about respecting public sentiment”. What's left unsaid is that respecting 'public sentiment' in the run-up to a polarising poll campaign for Uttar Pradesh means winking at the bigotry Khurshid flags in his book.



ANI

STAY THAT ORDER

The phrase 'wheels of justice' seems to have a different connotation in the Madras High Court, which has seen three chief justices in three years. So when word got out that the present chief justice, **Sanjib Banerjee**, was being moved to the Meghalaya HC, Chennai's lawyers stepped in. Over 200 of them urged the Supreme Court collegium to reconsider the move. Banerjee is seen as some kind of a role model, having disposed of a few thousand cases through the pandemic.

HARDIK CHHABRA

DEBAJYOTI CHAKRABORTY



SEATS FOR SUPPORT

Three years ago, Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi had breezed into the Rajya Sabha with the support of the Trinamool Congress (TMC). It wasn't a one-off gesture. TMC chief **Mamata Banerjee** has nominated new inductee and former Goa CM Luizinho Faleiro for a Rajya Sabha seat from West Bengal; another recent entrant, Sushmita Dev, was elected to the Upper House in September. With the TMC harbouring expansionist dreams, party leaders wonder how many more 'outsiders' will corner the state's quota of 22 Rajya Sabha berths.

Agony Uncle

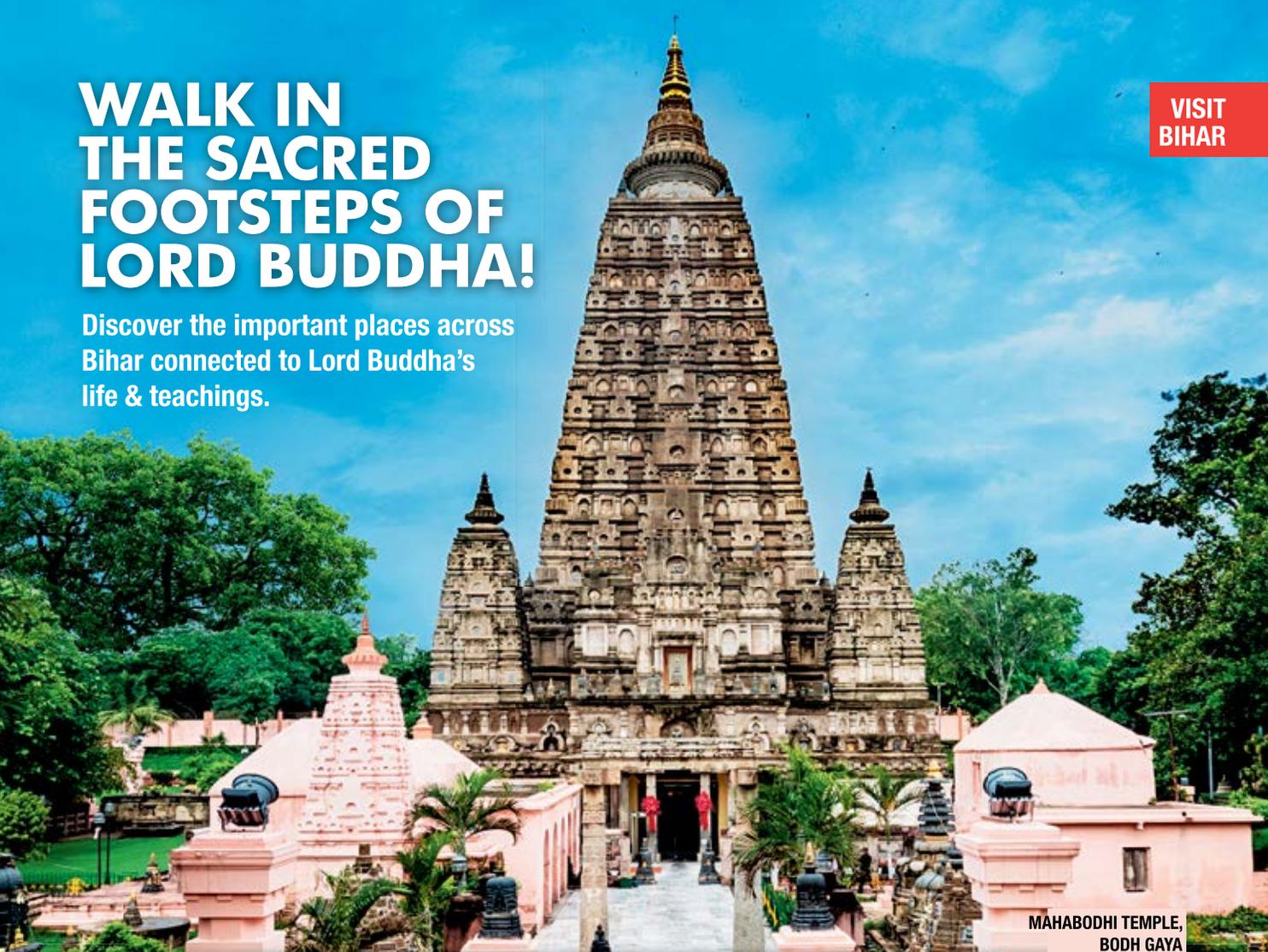
The queues at the Bihar chief minister's residence have been growing longer ever since **Nitish Kumar** resumed his weekly Janata Darbar in July—after a five-year hiatus. The range of complaints/petitions is diverse: from a girl seeking treatment for her cows to a resident who apparently wants his village to become a part of Uttar Pradesh. Nitish lends everyone a sympathetic ear—the kind of patience that becomes your second nature when you've had such a long run at managing a difficult state and diverse, differently challenging allies.



WALK IN THE SACRED FOOTSTEPS OF LORD BUDDHA!

Discover the important places across Bihar connected to Lord Buddha's life & teachings.

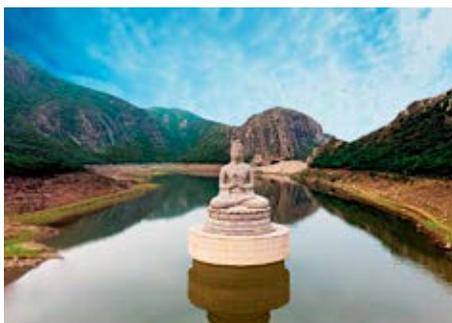
VISIT BIHAR



MAHABODHI TEMPLE, BODH GAYA



VISHWA SHANTI STUPA, RAJGIR



GHORA KATORA, RAJGIR



ASHOKAN PILLAR, VAISHALI



Bihar is the land where Lord Buddha began his search for answers to human suffering and found enlightenment. Visit the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya the place where Buddha attained enlightenment. A visit to the Vishwa Shanti Stupa, Ashokan Pillar, Ghora Katora and many others will add to the sense of discovering centuries old culture, mythology and adventure.

Lose yourself in the meditative chants, stand in awe of ancient marvels and treat your palate!

Come, explore Bihar to explore yourself.

 /tourismbihargov

www.tourism.bihar.gov.in

FERTILISER SHORTAGE

A CRIPPLING CRISIS

By **Rahul Noronha**

Farmers across the country have been reeling under a shortage of fertilisers, especially diammonium phosphate (DAP) and urea, both key inputs in the ongoing rabi season. The shortage could deplete farm incomes further as a delay in sowing leads to drop in production. For political parties, there is also the threat of an erosion of their support base. Poll-bound states such as Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, where farmers are a crucial political group, could see a more acute fallout of the crisis.

The DAP shortage has a lot to do with international factors, but it's also true that the Union government's late response in announcing the subsidy on fertilisers led to delays in placing import orders. India imports 6.1 million tonnes of DAP to supplement the 9 million tonnes it needs a year. India is also the largest importer of DAP in the world, followed by Pakistan, the USA, Turkey and Vietnam. Another reason for the massive shortage is that India, over the past decade or so, shut six big fertiliser plants as imports were found to be much cheaper than production. That decision has come back to bite now. China's ban on exports of phosphates has also hit us, as it did the world. One of the largest producers of fertilisers, it is among India's largest suppliers of DAP.

Top officials in the Union fertiliser ministry simply deny that there is a shortage of DAP; they blame it on panic- and rumour-induced hoarding..

Last week, Punjab's agriculture minister Randeep Singh Nabha met with chemical and fertilisers minister Mansukh Mandaviya and raised the issue of shortage of fertilisers in the state. The state's farmers, already on a short fuse over the Centre's new farm laws, now have this to further aggravate them. In fact, in neighbouring Haryana, the state government has had to deploy the police at fertiliser sale outlets and, in some areas, even distribute it from the police stations.

In Madhya Pradesh, the crisis first started in the northern districts of Bhind and Morena in the third week of

AN ACUTE SHORTAGE OF DAP HAS ENCOURAGED HOARDING AND BLACKMARKETING. THERE ARE ALSO ALLEGATIONS THAT COOP STOCKS HAVE BEEN DIVERTED TO PRIVATE TRADERS

October as farmers blocked highways. Long queues outside the government-run primary agriculture credit society (PACS) outlets eventually became law and order hotspots with farmers even lathi-charged in some places. Looting of fertilisers was also reported.

Officially, the MP government too denies that there is any shortage. "There is adequate fertiliser available, though we've seen some panic-buying. Stock is being lifted as soon as it arrives, which is why you don't see it stockpiled in godowns. Sowing will be completed in time," says Ajit Kesri, additional chief secretary, agriculture, Madhya Pradesh.

A fallout of the shortage has been black-marketing. "The state claims there is no shortage. It also claims that 70 per cent stock is distributed through PACS and 30 per cent through private traders. If that is the case, why is there a shortage in PACS and no shortage with private traders? There is obvious connivance here," says Anil Yadav, general secretary of the MP unit of the Bhartiya Kisan Union. Yadav claims a bag of DAP that would normally cost Rs 1,200 is being sold

PRABHJOT GILL





RUNNING OUT
Farmers waiting for DAP stocks at the grain mandi in Hisar

THE SOIL TEST

₹1.2
LAKH CRORE

Fertiliser subsidy offered by the Centre this year; **Rs 25,000 crore** this rabi season to cushion farmers against rising prices

6.1

MILLION TONNES

Amount of DAP India imports annually to supplement the **9 million tonnes** it needs a year. India is the largest importer of DAP in the world

Source: Argus and Union ministry of chemicals and fertilisers

for Rs 1,500 or more, depending on how desperate the farmer is.

Farmers point out that the delay in sowing will have an adverse impact on production. “I plan to sow HI 1544 variety that requires three irrigation operations. The later I sow, the greater the chances of my tubewells going dry

and water not being available for irrigation as others who managed to get fertiliser would have completed sowing and exhausted the water,” says Sanjay Patel, a farmer in Sahabnagar village in Badnawar block of Dhar district. The wheat crop needs 50-60 kg of DAP per acre while the requirement is less for crops like gram. DAP is mixed with the seed while sowing along with some urea.

Where fertiliser shortages were a regular occurrence in the past, the government had, over the past five or so years, successfully managed the problem. How so? Sources in the agriculture department say the PACS were encouraged to maintain a rolling stock, which meant that kharif season stocks were available to be utilised in the rabi season as well.

Why then did the situation change this year? Officials blame it on the Centre’s delayed decision on subsidies. The cycle of making fertilisers available carries on through the year. States inform the Union agriculture ministry of their requirement, which then aggregates this demand and passes it on to the chemicals and fertilisers ministry. A large part of the demand, both for fertilisers and the raw materials that go into their production, is met through imports. The Centre offers a nutrient-based subsidy on Nitrogen (N), Phosphorous (P) and Potassium (K) in varying degrees. This year, fertilisers and their raw materials showed an uptrend in prices right from the beginning, chiefly due to rising diesel prices. The spike in diesel prices has had a cascading effect on the price of DAP—which has risen from Rs 1,200 to Rs 1,900 per 50 kg bag.

The central government was worried of the political fallout and in May announced that it would hike the subsidy to cushion this price rise. The subsidy was then increased from Rs 500 to Rs 1,200, resulting in reduction of prices from Rs 1,900 to Rs 1,200. There was, however, no crisis in the kharif season when demand is also less

compared to rabi. The international prices of DAP, however, kept increasing during the kharif season itself, from nearly US \$580 per tonne to more than \$650. Similarly, international prices of urea too increased from \$410 per tonne to \$440 within a month in the kharif season.

The decision to hike subsidy for the rabi season was taken only in end-September. This led to delays in placing import orders; clogged international shipping lines further aggravated the crisis. “Had the orders been placed in July or August, this delay could have been avoided,” says a senior official in MP. The Centre has now formed a team to monitor supply from production units and ports to rake points and onward to states.

The fertiliser subsidy offered by the Centre has steadily risen over the past five years, hitting an estimated Rs 1.2 lakh crore in the current year. In the previous kharif season itself, the subsidy on fertilisers was increased by Rs 14,775 crore in June 2021 to cushion against rising prices. Another Rs 25,000 crore could be spent in the current rabi season.

In Madhya Pradesh, farmers are now being encouraged to shift to the complex fertiliser NPK, which is more easily available, if priced slightly higher—which is a reason why many farmers prefer their old trusty DAP. However, with no other option available, farmers are switching to NPK.

This year, India was working out plans to cut down imports because of the capacity ramp-up in the fertiliser units in southern and eastern parts of the country. Major producers like Paradeep Phosphates Ltd and Mangalore Chemical and Fertilizers were expected to increase production by 4 lakh tonnes as part of the Make in India strategy. But delays in ramping up capacities and in placing import orders, the rise in international prices of fertilisers and global shortages have created a politically charged crisis on Indian farms. ■

— with Anilesh S. Mahajan



BRICK BY BRICK
Amit Shah, with Yogi Adityanath, lays the foundation stone of a state university in Azamgarh, Nov. 13

ANI

UP ASSEMBLY ELECTION

A NEW TURF WAR

By Ashish Misra

Eastern Uttar Pradesh was abuzz with political anticipation on November 13 as chief minister Yogi Adityanath, accompanied by Union home minister Amit Shah, arrived in Azamgarh, the Lok Sabha seat of Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav, to lay the foundation stone of a state university to be built on 50 acres at a cost of Rs 108 crore. On Shah's cue, Adityanath announced the university will be named after Maharaja Suheldev, an icon of the backward Rajbhar community influential in 24 districts of Purvanchal and Awadh. The Rajbhars form the voter base of Akhilesh's new ally, the Om Prakash Rajbhar-led Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP).

If Shah and Adityanath were challenging the SP on its own turf, Akhilesh was daring the BJP by launching his 'Vijay Yatra' the same day from Gorakhpur, the chief minister's home district. "Yogi, *ji* did not give the (promised) laptops to the youth because he does not

know how to operate a laptop himself. UP needs a yogya (able) government, not a Yogi government," he told a gathering in Gorakhpur's Kusumhi Bazar.

The 2022 electoral battle for UP is intensifying with the incumbent BJP and its principal challenger, the SP, driving their campaigns into each other's strongholds (See *The Turf War*). "Yogi Adityanath is the BJP's mascot in the upcoming election, which is why Akhilesh Yadav is directly attacking him. Starting his Vijay Yatra from Gorakhpur was part of that strategy," says Gyas Asad Khan, former head of political science department, Shibli National College, Azamgarh. "The BJP may lose some seats from its 2017 tally. Adityanath will look to balance it by wresting seats in SP strongholds."

Adityanath began strengthening the BJP in SP areas way back in 2018, visiting Etawah, the home district of SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav, on June 1 and laying the foundation

ENEMY AT THE GATES

YOGI ADITYANATH'S VISITS TO SP STRONGHOLDS

MORADABAD

6 2 4

Moradabad Lok Sabha seat - **SP**

On November 1, Yogi Adityanath handed over 1,008 homes under the PM Awas Yojana to beneficiaries.

RAMPUR

5 2 3

Rampur Lok Sabha seat - **SP**

Adityanath unveiled 12 projects worth Rs 63 crore on November 8 in SP MP Azam Khan's home district.

BADAUN

6 5 1

Badaun Lok Sabha seat - **BJP**

The chief minister inaugurated 50 schemes worth Rs 1,117 crore on November 9.

SAMBHAL

3 1 2

Sambhal Lok Sabha seat - **SP**

On September 21, Adityanath inaugurated 62 projects worth Rs 275 crore here.

ETAWAH

3 2 1

Etawah Lok Sabha seat - **BJP**

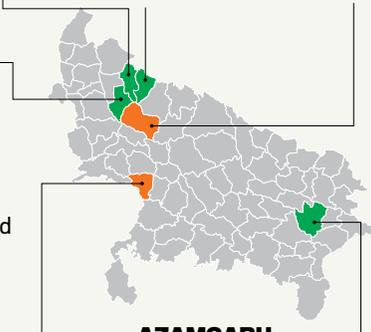
The CM has visited Etawah twice in 2021; laid the foundation of schemes worth Rs 454 crore on November 6.

AZAMGARH

10 1 5 4

Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat - **SP**

On November 13, Amit Shah and Adityanath laid the foundation stone of a state university, named after Rajbhar community icon Suheldev.



AKHILESH'S VISITS TO BJP STRONGHOLDS

MATHURA

5 4 1

Mathura Lok Sabha seat - **BJP**

On March 19, Akhilesh took part in a kisan panchayat here. The SP held a 'Dalit Samvad' on September 28.

AYODHYA

5 5

Faizabad Lok Sabha seat - **BJP**

The Jankranti Yatra of SP and ally Janvadi Party (Socialist) was flagged off from here on August 31.

GORAKHPUR

9 8 1

Gorakhpur Lok Sabha seat - **BJP**

The home district of Yogi Adityanath. Akhilesh started his 'Vijay Yatra' from here on November 13.

VARANASI

8 6 1 1

Varanasi Lok Sabha seat - **BJP**

Akhilesh prayed at the Sankatmochan temple on February 25. The SP organised an interaction with the public in Varanasi on October 28.

CHITRAKOOT

2 2

Banda Lok Sabha seat - **BJP**

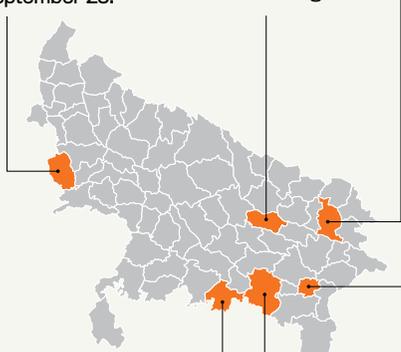
Akhilesh visited Chitrakoot in January. His party launched the Kisan Naujawan Patel Yatra from here on October 6.

PRAYAGRAJ

12 8 1 2 1

Allahabad Lok Sabha seat - **BJP**

Akhilesh paid a visit on September 21 after the death of Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad chief Narendra Giri.



stone of development schemes worth Rs 665 crore. He has been to Etawah four times since, launching projects and attacking the SP first family. On November 6 this year, Adityanath inaugurated the new central jail in Etawah. "Earlier, only one family was progressing in UP. Now, the state's 250 million people are getting the benefits of development," he said.

SP leader and Akhilesh's cousin Dharmendra Yadav dismisses the BJP threat, saying: "Adityanath has lost support. He is trying to assuage public anger with rallies in SP strongholds. But the BJP will not win a single seat there."

In the 2017 election, the BJP had contested 384 of the 403 seats, winning 312. Since then, it has lost four seats in assembly bypolls. For the 2022 election, Adityanath is focusing on these seats as well as the eight contested in 2017 by former ally Rajbhar's party. As part of the strategy, Adityanath has inaugurated 350 schemes, worth Rs 1,358 crore, in Badaun itself. The BJP won five of the six assembly seats in Badaun in 2017, but Sahaswan went to the SP. "Sahaswan, the last SP fortress in Badaun, will be breached in 2022," Adityanath recently declared.

Western UP's Moradabad division, which includes the districts of Amroha, Bijnor, Moradabad, Sambhal and Rampur, poses a major challenge for the BJP. In 2019, the BJP lost all five Lok Sabha seats here to the SP-BSP alliance. The Amroha and Bijnor seats were won by the BSP while the SP took Sambhal, Rampur and Moradabad. In the 2017 state election, the BJP and SP were neck and neck in Moradabad division, winning 14 and 13 seats, respectively. Adityanath has visited Moradabad district 12 times since becoming chief minister, eight of them after his party's rout in the region in 2019.

Akhilesh too is trying to make his presence felt in BJP areas. Take Chitrakoot for instance, where he landed on January 8 this year for a *parikrama* of the Kamadgiri mountains. Over the next two months, Akhilesh paid visits to the BJP strongholds of Varanasi, Prayagraj and Mathura. The past month has seen a slew of meetings by the SP's backward classes, women and business cells in BJP-dominated Gorakhpur, Varanasi and Prayagraj.

Akhilesh has assigned key responsibilities to his partymen in BJP strongholds. Jaishankar Pandey, a senior leader from Ayodhya and SP vice-president, has been engaging the public in Ayodhya, Ambedkar Nagar, Barabanki and Basti. "No development happened in districts the BJP swept in 2017. The crowds at SP events indicate the changed public mood," he says. The day of reckoning is not far. Come February, Yogi's challengers will find out if Uttar Pradesh really wants the change they hope it does. ■

WEST BENGAL

MINING A CONTROVERSY

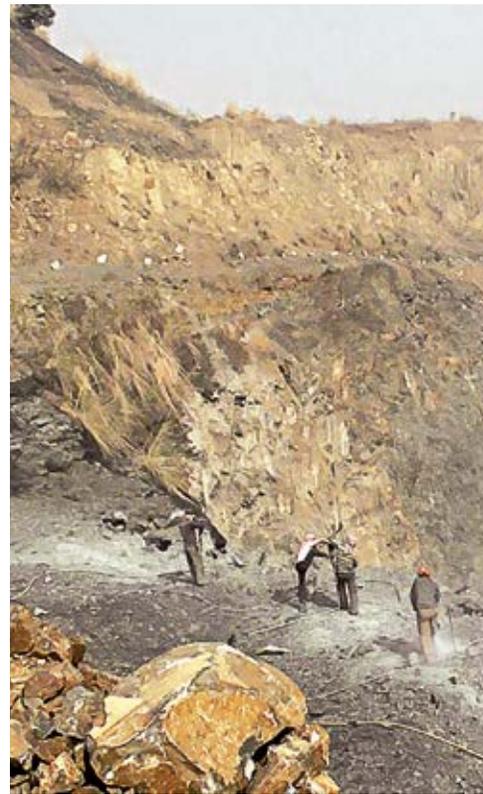
By Romita Datta

The Deocha Pachami coal mining project, involving land acquisition of thousands of acres, including a wide expanse of forests and 12 Adivasi villages, will be West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's biggest challenge yet. No one in the state has forgotten that 14 years ago, Mamata had been on the other side of the fence, spearheading the agitation against the Left Front government's land acquisition policy in Singur, which led to the Tatas migrating an iconic car project to Gujarat, and Bengal earning the dubious reputation of being hostile to industry in the bargain. The public blowback from the row contributed in no small measure to the ouster of the CPI(M)-led Left Front government and Mamata's rise to power in 2011.

A decade later, the Trinamool Congress chief herself is wary and determined to avoid the mistakes of the Left Front in Singur. Any investment that requires large tracts of land comes with attendant problems, but given the time she has invested in building consensus around the project—two years since it was announced—and finessing the compensation package for those who will be displaced from their lands or lose livelihoods, chances are the project will finally take off without causing much heartburn. Mamata has even made sure that the word 'acquisition' is not mentioned anywhere in the government notification on Deocha Pachami. She insists the government is going for direct purchase of land from the owners, and with their consent.

Deocha Pachami, said to be the

world's second-largest coal block with reserves of 2.1 billion tonnes at a depth of 135-835 metres, was earlier offered jointly to West Bengal, five other states and the Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam Ltd. Owing to the cost and geological challenges, the others backed out. The state power agency, West Bengal Power Development Corporation Ltd (WBPDC), got sole proprietorship in 2019. An expert survey estimated that it would take a minimum three years to reach the coal seams once mining starts. Even Coal India Ltd (CIL), the Centre-owned monopoly mining company, which had access to the block earlier, is sceptical of its viability. Former



SUBIR HALDER

CIL chairman Partha S. Bhattacharyya pointed out in 2019 that India did not have the technology to mine the deposit, which lies beneath a thick crust of basalt and the cost of 'overburden' removal could be staggering if the project was taken up in a conservative piece-meal manner as the government has proposed to do on the 550 acres under its control. But Mamata is convinced that Deocha Pachami can be a game changer for the state's economy, especially since the potential reserves could last a century and may also generate some 150,000 local jobs.

THE GROUND WORK

Though the coal block is spread over 11,000 acres in Birbhum district, the government is focusing on 3,500 acres, which includes five gram panchayats and 12 tribal villages in the Dewangunje-Harisingha, Deocha Pachami and Chanda Mouza blocks. Around 21,000 people have agricultural land and houses here. Then there are the stone quarry units, which many locals depend on for livelihood.

The government has been cautious about not sparking off a rebellion among the affected people, a majority of whom are tribals. Multiple strategies were adopted at the administrative,

2.1

billion tonnes

Estimated coal reserves in Deocha Pachami, said to be the world's second largest coal block

11,000

acres

Total land to be acquired; state govt focusing on 3,500 acres for now

21,000

No. of people who will lose their land/ houses

₹10,000

crore

Compensation package planned by the West Bengal govt



< THE BIG DIG
File pix of a coal pit in the Deocha Pachami block in Birbhum district

political and sociocultural level to win them over. The local Mohammadbazar district administration under district magistrate (DM) Bidhan Ray toured the villages to hear first hand what people made of the project. The SDOs (sub-divisional officers) and BDOs (block development officers) also made regular interventions to address fears and concerns, say officials. There were pockets of unrest, and another team, consisting of the DM and the local SP, made several trips of these areas to address misgivings. “[During a social impact assessment survey], I remember how locals were scared to share even basic information: on, say, the size of their plot, or whether they were owners or tenants, whether they kept poultry or goats etc. We went door-to-door to assuage their fears. The survey format was simplified to convince the people it was for their own good,” says Arghya Guha, BDO of Mohammadbazar, the epicentre of the project. The survey was completed in end-2020.

For those who qualify, the Rs 10,000 crore compensation package envisages jobs as constables in the police, 600 sq. ft flats in a colony, shifting costs and even remuneration for those who will be out of work till they find something new. Besides this, their land will fetch more

than double the market price (Rs 10-13 lakh per bigha, which is less than an acre). Pamphlets detailing the compensation package were also published in Alchiki, the local Santhali dialect, for the benefit of the locals. “We left no scope for political parties to meddle,” says an official requesting not to be quoted.

Before making the details public, the administration also organised camps to update the land records. “This was to identify genuine owners; many cases had names of the deceased still on file. The compensation amount and the package have been planned for a long-term effect,” adds Guha.

THE HICCUPS

Things could still go wrong, though. The government approached the tribal leaders of the Birbhum Adivasi Gaonta (BAG), a platform that fights for tribal rights, before reaching out to individuals to clear any confusion. Two prominent local leaders and ex-Naxals, Sunil and Rabin Soren, were tapped for this. Rabin is now a TMC supporter and has allegedly even made money on the deal, while Sunil is keeping a low profile after being arrested in a criminal case. The tribals, meanwhile, are desperately looking for a leader to articulate their concerns. “Huge sums are being splurged to

woo the young tribal men, so an uprising is unlikely even if people are unhappy with the deal,” claims Sunil Murmu, a local in Harisingha, a part of the coal block in Birbhum district.

Sunil Soren says the tribals are “not against mining. It will employ the locals and give them a livelihood, but the administration needs to sit down with the people to know their views”. The state has formed a nine-member committee consisting of local tribals, celebrities, members of NGOs and people’s representatives to thrash out any differences over the package.

The Mamata government is very keen to avoid a situation that might offer something to her political adversaries. Some 2,000 people of Harisingha, 80 per cent of whom are tribals, have been cribbing about the lack of development in the area. “There are no schools for eight km or motorable roads for 3-4 km. There’s also no health centre close by. Now that our villages have coal reserves, the administration is coming to our doorstep. This is our last chance to get some work done,” says Kalindi Hansda, a local. Those appeals seldom go unheard by rights activists.

Sunil Murmu, part of the nine-member committee set up by the state, says details of the rehabilitation package are still not clear. “The government package promises a job for one member of a family that is losing its land. What happens if there are three eligible sons?” asks Sushil Dhangre of the Adivasi Rights Forum. The government has promised Rs 10,000 a month for a year to 3,000 labourers at the stone crushing units and a one-time grant of Rs 50,000 to 160 farm labourers, its estimate of the people who will lose jobs (locals say there are some 200,000 unorganised workers in the region). Here too, the discrimination is clear: the owners of stone crushing units will get a one-time grant of Rs 50,000, a space in a nearby industrial park and free supply of raw material for six months. There is also no clarity about the future of the thousand-old people who depend on produce from the forests spread over 300-plus acres within the project site. ■

COVID-19 VACCINES FOR CHILDREN

TREADING WITH CARE

By **Sonali Acharjee**

Shreya Nangia, a 48-year-old mother of two in Gurugram, has not let her children out of their four-bedroom house since the beginning of the Covid pandemic in March 2020. Her daughters, aged 12 and 14, are both attending online counselling to work through the frustration and anger of being locked indoors for nearly 20 months. But Nangia says she cannot risk socialising them because the family also lives with her 86-year-old father, who is diabetic and a heart patient. “We have received special permission for the children to continue studies from home till they are vaccinated. It is very painful to see your own children suffer, but the risk to life outweighs that pain,” she says.

The family was overjoyed when, on August 20, 2021, plans to vaccinate children of 12-18 years were announced, with emergency use approval granted to Indian firm Zydus Cadilla’s **Zycov-D**, a needle-free DNA vaccine. However, two months on, with no further communication on when the vaccination process might begin, their eagerness has waned. Two months earlier, says Nangia, her kids would probably have been first in line for the shot, but now she is not so sure. “Is it safe? We keep reading news that trials for vaccines in children need more time and confirmation. And what about side-effects? There’s no clarity on that either,” she says.

Nangia is not alone. According to

an online survey of 770 parents, done by researchers from the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, and Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research, Puducherry, about 77 per cent respondents did not want to vaccinate their children. There are several reasons why—concerns about safety and effectiveness (86.4 per cent), side-effects (78.2 per cent), and the idea that children typically get milder versions of the disease and, therefore, do not need vaccination (52.8 per cent).

Doctors have been trying to counter this hesitancy with authentic information. “The DNA vaccine, having



“Children have been living indoors because of the pandemic, which is unhealthy. To bring their lives back to normal, vaccination is important”

—**Dr Anil Sachdeva**,
Paediatrician, Sir Ganga Ram
Hospital, Delhi



SWAB STORY

A healthcare worker at the New Delhi railway station takes a swab sample from a child to test for Covid

only been cleared after trials, is safe,” says Dr Yogesh Kumar Gupta, head of Paediatric Intensive Care Unit, Fortis Hospital, Bannerghatta Road, Bengaluru. “Some side-effects are common with all vaccines. People are getting confused by false online news. Parents should consult doctors to get clarity.” Ahmedabad-based Zydus announced interim results from its phase 3 trial, involving over 28,000 volunteers, in July this year. ZyCov-D, a three-dose vaccine given 28 days apart, was found to be 67 per cent effective against symptomatic infections. No severe cases or Covid-related deaths occurred among vaccinated individuals after the second dose and not even moderate cases were seen after the third. Tolerability of the vaccine was similar for both adults and the thousand-odd adolescents enrolled in the phase 3 trial. Additionally, the DNA plasmid platform, which Zycov-D uses, also easily adapts to new mutations of Covid. “Many children have been living indoors because of the pandemic. This is not healthy for their well-being or future. To bring life back to normal, vaccination is important,” says Dr Anil Sachdeva, paediatrician, Sir



NAVEEN SHARMA/GETTY IMAGES

Ganga Ram Fospital, Delhi.

Dr Barkha Pandey, paediatrician with the Manipal Hospital, Gurugram, says her patients are still keen to get their children vaccinated, but some fear persists. “Children are a vulnerable age group and vaccines for children do need long-term safety and efficacy data. So, we have to keep on studying the vaccines as some side-effects may show up over a longer period of time,” she says.

The hesitancy is less among parents of children with co-morbidities, such as diabetes, liver or kidney issues, asthma or other respiratory conditions. “On the basis of what we found in the two national waves, Covid is less dangerous in children. But in children with pre-existing diseases, the risk is heightened. These kids are also at higher risk of developing post-Covid inflammation and complications. So, it makes sense to vaccinate them alongside adults,” adds Dr Pandey.

According to members of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration (NEGVAC), a phased immunisation drive for children will likely begin in early 2022, prioritising

KIDS' SHOTS AT IMMUNITY

The status so far of the vaccines for children

ZYCOV-D BY ZYDUS CADILLA

➤ Zydus in July announced interim results from a phase 3 trial involving over 28,000 volunteers for ZyCov-D, a three-dose vaccine. When given 28 days apart, it was found to be 67 per cent effective against symptomatic infections.

➤ Uses strands of DNA carrying the Covid antigen to prime the immune system against the virus.

STATUS: *Emergency use authorisation (EUA) granted for those >12; not yet available to public*

COVAXIN BY BHARAT BIOTECH

➤ Phase 2 and 3 trials done on 525 volunteers across three age groups: 12-18 years, 6-12 years and 2-6 years.

➤ In adults, Covaxin is 65.2 per cent effective against symptomatic disease caused by the Delta variant.

STATUS: *Approved for all >2 years by NEGVAC; awaiting approval by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI)*

COVOVAX BY NOVOVAX

➤ Targets Covid-19's spike protein, which allows the virus to penetrate the human cell.

➤ Has shown a 60 per cent efficacy in global trials in ensuring the disease is asymptomatic; and 93 per cent against hospitalisation on being infected by the Delta strain.

STATUS: *Conducting phase 2 and 3 trials in children aged 2-17 years; has plans to complete trials and receive EUA by end of year.*

CORBEVAX BY BIOLOGICAL E

➤ It is an RBD protein sub-unit vaccine. Instead of injecting a whole virus to trigger an immune response, sub-unit vaccines contain purified pieces of the virus, which are selected for their ability to stimulate immune cells.

STATUS: *Conducting phase 2 and 3 trials in the 5-17 years age group.*

the most vulnerable in that population.

While the government has already announced a final price for Zycov-D and placed an order for 10 million doses at Rs 265 per dose (plus Rs 93 for the needle-free applicator) the jabs are not yet available to the public. Once the vaccination drive for this age bracket gets under way, children with comorbidities will be queued on priority. The government has stated that it will treat vaccination of children with caution. “We will make a decision based on expert opinion. We have decided to think and evaluate before going ahead with vaccinating children as they are the future of our country,” said health minister Mansukh Mandaviya last week.

Nearly 40 per cent of India's population falls below the age of 18. Experts say not vaccinating this age group will allow the Covid virus to continue to replicate, mutate and infect. “Children have a strong immune response to Covid in general but many faced multi-organ inflammation after recovery,” says Dr Sachdeva. Figures released by the Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP) Intensive Care Chapter show that over 2,000 cases of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) have been reported in the country, but overall, it's a rarity. Those under 20 accounted for just 1.2 per cent of all Covid deaths as on August 22, 2021, according to data put out by the ministry of health and family welfare (MoHFW). “There are a lot of other diseases that threaten children. Parents must not compromise protecting their children from these for fear of contracting Covid at the clinic,” says Dr Gupta.

From a public health perspective, doctors seem to concur that vaccinating all adults must remain our top priority, followed by comorbid children. Particularly since only 370 million Indians above 18 (out of 940 million) eligible so far for the shots are fully vaccinated. In balder terms, it might be a while before life returns to normal for everyone, but this conservative approach, public health experts seem to think, will mitigate the risk of death and post-Covid complications. ■



A GOVERNMENT DETERMINED TO MAKE UTTARAKHAND DEVBHOOMI

IN REAL SENSE, A CM WHO IS TORCH BEARER OF A GOVERNMENT FILLED WITH YOUNG THOUGHTS AND PERSPECTIVE.

The Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami decided to spread the happiness and joy of 21st anniversary of the formation of Uttarakhand to the common man of the state. For this, he decided that various programs related to the 21st state formation day will be organized for one week in the state. On this occasion Chief Minister specially remembered former Prime Minister Bharat Ratna late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Who was instrumental in the formation of the state and laid the foundation for special industrial development of the state as then Prime Minister.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami says that Uttarakhand state is a divine place, a Devlok of this earth. It finds mention in RigVeda while there are elaborate details of the place in Skanda Purana also. It is the same place where Abhigyan Shakuntalam was written. Keeping in mind the background of the state, the Uttarakhand government is moving the state forward on the path of development. Many such works have been done in the state, which were earlier looking impossible to do. This was made possible by approval of development projects worth around rupees 1 lakh crore by the central

government for the state. Many of such schemes have been completed and work is going on swiftly on the other projects. The steps taken by the government to boost tourism are going to transform the economy of the state.

Paying heart full tributes to the Martyrs and agitators of the Uttarakhand statehood movement, Chief Minister also saluted those brave hearts of the state who laid their lives for the country on the occasion of 21st state formation day. The Chief Minister also paid condolences to the people who lost their lives during the calamity which struck the state in October month. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said that the state government is always

ready to help the people affected from the calamity. Pushkar Singh Dhami said that the government has increased the financial assistance to the people affected from calamity, so that they can start a normal life again.

With the strong will power of the government, special attachment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Uttarakhand and help from the Central Government, Uttarakhand is now developing fastly. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and with the help of Central Government, the Rishikesh- karnprayag rail project which is 125 KM long and being built with the cost of rupees 16216 crore will be

completed by 2024-25. Apart from it, the budget for Tanakpur-Bageshwar and doiwala Gangotri-yamunotri rail line has also been sanctioned after approval of the survey. The doubling work of Haridwar Dehradun rail line is also going to be completed.

Along with it, work is going on fastly at the 889 km long Chardham road project for better road connectivity to Chardhams- Kedarnath, Badrinath, yamunotri and Gangotri. The work is going on to upgrade the Jolly grant airport as per the international standards to expand the air services in the state. Construction of Greenfield airport is also going on in Udham Singh Nagar of Kumaon division. Uttarakhand has become the first state to start heli services under the udan scheme. Air connectivity has been improved in recent years. In the coming days, the project proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to connect Hemkund Sahib through a ropeway will take shape. The place is an important pilgrimage for sikh community and also famous as the fifth dham of Uttarakhand. Government has also laid out the plan to initiate a major transformation in the field of tourism by starting cable car services till Kedarnath Shrine. Many high level institutes have also come to Uttarakhand by the efforts of the government. This includes institutions like drone application centre, coast guard recruitment centre, National Law University and centre of excellence of natural fibre. Many big projects like smart City project in Dehradun, Uttarakhand water management project, jamrani multipurpose project and Bharat net phase 2 project are going on in the state because of the double engine government.

Uttarakhand government's commitment for the youth reflects in the initiative to start the recruitment process on 24000 government posts in the state. No application fee will be charged for these exams. A relaxation of one year has been given to the candidates for the recruitment of group B and C services. A financial assistance of 50000 rupees is being given to candidates as per their economic condition, who have cleared the written test of Union public service commission, NDA, CDS and other equivalent exams and preparing for the interview. Time bound targets have been given to different departments for generating avenues of self employment. Keeping in mind the convenience of those who have applied for self employment, special camps are being organised and all formalities are being completed at one place. In order to make online study more convenient, free of cost mobiles and tablets will be provided to students of class 10th and 12th and of Government degree Colleges.

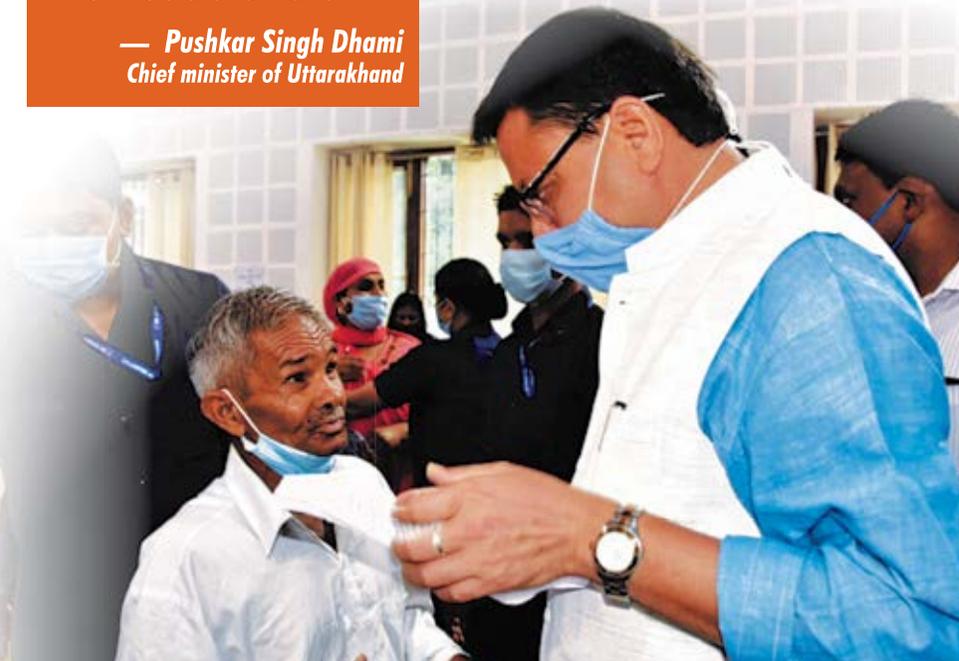


Taking the resolve to make Uttarakhand as a leading state in the country according to the spirit of sabka saath, sabka Vikas and sabka Vishwas, my government expresses commitment to fulfill the young aspirations of the youthful state and according to the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we will make Uttarakhand, the best state of the country by 2025, which is silver jubilee anniversary of the state formation.

— **Pushkar Singh Dhami**
Chief minister of Uttarakhand

For quality education, NCERT textbooks have been made compulsory in all government schools of the state. Smart eco clubs are being established in the secondary schools of state to make the children aware about their environment and to prepare smart campuses in colleges. Taking inspiration from the Prime Minister, the state is swiftly moving to achieve the target under world's biggest covid vaccination campaign 'sabko vaccine muft vaccine'. State also gave its contribution in achieving the important target of administering hundred crore doses of covid vaccine in the country. Under the guidance of Prime Minister Uttarakhand has become the state whose hundred percent eligible population has taken the first dose of covid vaccine. Government is also trying to fully vaccinate its eligible population as soon as possible. State government has boosted the morale of covid warriors for their commendable job during first and second wave of covid-19 by giving them encouragement and financial incentive. Despite adverse conditions, the government has made all efforts to help people affected from Covid -19.

The amount given under the covid relief package has started reaching into accounts of the beneficiaries through DBT. Under the package, the Government gave rupees 200 crores to the people related with tourism, culture and transport, while rupees 205 crore was given to people for the health sector and rupees 118 crore was given to women help groups and beneficiaries related to self employment schemes of the state government who were affected from Covid-19. Vatsalya scheme started for those children who have lost their parents or guardians during covid period. Under the scheme, the government will provide financial assistance of 3000 rupees per month to such





children till they reach the age of 21. State government is taking care of these children like a guardian. Health infrastructure has increased manifold during recent years. Oxygen plants have started in each and every district of the state. 207 types of pathological tests are being conducted free of cost under the free test scheme of the government.

44 lakh people of the state have got Ayushman card under Ayushman Uttarakhand scheme. More than 3 lakh 40 thousand patients have taken benefit of the card and undergone free treatment. More than rupees 461 crore has been utilised for the treatment of beneficiaries under the scheme.

Taking forward Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Beti bachao beti padhao campaign, the state has started Chief Minister Mahalaxmi scheme. Under the scheme Chief Minister Mahalaxmi kit is being provided to the mother and newborn child for the birth of first two girls.

Apart from increasing the remuneration of anganbadi sisters, the remuneration of folk artists has also been doubled. The amount for old age, widow and disabled pension has been increased from 10000 rupees per month to 12000 rupees per month. The remuneration of gram prahari has also been increased to 2000 rupees per month. According to the spirit of antyodaya, the



Government is committed to provide the benefits of development to the last man of the society.

Special focus is on simplification, satisfaction and disposal of the problems of common people so that they can get benefit of government schemes easily. The transparent system of e-cabinet, e-office, CM dashboard, Utkarsh, CM helpline, 1905, right of service and transfer act has started reflecting in the improvement of the work culture.

Government is committed to fulfill the dreams of the Martyrs who laid their life for state formation and the willpower is reflected in the decisions which are being taken and implemented firmly. Government made Gairsain as summer capital by giving high regard to the emotions of the agitators, who always thought about making this city as a state capital during the initial years of statehood movement. Now work is going on to develop necessary facilities in the city as per the requirement of a capital.

The whole tenure of the government was committed to the development of far flung and backward areas. This is the first government which took migration very seriously and has taken many important decisions for reverse migration.

- **Special focus has been on investment in tourism, Ayush and wellness, IT, solar energy and service sector in the hilly areas.**

Government has also put hilly areas in the centre of MSME. For the border tehsils, Chief Minister Border region development scheme has been started. Growth centers based on cluster approach are being constituted in all Nyay panchayats of the state. Efforts are on to generate self employment for local people and to provide global identity to the local products based under the 'One district

two products' scheme running with the vision of being vocal for local.

The home stay scheme in the state is strengthening the rural economy which was mentioned by the Prime Minister also in his speech. 16 eco tourism destinations are being developed across the state. Home stays are also being encouraged on tracking routes. Separate wing has been formed to promote adventure tourism. Solar energy and pirul energy policy is also proving helpful in increasing the livelihood of youth in rural areas. Sabka sath, sabka Vikas, sabka Vishwas and sabka prayas have emerged as the basic Mantra of the government.

With government efforts, power connection was provided to 94 villages of the state which were without electricity since independence. More than 2.5 lakh houses got electricity under the saubhagya scheme. Government is committed to achieve the target of providing drinking water facilities in every house with the help of the Central Government under the Pradhanmantri jal Shakti campaign. Water connection is being provided in rural areas on a charge of only one rupee under her ghar ko nal se jal scheme.

The initiative to revive the rivers and water bodies in the state has started on a large scale. Work is going on to develop a watershed in every district. Acceptability of the campaign reflexes in the participation of common people in this initiative. First time in the state, the government has given approval to the water policy. Lakes are being developed in every district to conserve the rain water. This will not only ensure the availability of drinking water but also accelerate water sports activities.

Around 9 lakh farmers are getting the benefit of Pradhan mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme in the state. Government is providing loan upto rupees 5 lakh to women self help groups and up to rupees 3 lakh to the farmers without any interest. To promote organic farming in the

state, work has started on 3900 organic clusters. 'Farm machinery Bank' scheme has been started to provide agriculture equipment to the farmers and the government is giving 80% subsidy on this.

Uttarakhand is not just Dev Bhumi it's also Veer Bhumi, the land of brave hearts Prime Minister Narendra Modi termed Uttarakhand as Sainya dham.

Government is accommodating one person from the family of martyr soldiers in the government job. The permissible amount for the soldiers honored with vishisht Seva padak has been increased manifold. Uttarakhand govt has performed exceptionally in many fields during the last four and half years. Uttarakhand has been able to make its mark on the national level. On the sustainable development goals index, the state was in 10th place in 2018 while today it has jumped on number 3. In the index related to power and law and order, the state is in first position. There has been significant improvement in many health indicators like infant mortality rate, children mortality rate and maternal mortality rate. In many socio-economic indicators, Uttarakhand is among the leading states of the country. As per the expectation of the Prime Minister, the government is determined to make Uttarakhand as the country's best state by 2025, when it will celebrate the silver jubilee of statehood. To achieve this goal, the government is working on war footing with the Mantra of vikalp rahit Sankalp, so that we can achieve the target of antyodaya and Uttarakhand can become devbhoomi in real terms.

On the state formation day the chief minister announced 18 projects for development of the state in Bharanisain. The Chief Minister announced to increase the amount of pension to the agitators of the state formation movement. Those who are getting 3100 rupees will get 4500 and those who are getting 5000 rupees will get 6000 rupees. Announcement was also made regarding construction of one women's hostel with all facilities at each district headquarter of the state for the



Around 9 lakh farmers are getting the benefit of Pradhan mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme in the state. Government is providing loan upto rupees 5 lakh to women self help groups and up to rupees 3 lakh to the farmers without any interest. To promote organic farming in the state, work has started on 3900 organic clusters. 'Farm machinery Bank' scheme has been started to provide agriculture equipment to the farmers and the government is giving 80% subsidy on this.

convenience of school going girls. According to the announcement of the chief minister, working women hostels will also be constructed as per the requirement at district headquarters for the working woman.

The Chief Minister also announced that 2000 rupees as gift will be given to the procreant who will stay for 48 hours in the government hospital for the better and safe health of mother and child. THR facility will be provided to the adolescent girls aged between 11 to 18 years under jiraiya Chaili jagi raiya naoni scheme.

As announced by the Chief Minister, sanitary napkin vending machines will be established at anganbadi centres to provide sanitary napkins to adolscent girls aged between 11 to 18 years. Free of cost health check up, like testing of hemoglobin along with free of cost clinical advice through helpline number 104 will be made available to adolescent girls aged between 11 to 18 years. The medicines which are used in treatment of Aarogya Uttarakhand chronic disease will be made available free of cost. Drug de addiction centers will be established at Dehradun and Haldwani. A State institute of Urban development will also be established in the state. Incentive of 10000 rupees will be provided to NHM workers for their commendable job during covid-19. Foreign employment unit will be formed to provide job opportunities abroad to the youth of the state. For the benefit of common people, 32 services which are being run through e-district will be included in the Apni Sarkar portal which will then have a total of 75 services whose benefit can be taken by anyone. 190 other services which are mentioned in the right to service act will also come on 'Apni Sarkar portal' so that people can take its benefit. Sports policy 2021 will be implemented immediately to encourage the sports activities in the state and also to connect youth of the state with different aspects of sports. Uttarakhand will be made as hub of Ayush wellness to boost the economic activities related with health and tourism in the state. For this Ayush wellness centres will be opened at tourist houses of Kumaon mandal Vikas Nigam and Garhwal mandal Vikas Nigam. International training and Research institute will be opened at Bharanisain assembly constituency. The Chief Minister also announced to approve rupees 1.2 crore for different problems related to Gairsain district panchayat. Adi Badri and Ghat area will become district panchayat. The allopathic hospital at Narayanbagad block will be upgraded.



COVER STORY | CRYPTOCURRENCY

THE CRYPTO MANIA

**A \$6 BN INVESTMENT BY
YOUNG INDIANS IN DIGITAL
CURRENCY IS FUELLING A
CRYPTO FRENZY. IS IT A
BUBBLE WAITING TO BURST?**

BY M.G. ARUN

*Photo illustration by BANDEEP SINGH
Digital Imaging by AMARJEET SINGH NAGI*



A

friend introduced Mumbai-based advertising professional Shouvik Sen, 42, to the world of cryptocurrencies in 2019. Intrigued, Sen registered with a crypto exchange and, after fulfilling the mandatory KYC (Know Your Customer) norms and linking his bank account with the exchange's online trading platform, invested part of his savings from mutual fund investments in a few cryptocurrencies. Close friends cautioned him against this 'gambling' in the digital space, but Sen's curiosity and excitement got the better of him. He placed his biggest bet on Ethereum, the second largest cryptocurrency by value after Bitcoin. He bought a few at Rs 15,000 apiece and sold them when their value touched Rs 2.7 lakh apiece early this year. "I could have made more money had I waited longer, since Ethereum has touched Rs 3.5 lakh a piece currently, but you never know in the crypto world," he says.

Sen is among the millions of Indians currently in the grip of a crypto mania. A digital currency that operates outside the central banking system, cryptocurrency is not legal tender anywhere, except in El Salvador and, now, Cuba. It derives its value more from its trade on online platforms, which is why many prefer to call it just crypto. In fact, the first cryptocurrency, Bitcoin, started as an incentive token in online

gaming. It was only when more and more people began transacting in it that cryptocurrency leapfrogged in value. On November 15, the Bitcoin was trading at \$65,734, or around Rs 48.7 lakh, apiece.

Its high risk, high award attribute has lured young Indians too. As many as 15-20 million Indians have invested around \$6 billion (Rs 44,400 crore) in cryptos, according to Ashish Singhal, founder and CEO of CoinSwitch Kuber, a crypto exchange where one can buy and sell 80 cryptocurrencies.

Yet, the very nature of crypto—unregulated and decentralised—is now threatening to work against it. You don't need a central bank or a company to launch crypto, anyone with knowledge of the underlying technology can float one. Ownership is recorded on an online ledger managed by a peer to peer network, using strong cryptography to secure information and communication (see *Crypto Currency for Dummies*) and is, therefore, difficult to trace for people outside the system. Nor does it exist in any physical form for it to be seized. Unlike stocks, which derive their value from the fundamentals of a company, its performance and business outlook, crypto is not backed by anything at all. Its price instead is determined by supply and demand. Some, such as Bitcoin, have limited supply; others, like Ethereum, have unlimited supply. Sometimes, a crypto's supply is dictated entirely by the team in charge of a project, which can opt to release more of a token, or "burn" tokens to manage the money supply. A crypto's value also depends on the manner in which its code is written, how well it can be used to solve a problem in the digital space, and so on.

New cryptocurrency tokens are produced through

10 MOST VALUED CRYPTOS

Publicly traded digital currencies that have the highest market capitalisation

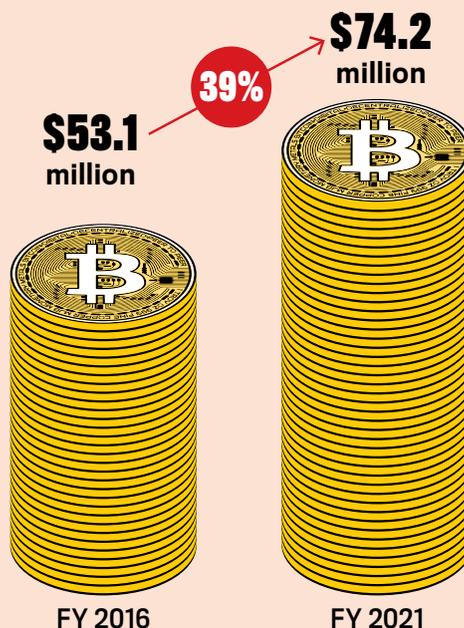
NO.	NAME	PRICE (\$)	MARKET CAP (in \$billion)
1	Bitcoin	65,886.42	1,242.2
2	Ethereum	4,735.97	559.85
3	Binance Coin	645.78	107.59
4	Solana	245.69	74.2
5	Tether	1.00	73.92
6	Cardano	2.07	68.9
7	XRP	1.21	56.8
8	Polkadot	47.23	46.39
9	Dogecoin	0.2626	34.69
10	USD Coin	1.00	34.41

Source: Coinmarketcap.com

SURGING STACK

The sharp appreciation in crypto in recent months has led to an explosion in investors

GROWTH IN INDIAN CRYPTO MARKET SIZE



Source: NASSCOM

15-20 MILLION

Indians who have invested in cryptocurrencies

\$6 BILLION

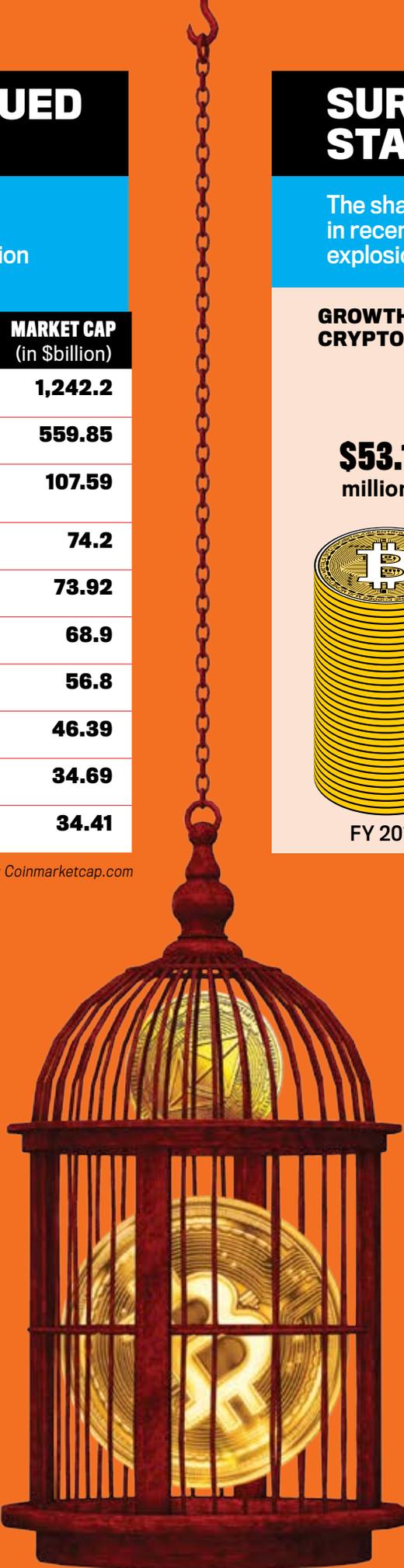
Or Rs 44,400 crore. Total size of Indian investments in cryptocurrencies

40 EXCHANGES

Number of crypto platforms in India, as per industry estimates

\$2.9 TRILLION

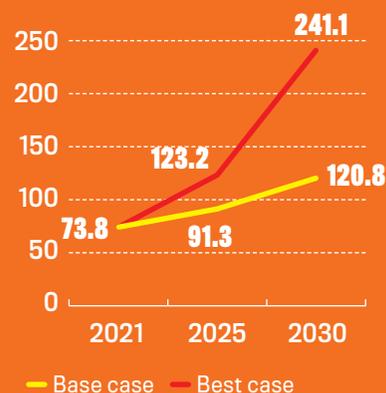
Or Rs 212 lakh crore. Combined M-cap of 7,393 cryptos trading publicly, as on November 15



THE NEXT BIG THING

With enough recognition and regulation, cryptos have great potential

CRYPTO MARKET POTENTIAL (in million \$)



Source: NASSCOM

a process called mining, which involves using a computer to verify transactions. In exchange, the protocol produces a reward in the form of crypto tokens, in addition to fees exchanging parties pay the miners.

The global market capitalisation of crypto (price crypto investors hold in crypto exchanges multiplied by the number of cryptos in circulation) touched \$2.88 trillion or around Rs 212 lakh crore on November 15. Currently, there are over 7,393 cryptocurrencies trading publicly, though experts believe there could be double the number in the crypto universe.

As the crypto fever rages on outside their control, governments worldwide are debating regulation.



“In the absence of [reliable] knowledge of its true nature and potential, there is real danger of cryptos also becoming an overblown bubble”

Subhash Chandra Garg
Former finance secretary

India, too, is mulling legislation to regulate cryptocurrency, and may table a bill in the winter session of Parliament. RBI governor Shaktikanta Das has been striking a consistent note of caution, saying cryptocurrencies pose a threat to the country’s “macroeconomic and financial stability”. On November 13, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a high-level meeting in New Delhi which, according to government sources, deliberated on why “unregulated crypto markets cannot be allowed to become avenues for money laundering and terror financing” and flagged “misleading,

over-promising and non-transparent” advertising in cryptocurrency, among other issues. A parliamentary panel on finance chaired by MP and BJP leader Jayant Sinha also expressed concerns on crypto. However, rather than close the door entirely on cryptocurrencies, efforts are on to allow them as an asset class, subject to regulatory oversight by SEBI, or the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

So, where does that leave cryptocurrency? Is it poised to be the currency of the future, or is it a latent,

A PRIMER FOR CRYPTO CURRENCY

ALL THAT YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS EVER-DYNAMIC, EXPANSIVE DIGITAL UNIVERSE BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

WHAT IS CRYPTOCURRENCY?

It is a digital token with which you can buy goods and services or trade for profit, using a shared online ledger with strong cryptography to secure online transactions

CAN ONE BUY GOODS WITH IT?

Crypto is recognised as legal tender only in two countries—**El Salvador and Cuba**. The rest of the world, including India, only allows trading in cryptocurrency.



WHAT IS BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY?

The underlying technology of crypto, blockchain is a decentralised, distributed ledger of all transactions across a peer-to-peer network

HOW SECURE IS A BLOCKCHAIN?

Each ‘block’ in a blockchain contains data of that particular transaction and the previous transaction. If someone attempts to break into the blockchain or manipulate

HOW DID IT ORIGINATE?

The 2008 Lehman Brothers crisis in the US, the largest bankruptcy in recent times, led some to re-imagine our financial system in a new way. Hence a decentralised currency system where people could transact with one

another on the internet rather than depend on central institutions such as a central bank and centralised regulators, where a handful of executives made all the decisions

**LEHMAN
BROTHERS**

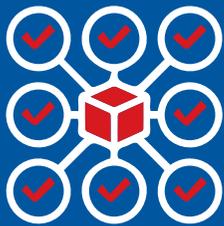
WHO STARTED CRYPTO-CURRENCY?

In 2008, a person or a group of persons, under the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto, came out with a white paper, calling for a decentralised payment system. They called this global virtual currency Bitcoin, and registered the domain name, bitcoin.org. The idea was to have person-to-person transactions across

borders, without having “trusted intermediaries” in between

HOW WAS THE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPED?

The decentralised community used a protocol called blockchain, first proposed as a research project in 1991. Nakamoto and others refined it further in 2009 through crowdsourcing, for what they believed was a good social cause.



a transaction, all subsequent transactions will be rendered invalid. The crypto lobby cites this attribute to claim that breaking into the crypto space is far tougher than in digital banking.

WHAT ELSE CAN BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY BE USED FOR?

Blockchain applications include secure sharing of medical data, tracking music royalties, making cross-border payments, enabling real-time IoT (Internet of Things) operating systems, anti-money laundering tracking system, supply chain and logistics monitoring

WHERE DOES THE WORLD STAND ON CRYPTO?

El Salvador and Cuba are

the only ones to pass legislation to recognise Bitcoin as legal tender. The US, Canada and the UK allow trade in Bitcoin but Russia and China do not. China, in fact, imposed a blanket ban on all crypto transactions earlier this year.

WHAT IS INDIA DOING TO REGULATE CRYPTOCURRENCY?

↘ In 2018, the RBI had imposed a ban on trading in cryptocurrencies, which a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court overturned in March 2020

↘ PM Narendra Modi chaired a high-level meeting on November 13, which flagged “misleading”, “over-promising” and “non-transparent” advertising on cryptocurrency and why “unregulated crypto markets cannot be allowed to become avenues for money laundering and terror financing”.

↘ RBI governor Shaktikanta Das says that cryptocurrencies pose a threat to the “macro-economic and financial

stability” of the country

↘ The government may present a bill in the upcoming winter session. Crypto may be barred as legal tender but allowed as an asset class, subject to regulation, perhaps by SEBI



HOW DOES ONE TRADE IN CRYPTO?

Crypto can be bought or sold on the 40-odd crypto exchanges, including Coinbase, Binance, CoinDCX, WazirX and CoinSwitch Kuber. Experts recommend investing an amount one can afford to lose initially. Newbies are also recommended to seek the help of experts

5 STEPS TO CRYPTO INVESTMENT

1. Identify a cryptocurrency exchange
2. Use debit cards or wire transfers to add money into a digital wallet
3. Choose from cryptos listed on the exchange
4. Choose a trading strategy: **scalping** (short-term, people hold the coins for a few minutes or seconds before selling), **day trading** (holding assets for a day), **swing trading** (holding the position for several days or weeks), **position trading** (focusing on long-term price shifts). Gains are remitted to the bank account linked to the crypto account. The same account funds the purchase of crypto
5. Store your crypto securely on a hardware or software digital wallet

(Source: blockchain-council.org)



lurking evil that must be stamped out before it consumes us? To answer these and other questions, let's go back to the beginning.

THE ORIGINS OF CRYPTO

Cryptocurrency rose from the ashes of the 2008 Lehman Brothers' crisis, when an individual or a group of individuals under the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto published a white paper in November of that year calling for the creation of a global virtual currency. The uncertainties and irregularities of the world's financial system led them to reimagine it in ways that circumvented centralised institutions such as central banks and regulators, where a handful of executives made all the decisions and perhaps, as the crisis exemplified, not the right ones. The idea was to facilitate person-to-person transactions across the world, without any of the traditional "trusted intermediaries", so that such transactions could be faster, cheaper and more transparent. The early proponents of crypto called this borderless new "currency" Bitcoin.

Trust in the new system was reinforced using a protocol called blockchain technology. A blockchain is a decentralised, distributed ledger of all transactions across a peer-to-peer network, and was developed in 2009 by technology professionals through crowdsourcing. Bitcoin was the first, but in due course, technology enthusiasts launched more and more cryptos, and today thousands of variants are circulating in the virtual world.

CRYPTO IN INDIA

SpaceX and Tesla CEO Elon Musk has an enviable crypto portfolio, and millions of others are going crypto crazy too. India is no exception. The pandemic, when countless numbers were forced to work from home, led more investors to flock to crypto. The huge appreciation in crypto in recent times also made it a popular option for investment. Since it is not allowed as legal tender in most parts of the world, crypto has increasingly gained traction as an "asset class" (a group of investments with similar characteristics such as equities, cash and cash equivalents, real estate) to invest in.

Shoppers in El Salvador can load bitcoins onto digital wallets called "Chivo" (translated as "cool") and access them via



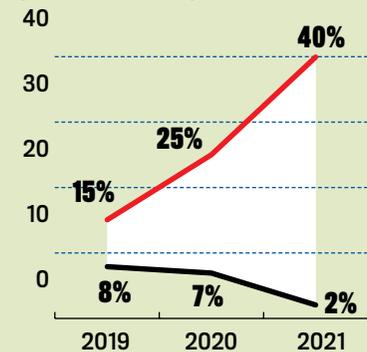
"Regulation is something we welcome in this industry. We don't want anyone in the ecosystem to do anything bad that will hurt users"

Ashish Singhal
Founder and CEO,
CoinSwitch Kuber

CRYPTO ON TURBO

The crypto industry in India has grown at four times the pace of the tech industry in the past two years

CRYPTO REVENUE GROWTH IN INDIA (2019-2021 YTD)



— Technology industry
— Crypto exchanges & crypto tech providers (Top 5 in India)

Illustration by NILANJAN DAS

a mobile app. Payments can either be in Bitcoin or their dollar equivalent. Investors in India, too, use digital wallets to store crypto, which is then transacted on crypto exchanges. Besides Bitcoin and Ethereum, other highly valued cryptos include Binance Coin, Solana, Tether, Cardano, XRP, Polkadot, Dogecoin and USD Coin (see *The 10 Most Valued Cryptos*). Non-fungible tokens (NFTs), a type of digital tag, have also become a rage among investors, mostly in the auction of art in the digital world (see *NFTs Get Star Power*).

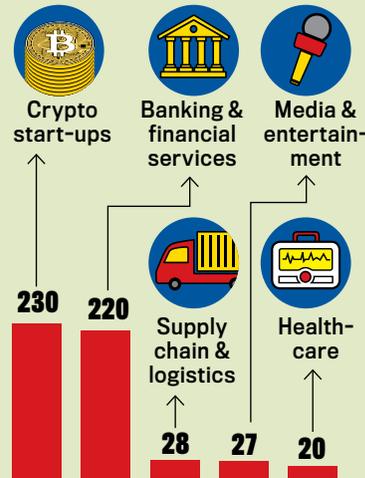
There are nearly 40 crypto exchanges, big and small, vying with each other to lure potential investors. A few exchanges have been on a promotions and advertisements spree, spending big in mainstream media and on digital platforms to "create awareness". They spent nearly Rs 50 crore in advertising during the recently held T20 cricket World Cup,



START-UP DARLING

Crypto start-ups are clearly the flavour of the day

START-UPS OPERATING IN INDIA



EMERGING POWER

The global crypto industry is expected to touch \$2.3 billion by 2026

GLOBAL CRYPTO INDUSTRY (in \$ billion)



Source: NASSCOM

according to media reports, which has invited unsolicited government scrutiny. Hundreds of vloggers on YouTube and social media sites, in English, Hindi and several regional languages, have taken to “educating” aspiring investors on crypto investment opportunities. A YouTube video of an interview with crypto exchange CoinDCX founder Sumit Gupta, titled ‘Meet India’s crypto millionaire’, has garnered over a million views since it was uploaded in March.

A recent report by industry body Nasscom estimates that the crypto market, which currently employs 50,000 people, has the potential to create over 800,000 jobs by 2030. Sixty per cent of Indian states are emerging as crypto tech adopters, with the industry set to reach \$241 million by 2030, the report adds. The crypto tech industry in India grew 39 per cent over the past five years to \$74.2 million in 2020-21, according to the report. Moreover, the industry has been growing at four times the pace of the tech sector in the past two years. There has been an eightfold growth in institutional funding for crypto start-ups in India in this period, with more than 230 crypto start-ups currently operating from India.

THE NAY SAYERS

Countries like the US, Canada and the UK allow trade in Bitcoin while China and Russia do not. China, in fact, imposed a blanket ban on all crypto transactions earlier this year, though some industry observers say it’s a calculated strategy to deflate crypto prices and then buy them at a lower value. The country also wants to eliminate any competition to its highly regulated and centralised Digital Yuan or e-CNY, primarily used in retail transactions.

India, on the other hand, has been treading a cautious path. In 2018, the RBI (Reserve Bank of India) had imposed a ban on trading in crypto, but a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court quashed it in March 2020, leading to a renewed surge in crypto trading. As governments across the world figure out how to exert control over something designed exclusively to resist it, India too is seeing the beginning of that conversation.

There are several key public policy concerns around the crypto phenomenon, according to former finance secretary Subhash Chandra Garg. Primary among them is figuring out the true nature of crypto,

PLUGGING GAPS IN THE CRYPTO TRADE

There are several concerns around cryptocurrencies, leading to demands for their stringent regulation. Some solutions are at hand

Concern: Investors could burn their fingers in crypto markets, since they are often highly volatile

Solution: Exchanges should build in safeguards to prevent gullible investors from losing money. Displaying crypto prices for the entire year helps in understanding volatility and making informed decisions

Concern: A surge in promotions and advertising is exaggerating returns on crypto investments

Solution: The government may ask the Advertising Standards Council of India to keep a close watch on such advertisements and flag them if needed

Concern: Indian crypto exchanges have reportedly fallen prey to hackers from time to time, who break into digital wallets and make away with cryptocurrencies

Solution: Investors need to educate themselves on crypto as an asset class like when they started investing in equity markets

Concern: Terrorists, money launderers and other anti-social elements misusing the crypto ecosystem

Solution: The government should design appropriate security systems and put in place adequate legal and institutional arrangements and safeguards for protecting national security

as blockchain and cryptography technology is an alternative digital world, is growing very fast and is increasingly expanding the digital services that can be delivered on crypto platforms. Digital currency certainly has numerous advantages over the industrial-era paper currency. However, as currency issuance is a sovereign function and responsibility, it cannot be left in the hands of individuals. And since crypto, like any other new technology, has fired people's imagination massively, there is a very real danger of it becoming an overblown bubble in the absence of sound knowledge of its true nature and potential. There is every likelihood that many investors burn their real money in crypto, which is why governments need to build in investor and consumer protection. At the same time, with much of the income and capital gains in the crypto world being earned "under the radar", the government needs to figure out the right taxation regime for crypto and related businesses. As of now, there is very little clarity on taxing the value added in

crypto businesses, income earned in these exchanges, decentralised finance and other businesses and capital gains made in investing in cryptos. Finally, there are very real possibilities of terrorists, money launderers and other anti-social elements misusing the crypto ecosystem. Building adequate safeguards for protecting national security, therefore, is equally important.

F

or the moment, though, the unrealistically high valuations of crypto have sparked fears of a bubble. Kunal Nandwani, co-founder and CEO of uTrade Solutions, a fintech company, warns against the hype around crypto, which is driven by its rise in value in the past year instead of the fundamentals behind it. "This was invented as a cryptocurrency, which means you could send money to someone parallel to the government authorised central regulated system. However, that isn't happening at all.

Illustration by NILANJAN DAS

NFTs GET STAR POWER

Celebrities and Bollywood personalities are getting on the NFT bandwagon, with many of them selling their digital collectibles via NFT auctions

Non-fungible tokens (NFTs) have become a rage among investors, mostly in the auctioning of art in the digital space. NFTs are digital assets that represent 'unique' objects like art, music, in-game items and videos that can be bought as collectibles using cryptocurrencies. In February, a digital rendition of the famed Nyan Cat meme was sold for 300 Ethereum (around Rs 10.4 crore). Nyan Cat is a YouTube video, originally uploaded in April 2011, which became a viral internet meme.

In October, fashion designer Manish Malhotra partnered with WazirX NFT Marketplace and, within seconds of the launch, sold out five of his NFT creations, including two sketches and GIFs. Kamal Haasan and Sunny Leone, too, have hopped on to the metaverse bandwagon, launching digital memorabilia via NFTs. "I am excited to explore the emerging intersection of the digital and physical world which is now becoming popularly known as the metaverse," said Haasan in a press statement.

In November, actor Amitabh Bachchan

auctioned his NFT collection, *Madhushala*—an anthology of poetry penned by his late father, poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan and recorded in the actor's own voice. The auction fetched a total of \$966,000 (around Rs 7.18 crore), according to Guardian Link, the R&D technology firm that powered Bachchan's NFT launch. "In this world of digitisation, NFTs have opened a new realm of opportunities to engage with my fans even more than before," says Bachchan.

More recently, singer Sonu Nigam collaborated with JetSynthesys, a digital entertainment and

technology company, to start an NFT series which includes his first ever English song along with the lyrics of his popular songs handwritten by him in his diary.

More and more actors are endorsing crypto platforms like Salman Khan (for short video app Chingari's crypto token \$GARI) Ayushmann Khurrana (CoinDCX) and Ranveer Singh (CoinSwitch Kuber). On November 10, Khan announced on Twitter that he will soon launch his own NFTs in partnership with Bollycoin.

—Suhani Singh

Rather, everyone is hoarding coins to sell them at a higher price later," he says. Nandwani also questions the 'decentralised' nature of the entire system that the crypto lobby lauds. "Most cryptos have a CEO in the middle and are working on the betterment of their own profits. So, there is ample centralisation in this so-called decentralisation."

SOLVING THE CRYPTO CONUNDRUM

At the heart of the government's resistance to accord crypto the status of legal tender is the reluctance to replace sovereign currencies as a means of exchange. However, there are enough takers for a government-backed digital currency. India already has a very large digital payment ecosystem. In value terms, more than 95 per cent of payments are made digitally, using modes such as UPI (Unified Payment Interface) and IMPS (Immediate Payment Service). However, in volume terms, most payments are still in physical form. This is where a more versatile and convenient digital

currency could prove useful—along the lines of what China has been experimenting with, using digital wallets for transactions (as opposed to digital payments made through one's bank accounts like we commonly use in India).

Other experts list the several advantages of crypto. Rahul Pagdipati, CEO of ZebPay, a crypto exchange, points out how Bitcoin has introduced decentralised, triple-entry accounting and a value transfer system that reduces rent-seeking, fights corruption and resists inflation.

There is also the immense potential in crypto's underlying technology and its application in various fields. According to consulting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers, cryptocurrency represents the beginning of a new phase of technology-driven markets that have the potential to disrupt conventional market strategies, longstanding business practices and established regulatory perspectives that will benefit consumers and the economy in general. Cryptocurrencies

carry ground-breaking potential to allow consumers access to an anywhere, anytime global payment system, in which participation is restricted only by access to technology rather than by factors such as having a credit history or a bank account, it adds. In financial services, it would mean cheaper bank-to-bank money transfer and, in retail, easier purchases and reduced costs from credit card transactions. This untapped potential has led many to invest in early-stage tech start-ups through digital token-based fundraising, which skirts many traditional regulatory hazards, and enable sending non-cash remittances such as clothes, toys or laptops, among other uses.

The crypto technology ecosystem is evolving very fast,” says Garg. “There is a promising new product or service every day. The potential is simply enormous.” While the combined GDP of centralised database economies worldwide exceeds \$5 trillion (Rs 370 lakh crore) at present, there are no estimates of the decentralised or crypto economy’s GDP at present. He says that the capital market valuation of crypto assets should not be confused with its economy/ GDP contribution. That said, the GDP contribution of decentralised digital and crypto technology is likely to rise fast. “I don’t believe the decentralised crypto system will replace the centralised database digital economy massively, but its use is likely to spread in most fields in which centralised database technology is currently used such as building and running businesses,” he adds. According to him, India should focus on creating an enabling and nurturing ecosystem for building products, services and assets using crypto database technology in all sectors, most particularly in information technology and finance.

Singhal believes the technology giants of tomorrow will come from using blockchain, and from India. “Today, India is an importer of technology,” he says. “Anyone starting a business will have to pay a huge price for such technologies and money will go out of the country. But now, we have the chance to build such technologies inhouse and become a net exporter.”

RBI governor Shaktikanta Das, however, is not willing to buy the argument. According to him, block-

chain technology is not something new, it has been around for 10 years. He has no doubt it will grow, and does not need crypto to do so.

Both the government and the crypto lobby, therefore, are veering around to letting crypto operate as an asset for trading. “As a sovereign nation,” says Singhal, “we cannot allow the control of currency to be taken out of the hands of the government.” But crypto, he adds, has become more than just a currency. “It has moved on from being a currency to an asset class.” The government, too, seems to be in agreement—with caveats about regulatory oversight.

“Clarity in regulations and on specific disclosures one has to make will help investors like me,” says Anand Mahesh, a digital marketing entrepreneur in Panvel, Navi Mumbai. The 43-year-old started investing in crypto seven months ago, and has put in around Rs 2.2 lakh so far through two crypto exchanges. “I do not hold on to my investments for long, and exit if I can get 25-30 per cent returns,” he says. His portfolio has a mix of long-term investments in “stable” crypto such as Bitcoin and Ethereum, and short-term ones like Solana, Dogecoin, Ripple, Litecoin and Cardano.

Sanjay Mehta, founder and partner, 100X VC, a venture capital firm that invests in early start-ups, believes the onus remains on investors to safeguard and follow all security protocols advised by exchanges or wallet companies. “Just as they did when they embarked on their journey to invest in equity markets, investors need to educate themselves on this asset class as well,” he says. “We read about online banking thefts and phishing attacks regularly in the media even after banks have implemented so much security.” The Karnataka police, for instance, recently detained a 26-year-old man for reportedly hack-

ing into Indian exchanges and stealing bitcoins by “exploiting a bug”. Going by reports in the media, all big crypto exchanges have seen at least 2-3 large instances of cyber attacks, with investors losing their crypto holdings after their wallets were hacked into.

Cryptocurrencies have, no doubt, generated much excitement. But, like with any other addiction, moderation is key. Regulation, by individuals, by promoters, and by the government, is the only way to keep crypto in currency. ■



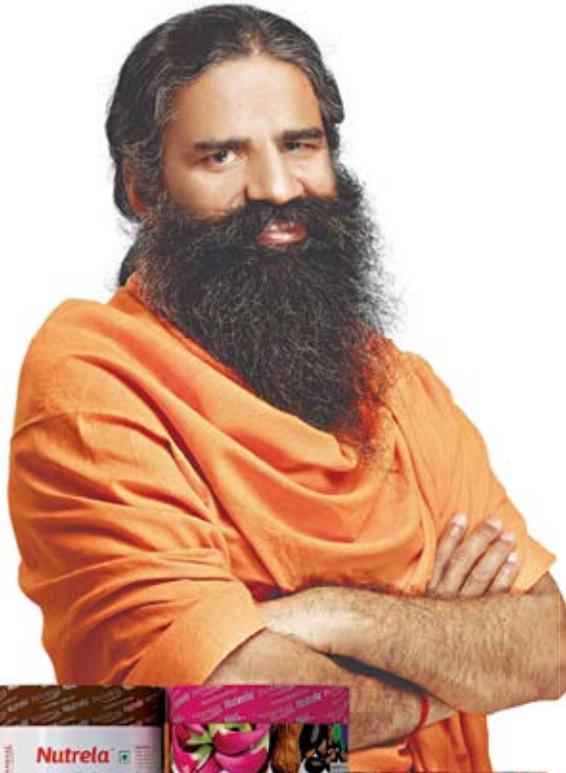
“Investors need to educate themselves on this asset class as they did when embarking on their journey to invest in equity markets”

Sanjay Mehta
Founder and partner, 100X VC

50% to 80% people are deficient of Vitamin D, B12, Calcium, Iron, Omega, Vitamin C, Zinc and Protein

Because of which they suffer from serious diseases like Low Immunity, Arthritis, Anemia, Weakness, Cancer, Autoimmune disease and diseases of Brain and Nervous system

Nutrela™'s Bio-Fermented, Organic, Natural and 100% Vegetarian Nutrition, helps you remain healthy and fight diseases



COLLAGENPRASH

Remove wrinkles of your skin and remain young for years with Collagenprash.

DAILY ACTIVE

Multivitamin, made from 41 Ingredients, 13 Vitamins, 8 Organic Herbs, 12 Minerals and 8 Essential Amino Acids.

VIT. & PROTEIN POWDERS

100% Vegetarian and Plant based Bio-fermented Nutrition for your complete health, 100% safe.

India's Most Certified Nutrition



Organic Omega

Natural B-Complex

Bio-fermented Multivitamin

Made from Moti Pishti

Made from Lichen

Natural Iron

Made from Corn Extract

Made from Rosehip

Natural Spirulina

Nutrela Sandesh



Online Store: Amazon, Orderme app, www.nutrelanutrition.com

Retail Store: Available at All Patanjali Chikitsalyas, Patanjali Stores and all prominent stores near you.

Ruchi Soya Industries Limited, Regd. Office: Ruchi House, Royal palms, Survey no. 169, Aarey Milk Colony, Near Mayur Nagar, Goregaon (E), Mumbai-400065

Website - www.nutrelanutrition.com | E-mail - wecare@nutrelanutrition.com | Phone - 18601800180

Join us on social media:



The Chief Justice of India lauded Galgotias University Law students

Top legal luminaries teach at Galgotias Law school



Justice J.R. Midha (Retd.), Former Judge of the Delhi High Court, Joins Galgotias University

Students of School of Law, Galgotias University were lauded by Shri Justice N.V. Ramana, Chief Justice of India, at an event in Greater Noida organised by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) for securing 2nd position in the moot competition

Among others present at the event were Shri Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister of Law & Justice and Shri Justice Uday Umesh Lalit, Judge Supreme Court of India & Executive Chairman, NALSA who were the Guests of Honour for the function. Shri Justice Rajesh Bindal, Chief Justice, Allahabad High Court and Shri Justice M.N.Bhandari, Executive Chairman, UP State Legal Services Authority and other dignitaries including Judges of the Supreme Court of India and Judicial Officers graced the occasion.

Top legal luminaries teach at Galgotias Law school

Galgotias University students felt privileged when Justice J.R. Midha (Retd.), Former Judge of Delhi High Court joined Galgotias University as an advisor/pro-

fessor emeritus, amongst the first in the history of Indian higher education system where a retired High Court Judge has joined any Indian University immediately after his retirement.

Justice J.R. Midha is currently Teaching Law at Galgotias University to reform the legal education with stress on Fundamentals of Law, Communication Skills, and Rational Thinking. He has had a great passion for teaching law and has the vision to transform the legal education in our country, so that a law graduate is an accomplished lawyer upon completing his law degree. His vision to revolutionise the legal education system in our country with extensive focus on practical training, will greatly benefit the lawyers in the making.

Justice Midha served as a Judge



SUNEEL GALGOTIA
Chancellor
Galgotias University

of Delhi High Court for more than 13 years. As a Judge he dealt with all kinds of jurisdictions and pronounced many landmark judgments & authored more than 1300 reported judgments in his judicial career.

He was appointed as an arbitrator by the Delhi High Court in many prominent cases. Other arbitral panels include the Delhi International Arbitration Centre (DIAC), the Indian Council of Arbitration (ICA), and the



DHRUV GALGOTIA
CEO
Galgotias University

Indian Dispute Resolution Centre (IDRC).

The notable judgments/ orders delivered as Judge of the Delhi High Court by Justice J. R. Midha are :

- Amazon v. Future Group, 2021 SCC Online Del 1279, it was held that the award of an Emergency Arbitrator is enforceable under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. This view has been affirmed by the Supreme Court.
- In Airports Authority of India v. Hotel Leela Venture Ltd., 231 (2016) DLT 457- Concluded commercial contracts cannot be challenged on the ground of being onerous. Award against Morality and Justice, and based on false claims was

set aside.

- Juhi Chawla v. Science & Engineering Research Board, (2021)280 DLT 1- The Delhi High Court declined to grant of leave to institute the suit against 5G Technology under Section 91(1)(b) of the Code of Civil Procedure or to sue in representative interest under Order I Rule 8 of the Code of Civil Procedure and

dismissed the defective suit with cost of Rs. 20 Lakhs.

- The other landmark judgements by Justice Midha include, Arbitration, Motor Accident Claims, Execution Cases, Maintenance in Matrimonial Cases, Compensation to Victims of Crime, Prosecution for False Claims, Proclaimed Offenders, etc.

Galgotias University Law students secured 2nd Position in the Moot Court Competition

Galgotias School of Law students were presented with an award by Hon'ble Shri Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister for Law and Justice, Govt of India and Hon'ble Mr. Justice Uday Umesh Lalit, Judge, Supreme Court of India during the celebration of Legal Services Day at Greater Noida.

The School Of Law, Galgotias University secured 2nd Position in the Moot Court Competition organized by District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) in Greater Noida. The Moot Court Competition was organised on 8th and 9th November, 2021 at Greater Noida wherein all law colleges and universities in Greater Noida extensively participated.

Three students of Galgotias School of Law, namely, Mr. Jyotirmay Chatterjee (BA LLB, 4th Year), Ms. Shivi Dwivedi, (BA LLB, 4th Year) & Mr. Devansh Kaushik (BBA LLB, 2nd Year) participated as a team and successfully secured the First Runner

Up position. These students received the award by Hon'ble Shri Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister for Law and Justice, Govt of India during observance of National Legal Services Day by NALSA on 9th November 2021 at Greater Noida. The event was also graced by Hon'ble Mr. Justice N V Ramana, Chief Justice of India and Patron -in -Chief NALSA; Hon'ble Mr. Justice Uday Umesh Lalit, Judge , Supreme Court of India and Executive Chairman, NALSA, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Rajesh Bindal, Chief Justice Allahabad High Court and Patron -in -Chief , UP SLSA; Hon'ble Mr. Justice M. N. Bhandari, Judge, Allahabad High Court and Executive Chairman, UP SLSA and other senior officials of district administration.

Mr. Jyotirmay Chatterjee (BA LLB 4th Year) also secured the Best Mooter Award and was given the trophy by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Uday Umesh Lalit, Judge, Supreme Court of India and Executive Chairman, NALSA.

TOP LAW PLACEMENTS AT GALGOTIAS

Galgotias University Law students have been getting placed at some of the top legal law firms and this is due to the focus on practical training by some of the best teachers in the field of legal education. The Hon'ble Chief Justice of India Justice Dipak Misra, top lawyers of India and several high court and Supreme Court judges and lawyers have taken lectures and disseminated thought provoking lectures to the students which is further adding to the knowledge of students which neither a book nor the internet can provide which has given an edge to the Galgotias Law students.





STRIKING AT THE TOP



NOVEMBER HAS BEEN A MONTH OF DEBILITATING LOSSES FOR THE MAOIST INSURGENCY IN INDIA. THEIR LEADERSHIP IS IN TATTERS AFTER THE ELIMINATION OF FOUR TOP LEADERS

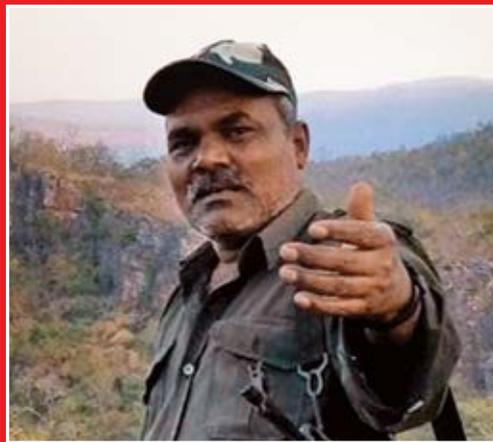
By Amarnath K. Menon, Kiran D. Tare and Amitabh Srivastava

A MAJOR SETBACK

Six CPI (Maoist) central committee members are now out of the reckoning

MILIND TELTUMBDE
A.K.A. DEEPAK, 61

Killed in encounter with the Maharashtra Police, November 12, 2021



PRASHANT BOSE A.K.A. KISHANDA, 82

Arrested in Jharkhand, November 11, 2021



SHEELA MARANDI A.K.A. SHOBHA, 64

Arrested in Jharkhand, November 11, 2021



B.G. KRISHNAMURTHY A.K.A. VIJAY, 51

Arrested in Kerala, November 9, 2021



AKKIRAJU HARGOPAL A.K.A. RAMAKRISHNA A.K.A. RK, 63

Died of renal failure in Chhattisgarh, October 14, 2021



HARIBHUSHAN A.K.A. YAPA NARAYAA A.K.A. LAKMU DADA, 52

Died of Covid-19 in Chhattisgarh, June 21, 2021

O

On November 13, when the Gadchiroli Police received intelligence that outlawed Maoists had gathered in the Gyarapatti jungles near the Maharashtra-Chhattisgarh border, little did they imagine they had a prize catch in store. For nearly 10 hours, men of the elite C-60 force locked the militants in a gun battle, killing 26 of them. Among the dead was Milind Teltumbde, 61, a member of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) central committee (CC), the core group that coordinates the activities of the splinter groups of the outlaws and their supporters in different pockets across India. He's also the man who reportedly steered the Maoists in the Maharashtra-Madhya Pradesh-Chhattisgarh (MMC) region. Security officials believe that with the killing of Teltumbde, the Maoists are considerably weakened in the region.

A day earlier, before dawn on November 12, acting on a tip-off, a joint team of the Jharkhand Police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) stopped a white Mahindra Scorpio at the Gid-dibeda toll gate in Saraikela-Kharsawan district, Jharkhand; the occupants were bundled into another car and taken to Ranchi. After an hour's sustained interrogation, veteran Prashant Bose, 82, identified himself as Kishanda, one of India's most wanted Maoists. He was returning from his hide-outs in the Parasnath hills in Giridih and was on his way to the Saranda sal forest in West Birbhum, where he has had a base for several years. Bose, a member of the CC and the CPI (Maoist) politburo, was travelling with his wife Sheela Marandi, 64, also the first woman member of the CC, and four other Maoists. His arrest (there was a reward of Rs 1 crore on his head) is seen as the biggest success of the security forces since the encounter death of politburo member Mallojula Koteswara Rao a.k.a. Kishanji in Burishole forest in West Bengal's West Midnapore district on November 24, 2011.

Indeed, November has been a bad month for the banned CPI (Maoists). For, on November 9, the anti-terrorism squad (ATS) of the Kerala Police picked up lawyer-turned-Maoist B.G.

ORGANISATION

COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MAOIST)

Formed in 2004 with the merger of the People's War Group and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC)

Strength: Approximately 8,000-10,000 armed cadre

GENERAL SECRETARY NAMBALA KESAVA RAO

A.K.A. **BASAVARAJ**
Appointed in 2017



CENTRAL COMMITTEE

28 members

With Deepak Teltumbde killed, three others arrested in November and two passing away earlier in the year, its strength is depleted

POLITICAL

POLITBURO

Topmost decision-making body

- **NAMBALA KESAVA RAO**
A.K.A. **BASAVARAJ, 65**
- **PRASHANT BOSE** A.K.A.
KISHANDA, 82
- **MUPPALLA LAKSHMANA RAO** A.K.A. **GANAPATHY, 73**
- **KATAKAM SUDARSHAN**
A.K.A. **DOOLA DADA** A.K.A.
ANAND MOHAN, 63
- **MALLOJULA VENUGOPAL**
A.K.A. **LAKSHANNA, 61**
- **MISHIR BESRA** A.K.A.
SUNIRMAL, 83

REGIONAL BUREAU

STATE COMMITTEE

DISTRICT COMMITTEE

MILITARY

CENTRAL MILITARY COMMISSION

Main armed body of the CPI (Maoist)

CHIEF: NAMBALA KESAVA RAO A.K.A.
BASAVARAJ

STATE/SPECIAL ZONAL COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDS

DISTRICT COMMAND



Krishnamurthy a.k.a. Vijay, 51, also a CC member, and another Maoist, both unarmed, when they were travelling by road from Karnataka to Kerala. They handed him over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to be tried in a slew of cases. The capture or killing of four CC members in just five days is an achievement without precedent for the security forces. Two other CC members have also died in the past few months—Haribhushan a.k.a. Yapa

THE MAOIST INFLUENCE IS WANING, THE GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD OF LWE VIOLENCE WAS DOWN TO 53 DISTRICTS IN 2020, FROM 76 IN 2013

in the embattled regions of four key states—Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Odisha. Their numbers are also shrinking, with recruitment declining sharply for want of funds to keep the cadre motivated. Attempts have been made from Chhattisgarh (where much of the leadership is holed up) to foray back into Telangana, the cradle of the Maoist insurgency, and Andhra Pradesh to enlist new cadre. Leaders from the two Telugu states still dominate the CC with 10 members but, with the spate of recent public surrenders, there are not many takers here. The new recruits are now mostly from Chhattisgarh itself.

The states have mostly banked on individual strategies to take on the Maoists. The Maharashtra Police have arrested or killed 27 Maoist leaders and sympathisers since the previous encounter in April 2018 when 42 Maoists were killed in two separate firefights. The number of foot soldiers who have been arrested or who have surrendered in the past five years has crossed 300, say police sources, adding that these are the best results since Maoism started gaining ground in Maharashtra in the 1980s. Modernising the police force and maintaining a dialogue with locals have helped the police gather better and accurate intelligence on the Maoists' movements. Former Maharashtra director general of police Pravin Dixit attributes the success to development activities in Maoist-controlled areas as well as the effort to win the hearts of the locals. "The C-60 force is made up completely of local youths. They have played a major role in this achievement."

In Jharkhand, DGP Niraj Sinha considers nabbing Bose as one of his biggest achievements. Since taking over as Jharkhand's top cop in February 2021, he has focused on human intelligence while working with some of the surrendered Maoists. Bose's arrest has offered the police new insights into the Maoists' world in India. They hit a goldmine when they recovered two TB data on him. "Apart from Rs 1.51 lakh cash and four mobile phones, we

ANI



ENCOUNTERED Maharashtra Police display the items recovered after the firefight in the Gyrapatti jungles on Nov. 12, in which 26 Maoists were killed

Narayana or Lakmu Dada, 52, from Telangana (June 21) and Akkiraju Harigopal a.k.a. Ramakrishna or RK, 63, from Andhra Pradesh (October 14)—for want of treatment after falling ill in the backwoods of Chhattisgarh.

LWE (Left-wing extremism) analysts of the security forces say the top leadership of the Maoists is in tatters. Three of them, including Krishnamurthy, were admitted to the CC only this year after the last recast with 25 members in 2019. A decade back, the CC used to have 32 members. Similarly, the CPI (Maoists) politburo has shrunk in strength from 12 members to six.

Significantly, in recent years, security forces have gained the upper hand

everywhere except in Chhattisgarh, where the militants have managed to outwit the forces on a number of occasions. The geographical spread of LWE violence was down to 53 districts in 2020 from 76 in 2013. Incidents of LWE fell 70 per cent to 665 in 2020 from an all-time high of 2,258 in 2009. Similarly, deaths of civilians and security forces fell 82 per cent to 183 in 2020 from a high of 1,005 in 2010.

Clearly, the concerted operations of the security forces, superior intelligence inputs and the synergy among states compared to earlier decades are paying dividends. CC members apart, the Maoists have also steadily been losing ground as well as cadre, especially



EXPLORE
RAJASTHAN

www.tourism.rajasthan.gov.in, www.rtdc.tourism.rajasthan.gov.in

 [rajasthantourism](#)  [my_rajasthan](#)  [rajasthan_tourism](#)  [Rajasthan Tourism Channel](#)

Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan



RAJASTHAN
The Incredible State of India !



recovered hard drives with 2 TB data in it. This data is like Don's diary, from the Amitabh Bachchan movie," says a top Jharkhand police officer.

The data, reportedly, has minute details about the Maoists. From debriefings of Maoist operations to dispassionate analysis of Maoist acts of violence—how they succeeded and why they failed—along with specifics of firearms the Maoists have and the name of suppliers who provide them ammunition. It also includes names and photos of Maoist cadre, apart from those who have been identified as martyrs and whose families are to be taken care of by the rebels. The data reportedly carries details from all states and is being shared with state police chiefs of all LWE-hit states, apart from central agencies. Not surprisingly, to underplay their sensational loss, a day after Bose's arrest, the ultra-Left group killed four people in Bihar's Gaya district, calling them police informers.

Meanwhile, the Odisha government has taken a different tack with an attractive surrender and rehabilitation policy. Recently, over 20 young Maoists gave themselves up before the Odisha Police. Besides the compensation package for surrendered Maoists, the state also recruits local youth for its Special Operations Group (SOG), who are trained to combat the Maoists. While improving their capacities, the state is also looking to wean away young people from joining the Maoist ranks. Officials say the SOG has not only stopped local boys from picking up arms against the state but has also helped redress a major grievance, unemployment. Maoists, once active in 15 of the 30 districts in the state, are now scattered and limited to five. The Odisha government's multi-pronged strategy—encounter killings in Kandhamal, Kalahandi and Koraput areas, disabusing vulnerable sections of the charms of Maoist ideology and, at the same time, rolling out development programmes, has stopped the Maoists from regrouping in a big way. Development, social welfare and livelihood activities have helped the state find favour



MANDAR DEODHAR

BATTLE READY File pix of C-60 commandos on a patrol in the forests of Gadchiroli

among the locals while also alienating the Maoists. In fact, in January 2020, tribals of Janturai village in Malkangiri killed a Maoist, Ganga Madi, when he and his group tried to oppose the construction of a road in the area. "We have initiated major development work, irrigation, drinking water, health camps, and a large number of security camps, as confidence-building measures," says chief secretary Suresh Mahapatra.

Chhattisgarh is the only state where the Maoists seem to be holding their ground. There has been a lull in security operations here, with the last big case being the surrender of Pahad Singh, a

Dandakaranya special zonal committee member, in August 2018.

Meanwhile, the rebels are also changing with the times, especially in the matter of 'fund raising'. Earlier, they targeted contractors of infrastructure works such as roads and bridges but have now shifted focus to the tendu patta trade in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. Police sources say that one of the factors in creating the MCC (Maoist Communist Centre) was to also look for alternative funding sources as there was major infrastructure work going on in the tri-junction area of the three states. In Chhattisgarh, spending on infrastructure works has gone down in the past few years, leading to the focus on the tendu leaf trade.

And despite the recent reverses, they still have sway in vast swathes of land in the four affected states. Their ideology, too, will have takers as the backwoods remains a fertile petri dish for discontent and a deep sense of neglect. The successes of the security forces will have to be backed by a region-specific roadmap for development or the state will soon find matters getting out of hand again. ■

— with Rahul Noronha and Romita Datta

THE 2 TB DATA RECOVERED FROM KISHANDA HAS MINUTE DETAILS ABOUT THE MAOISTS. "IT'S LIKE DON'S DIARY FROM THE BIG B MOVIE," SAYS A JHARKHAND COP

Incredible India

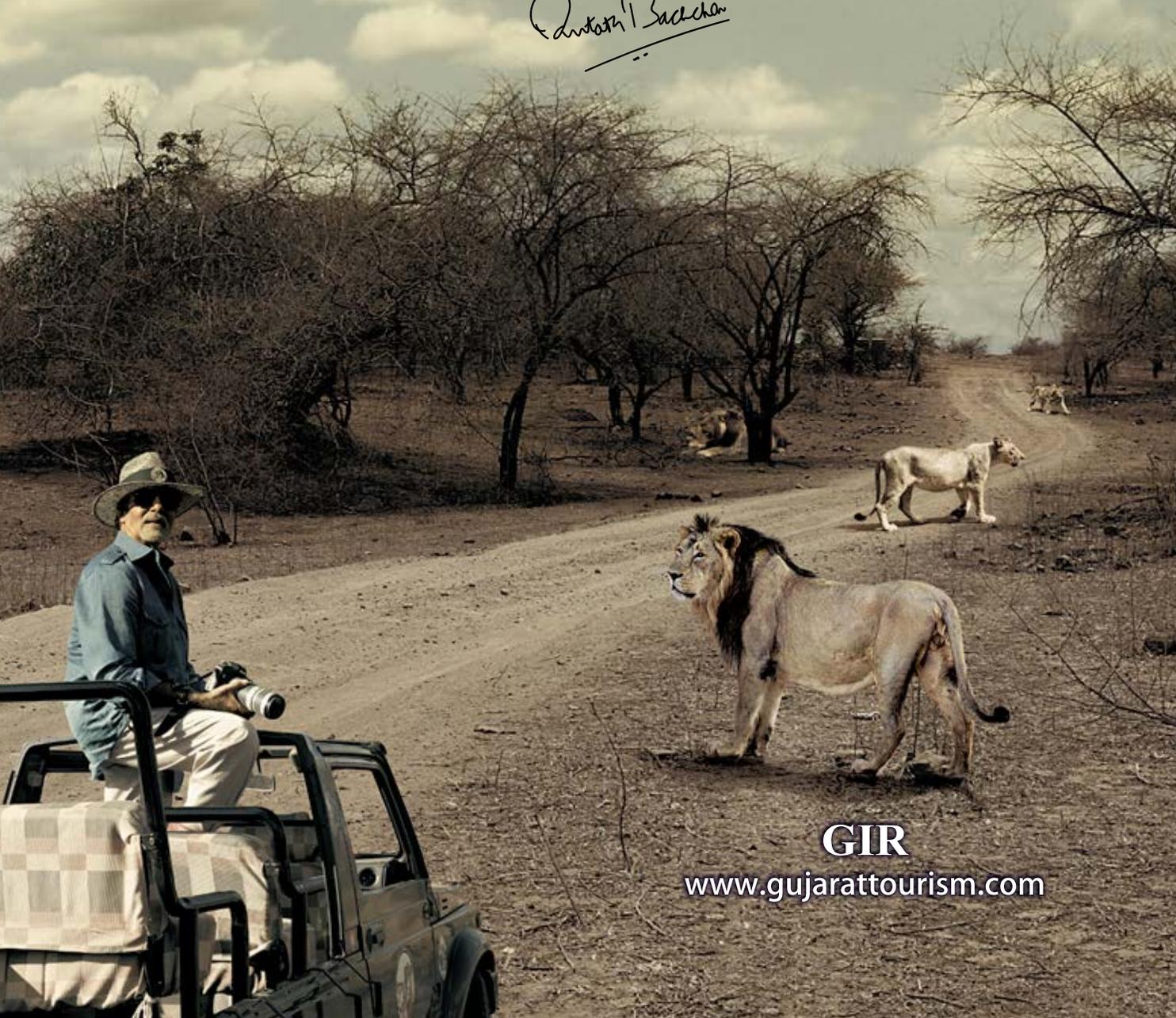


Khushboo Gujarat Ki

Mirage like, almost mingled in the dry foliage, the gentle, controlled, sauntering... Lion!
Not just one, many. The entire lot begins moving towards us, getting closer and closer... and
is now a few feet away from my hand!!

And why do I still wish that they had come closer? Maybe they will, in your tour.

Pankaj Baccan



GIR

www.gujarattourism.com

A GRIM WARNING

THE BRAZEN STRIKE ON AN ARMY CONVOY NEAR THE MYANMAR BORDER SHATTERS THE RELATIVE PEACE OF THE RECENT PAST IN THE STATE AND RAISES FRESH CONCERNS ABOUT ONE OF INDIA'S LONGEST-RUNNING INSURGENCIES

By SANDEEP UNNITHAN AND KAUSHIK DEKA

O

On the morning of November 13, Colonel Viplav Tripathi, 41; his wife Anuja, 33; and their eight-year-old son Abeer set off in a black Mahindra Bolero jeep for Manipur's Churachandpur district. The family was driving back after a night's stay at Behiang T village, located a few kilometres from the 1,643-km-long Myanmar border that is guarded by the Assam Rifles. Colonel Tripathi, the commanding officer of the 46th battalion of Assam Rifles, and his family were accompanied by around a dozen armed troopers in three Maruti Gypsies. They were returning from a community outreach programme at the village—officers usually make these visits with their families.

The small convoy had just left the village when multiple explosions ripped through the narrow road. Militants lying in wait in the dense jungle fired at the vehicles with automatic guns and rifle grenades. When the firing stopped a few minutes later, Colonel Tripathi and his family lay dead. Four other soldiers were killed and six seriously wounded.

In a statement released later that day, two militant outfits—the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Manipur Naga People's Front (MNPF)—claimed responsibility for the attack. Manipur, where at least 40 banned underground outfits operate, has witnessed one of India's longest running insurgencies. Yet, for the past six years, militant groups have not carried out such daring attacks. In the last big strike, on June 4, 2015, separatists of the United Liberation Front of Western South-east Asia (ULFWSA) had ambushed



FATAL JOURNEY
The jeep Colonel Tripathi and his family were travelling in

INSURGENCY IN MANIPUR HAS SEEN A SPIKE IN 2021, WITH 162 TERROR INCIDENTS AND 24 DEATHS REPORTED SO FAR



an Indian Army convoy in Chandel district, killing 18 soldiers.

The November 13 killings in the state's Singhat subdivision have shattered the relative peace of the past few years and come amidst a period of flux in the region. On February 1, the Myanmar military staged a coup and detained democratically elected leaders. Thousands of people fleeing the military junta's crackdown have streamed into India's border states,

UNHOLY ALLIANCE

Manipur's separatist armies are divided on ethnic lines—Naga, Kuki and Meitei. Groups representing two of these tribes claimed responsibility for the November 13 attack

JUNE 4, 2015
ULFWSA kills 18 soldiers of an Indian Army convoy in Chandel district. Army launches retaliatory strike inside Myanmar, targeting NSCN(K) camps.

NOV. 13, 2021
Ambush in Churachandpur district kills Assam Rifles colonel, his wife and son, and four other troopers

INSURGENT GROUPS BEHIND NOV. 13 KILLINGS

<p>Manipur Naga People's Front (MNPF) Formed in 2013 after the merger of two Naga underground outfits in Manipur—the Manipur Naga Revolutionary Front (MNRF) and United Naga</p>	<p>People's Council (UNPC). Fighting for Nagas' 'sovereignty and right to self-determination'.</p> <p>People's Liberation Army (PLA) The insurgent group comprising ethnic Meiteis was</p>	<p>established under the leadership of N. Bisheswar Singh on September 25, 1978. Fighting for an independent Manipur. Inspired by Maoist China, has shunned peace talks with the Indian government.</p>
---	---	---

including Manipur. The chaos has allowed groups like the PLA and MNPF, which have camps in Myanmar, to operate freely.

A LONG, POROUS BORDER

Unlike the Pakistan and Bangladesh frontiers, which are largely fenced with barbed wire and have floodlit stretches, India's long border with Myanmar is marked only by boundary pillars, there's no fencing. "Any place that is a one-day turnaround from the Myanmar border is vulnerable. They (militants) can come, launch an ambush and return," says Lt General S.L. Narasimhan (retired), a member of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB).

Following the ambush in 2015, Indian Army special units had swiftly carried out a strike inside

Myanmar on camps of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang), or NSCN(K). India's border tensions with China in eastern Ladakh since May 2020 have forced the army to pull out special forces from the region and redeploy them hundreds of kilometres to the north, along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.

Top army officials are not ruling out external assistance to the insurgents in the Churachandpur attack. China has been known to support insurgent groups in the Northeast, both overtly and covertly. In a candid affidavit filed before the UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act) Tribunal in Guwahati last October, the Union home ministry stated that Paresw Baruah's United Liberation Front of Assam (Independent), or



“ THIS IS A SIGN OF DESPERATION AND FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL BY MILITANT GROUPS. AS MILITANCY HAS NO TAKERS IN THE STATE, THESE GROUPS ARE COMING TOGETHER TO ASSERT THEIR EXISTENCE ”

N. BIREN SINGH
Chief Minister, Manipur

ULFA(I), was based in Ruili in China’s Yunnan province. Security agencies probing the November 13 attack have only one vital clue so far—a satellite phone that was active in nearby villages around the time Colonel Tripathi and his men were ambushed.

ARE INSURGENTS REGROUPING?

The armed forces have been deployed in Manipur for decades to combat insurgency. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, is in force in the entire state, except the Imphal Municipal Council area. The recent attack has taken many by surprise as it’s the first time family members of armed forces personnel were targeted. The two militant outfits claiming responsibility later said they were unaware of the presence of family members in the convoy. However, the militants who laid the ambush clearly knew about Colonel Tripathi’s impending visit and had time to fix the location of their attack, bring in armed cadre and plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices).

The spot chosen by the insurgents is also peculiar. The PLA is dominated by ethnic Meiteis from the Imphal Valley and lacks a strong presence in Churachandpur. Militant groups of the Kuki, Paite and Zomi tribes are more active in the district. Since the Indian Army’s Operation All Clear in 2003, Churachandpur district, located 65 km south of Imphal and bordering Myanmar, has remained largely free of insurgent attacks. Most of the tribal militant groups in the region are in various stages of peace talks with the Union government and have suspended operations. Experts are wondering if the attack signals the emergence of a new coalition between insurgent outfits—in this case the PLA and MNPF.

There is, however, no clarity if the Kuki outfits active in Churachandpur gave tacit support to the strike or were caught by surprise. “This is a sign of desperation and fight for survival by militant groups. Militancy has no takers

in the state, so these groups are coming together to assert their existence,” said Manipur chief minister N. Biren Singh.

The PLA, like the other Meitei groups from the Imphal Valley, has neither signed a ceasefire agreement with the Indian government nor expressed any intention to do so. Yet, the group, which has been fighting for the secession of Manipur, has been lying low for the past five or six years.

THE MYANMAR FACTOR

The PLA, which has been primarily operating from Myanmar, is run by three leaders—president and ‘Lt General’ Irengban Chaoren alias Bhorot, vice-president and ‘army chief’ M.M. Ngouba alias Prabin Sharma, and general secretary Sanasam Gunen alias Phalguni, all believed to be in their 70s. The leaders live in Mandalay and run transport and areca nut businesses.

The PLA has a few hundred cadre in camps in the Tamu region of Myanmar, bordering Manipur. In the past, the Indian and Myanmar forces have carried out multiple joint operations against insurgents living in cross-border sanctuaries. “The ambush by a

splinter guerrilla group on an Assam Rifles convoy in a state bordering Myanmar is a reminder that given the porous frontiers, counterinsurgency cooperation with Myanmar is crucial for India, and New Delhi cannot join US president Joe Biden’s efforts to isolate the Myanmar junta,” says strategic affairs analyst Brahma Chellaney.

The MNPF was formed in 2013 following the merger of two Naga underground outfits in Manipur—the Manipur Naga Revolutionary Front (MNR) and the United Naga People’s Council (UNPC). The new group was reportedly formed because of ‘the shaky condition of Naga revolutionaries’ with the aim of ‘restoration of the sovereignty of Naga people and their right to self-determination’.

With many Manipur insurgent groups signing separate suspension-of-operation agreements with the government, terror incidents in the state had significantly dropped in the past six years, from over 700 in 2014 to 113 in 2020. Insurgency in the state has shown a spike since then, with 162 terror incidents so far this year, claiming 24 lives. Fatalities in the past two years did not touch double digits.

With Manipur going to polls next March, the issue is likely to be raked up by the opposition parties. The ruling BJP says the November 13 attack indicates the desperation of terror outfits. Party leaders claim the killings are also aimed at tarnishing the image of the BJP-led government since it has been tough on insurgents. “The aim could be to project that things aren’t as rosy as portrayed,” says a senior BJP leader, requesting anonymity. “The opposition parties will try to take advantage of this by claiming that the BJP has failed to maintain peace in the state.”

The state government, though, is not unduly worried. Chief Minister Singh claims that the militants had sneaked in from Myanmar. “We will be more vigilant along the border and not allow a repeat of such a dastardly act,” he says. But with armed insurgents sitting across the porous border, it’s anybody’s guess if that will be the case. ■

Incredible India



Home Stays are Available
in Uttarakhand

For blissful moments and timeless memories

Visit
Uttarakhand

Colourful hues, breathtaking views



Come discover the beauty of Uttarakhand. Visit destinations such as Almora, Auli, Nainital, Haridwar, Ukhimath, Joshimath, Kharsali, Mukhba, Jim Corbett National Park, Lansdowne, Chopta, Binsar, Kausani, Mukteshwar, Khirsu and many more.



Uttarakhand
Simply Heaven!

www.uttarakhandtourism.gov.in

Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board, Pt. Deendayal Upadhaya Paryatan Bhawan,
Near ONGC Helipad, Garhi Cantt. Dehradun-248001 (India), Ph. # +91 135 2559898/2559987, www.gmvnl.com, www.kmvn.gov.in

“RICH COUNTRIES FAILED TO KEEP THEIR PROMISE ON FINANCE”

The recently concluded Climate Change summit at Glasgow drew flak from activists for the lack of adequate action to save the world but also won praise for some of the big decisions that were taken. India played an important and, at times, controversial role in this. Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change **Bhupender Yadav** was India's chief negotiator and, in an exclusive interview to **Raj Chengappa**, Group Editorial Director, he spoke about the gains and the big misses of the summit. Excerpts:



CHANDRADEEP KUMAR

Q.

What was India's approach at the Glasgow Climate Change Conference?

Was it able to

achieve what it set out to do?

Our approach was that there is no planet B, this is the only one and it is our duty to save it. But our duty is also bound by our circumstances. That is why the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) that India had always pushed for was accepted in the 2015 Paris Agreement. That is why we said the text of the agreement should have national circumstances and poverty eradication. In Glasgow, we made it clear to all that the environment cannot remain an issue of just dialogues, it should be converted into action with vision.

We are well on our way to achieving whatever goals we committed to in our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and showed that we are willing to do much more. At the inaugural session in Glasgow, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared the five new targets we set ourselves as 'Panchamrit'. India fixed a target of producing 500 Gigawatts (GW) renewable energy by 2030. It committed to meeting 50 per cent of its energy requirements using renewable energy sources by then. It gave assurances on reducing with cumulative effect its greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions by 1 billion tonnes by 2030. It said it would decrease carbon intensity of the economy to less than 45 per cent by the end of the decade. And that India would reach net-zero emission levels by 2070. The prime minister coined a new acronym

for 'Life', which he said stood for 'Lifestyle for Environment' and said it is now a necessity that must be adopted the world over. India has also taken a major initiative to promote futuristic energy, including the Green Grid Initiative—One Sun, One World, One Grid—launched in Glasgow. We have envisioned and adopted the competencies required to see the world through in the future. These were the achievements from India's vantage point.

Q. What were the big disappointments of the Glasgow summit?

If you must ensure climate justice, you have to provide finance and technology to developing countries. The industrialised nations are responsible for most of the carbon emissions currently present in the atmosphere. Taking their historic responsibility, under the Paris



“
**WHEN WE ACHIEVE
THE TARGET OF
50% ENERGY
FROM RENEWABLE
SOURCES THAT
WE COMMITTED
TO, NATURALLY
INDIA WILL REDUCE
ITS DEPENDENCE
ON FOSSIL FUEL
SOURCES LIKE COAL**
”

agreement, they had to give \$100 billion annually to help developing countries tackle climate change from 2020 onwards. But, so far, they have failed to keep their promise.

Q. Was India able to pressure the rich countries to keep their commitments on finance?

The prime minister raised the concerns of developing countries on this issue in his inaugural speech by stating that what was needed was \$1 trillion annually and not \$1 billion. For the first time, it made the presidency of the Committee of Parties (COP) note with 'deep regret' that the assurance on climate finance to the developing countries had not been fulfilled and to acknowledge that, ultimately, the developed countries would have to honour their commitment. Secondly, the issue

of the definition of 'Climate Finance', was referred to the standing committee for a decision. Thirdly, the COP appointed an ad hoc committee on New Collective Quantified Goals to define the goals for the post-2025 period. Fourthly, developed countries wanted to end the long-term finance they provided by 2027, but under the pressure of developing countries, they had to accept its continuance. Fifthly, the necessity of capacity building in small countries and providing finance to them was also accepted. The Global Environment Facility was also brought under the Enhanced Transparency Framework.

Q. What about the controversy over India watering down the Glasgow pact by insisting on changing the nomenclature from phasing out to phasing down coal being used for energy?

The core of the Paris Agreement lies in the principle of CBDR. It was decided that every country would decide its targets on the basis of its national circumstances. And, even there, it was decided that the use of all fossil fuels should be progressively discontinued, but it did not target a single energy source. When we achieve the target of 50 per cent energy from renewable sources that we committed to in Glasgow, naturally India shall reduce its dependence on fossil fuel sources like coal. This is the situation for most developing countries. We pleaded that such commitments like the use of coal should be determined on the basis of national circumstances, and that's why we said phased down.

Q. There was criticism that India was seen as obstructionist and China, the biggest consumer of coal, used us to get its way without taking the flak?

No. If you see the language of the proposal when the meeting adjourned, you'll find that both India and China used the phrase "with the consensus of the presidency". It shows that a consensus was arrived at. Everyone present was a part of it. Since the change had to be effected in the narration of the COP presidency, it had to be on the basis of consensus.

INTERVIEW | BHUPENDER YADAV

Not just India and China, a number of developing countries raised the issue.

Q. But India could have got China to propose the change in terminology?

They proposed it first and then we did. South Africa, Iran, Cuba, Nigeria and many other developing countries raised this issue.

Q. Why is the wording phase down of coal in the Glasgow pact so important for India?

You cannot stop using coal overnight. It will be done gradually as we reach 2070. Even today, the US and the UK have not stopped coal production though they are among the most developed countries. If they are to achieve their net zero target by 2050, then they should achieve their goal of doing away with coal by 2030. But developed countries are still unable to achieve this goal. Let's not forget, we have to provide electricity to our villages. We are not dependent only on one source but will push increasingly for renewables. India has already done it in some sectors. The use of coal in railways has long been done away with and the railways has almost completed electrification. We have achieved a goal by distributing 360 million LED bulbs. India has set its own targets and are achieving them.

Q. What about commitments by developed countries for clean technology transfer to developing countries?

The issues of climate finance, creation of a committee for adaptation, long-term finance, new collective quantified goals have been acknowledged, but I feel that it has to be accepted urgently because only then can the subsidiary body for science and technology under the COP work more effectively.

Q. One of the key issues at Glasgow was finalising the rulebook for carbon trading. Was that done effectively?

India has always been pleading that the provisions for Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) and Clean




TO ENSURE CLIMATE JUSTICE, A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD HAS TO BE CREATED. DEVELOPED COUNTRIES MUST FULFIL THEIR RESPONSIBILITY ON CLIMATE FINANCE, TECH TRANSFER



Development Mechanism (CDM) projects implemented under the 1997 Kyoto COP should remain in place, otherwise the organisation's credibility would be in peril. Continuation of those provisions was accepted, and, in a way, it has benefitted many Indian companies. I believe it is a great achievement under the leadership of our prime minister.

Q. Why did India not sign the agreement to phase down methane?

On methane, the responsibility lies with those whose lifestyles involve meat eating. Western lifestyles are more responsible for it and that is why the prime

minister emphasised an environment-friendly lifestyle. The issue of methane cannot be connected with our priorities. Under the NDC, countries are free to choose their areas to meet carbon emission targets. When we are exercising this freedom, it means we are cooperating with the world. We will never create problems; we will always choose the way of solution.

Q. Why did India not sign the reforestation agreement?

We are fully committed to extending our forest area to 33 per cent of our geographical area and are working to achieve that. We are committed to protecting the biodiversity of our forest areas. And in the future, if a forest land is diverted, there will be mandatory reforestation to compensate for it.

Q. Post-Glasgow, what are the essentials that countries need to do?

A level playing field should be created. Developed countries should fulfil their responsibility on climate finance and technology transfer. This is not an issue of helping someone, this is an issue of responsibility and duty. If the world is to be saved, those who contributed most to the greenhouse gases in the past must take on their responsibilities. Second, every country should develop its potential and actions to tackle climate changes. India is a model example of that for the world. ■



Script your adventure

Get lost in an evergreen dream.
Traverse 38,720 sq km peppered with national parks
and sanctuaries. Befriend elephants, macaques,
tigers, spoonbills and what not.
Get ready to script your own adventure.

Karnataka
One state. Many worlds.

Department of Tourism

www.karnatakaturism.org

[Facebook](#) /KarnatakaWorld [Twitter](#) /KarnatakaWorld

STARK.BH. 8969

Nagarahole National Park, Kabini, India



DELHI GOVERNMENT'S NEW TOURISM APP

Delhi at Your Fingertips



देखो मेरी दिल्ली | Dekho Meri Dilli

It's hard to capture all that Delhi is in one place. From the vibrant, bustling lanes of Chandni Chowk, to the picturesque avenues of Lutyens' Delhi, the city's landscape is an elegant blend of a multitude of cultures. In some ways, travelling through Delhi is akin to travelling through time. The city has evolved over centuries into its present form, and explorers encounter highlights from across its glorious years. Whether you are a first time visitor, a frequent passerby, or a local *Dilliwalla*, the city offers much to discover.

To help explorers unpack the city of Delhi, the Government of Delhi recently launched Delhi Tourism's official mobile application '*Dekho Meri Dilli*'

“Delhi boasts of amazing food, the most indulging entertainment and the most revered monuments. However, there was no place where one could find all relevant details on the city. This app plugs that information gap- all one needs to know about tourism in Delhi is available now in an organised, user-friendly, and effective manner.

-- Arvind Kejriwal
Chief Minister, Govt. of NCT of Delhi



Your Perfect Travel Companion

One-stop-shop for all things Delhi: Discover all that Delhi has to offer, ranging from monuments and heritage sites, to restaurants and parks, to markets and malls within a single forum. Whether you are looking to explore history, enjoy an evening with friends or family, buy gifts for loved ones, or try Delhi's delightful range of cuisines- the application has recommendations for you.

No-stress journey planning: The application helps you plan your holiday, depending on the duration of your stay. Once in Delhi, the

app will get you where you want, outlining the different modes of transport and ways to access different locations. Additionally, all public conveniences in the city have been mapped, so no matter where you are, you won't be caught off guard!

Hassle-free bookings: Say goodbye to long queues for tickets! The Tourism Application allows users to book tickets to most popular destinations online.

Understanding unfamiliar surroundings: With an integrated Google Lens feature, the app ensures that users never feel lost in the city.

Whether it is a signboard in the regional language, or an unknown landmark- Delhi tourism's app has you covered. As Mr. Vijay Kumar Dev, Chief Secretary GNCTD said, *"The application has been created so no one in Delhi ever feels lost, it is a pocket-sized guide to accompany you on your adventures through the city."*

User-friendly interface: All of this, and more, compiled within a user-friendly interface allows for seamless navigation between sections. '*Dekho Meri Dilli*' is your ideal partner when in the capital city.



“The flavour of tourism is associated with happiness - exploring new places, rediscovering old favourites, making memories with our loved ones. While creating this app, it seemed like we were making an invitation card - from the people of Delhi to the entire country and world. Delhi Tourism's app is here to take you on your perfect journey through the city. Come, explore!

-- Manish Sisodia
Dy. Chief Minister & Tourism Minister
Govt. of NCT of Delhi

Be In-Charge of Your Visit

Take control and curate your own travel experience- whether a first time visitor or a seasoned veteran, there are new ways to discover the glorious city of Delhi for everyone! As said by Ms. Swati Sharma, Secretary Tourism, “Delhi Tourism’s application is an all-inclusive platform which we wish to place in everyone’s hand - in Delhi, across India and people throughout the world to empower them to take charge of their experience while in Delhi.”

The app has been developed keeping in mind different people hoping to explore Delhi. Those coming in for work can learn about places of Delhi, those on holiday can find options for a variety of experiences, and locals in Delhi can browse for recommendations for outings on ‘Dekho Meri Dilli’.



Discover Delhi Through Delhi Tourism’s App

The City Around Me

Ever find yourself in the position to entertain last minute guests or business associates? Delhi Tourism’s app allows you to discover places to explore within a 10 kilometre radius of your location.

For the Bucket List: The Best of Everything

In the city for a few days and want to experience the best it has to offer? The application lists the top 10 food experiences, historical monuments, parks and gardens, shopping destinations, and spiritual abodes in the city. Be prepared to knock things off your bucket list!

Delhi Across the Years

With centuries of history, Delhi is a history buff’s delight. Find monuments to explore, and heritage walks to join within the city on the app.

Delhi’s Unexplored Gems

If you are a proud *dilliwalla*, or a frequent visitor to the city and believe you’ve explored all that Delhi has to offer- there’s still more to see! Be a guest at



Mirza Ghalib’s Haveli, or have a day out at Tughlaqabad Fort with your friends- Delhi’s unexplored gems have many more stories to tell you.

Foodie’s Paradise

Reflective of its rich cultural heritage is Delhi’s range of cuisines. Whether you are looking to gorge on Delhi’s street food, or for a meal in a fine dining restaurant, find recommendations on ‘Dekho Meri Dilli’ based on your tastes and requirements.

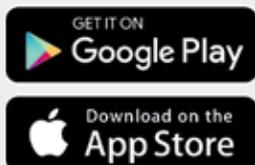
For the Whole Family

If you are visiting Delhi with the family, find family and child-friendly activities within the city. The application will ensure that you are not bored for a moment of your stay.

Support and Guidance

If you are entirely new to the city of Delhi, find answers on the weather, advice on cultural norms, practices and customs, and general travel tips on the application. You can also book a guide in the city who will speak the language of your choice and comfort.

Happy Exploring!



Android



iOS



ONE ID, MANY BENEFITS

HARYANA'S PARIVAR PEHCHAN PATRA SCHEME AIMS TO CREATE A POOL OF VERIFIED CITIZENS' DATA TO IMPROVE WELFARE DELIVERY

By ANILESH S. MAHAJAN

Registering for the Haryana government's 'Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP)' in January, Sonapat resident Navin Kumar was shocked to find himself listed as deceased in government records. It turned out that instead of his father Tek Ram, who passed away in 2018, the death certificate was issued in Kumar's name. Given such common goof-ups in government data, including misspelt names and incorrect addresses, Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar is confident that his PPP unique family ID scheme will be a game changer.

The PPP is aimed at creating verified data of all families in the state to ensure that citizens are not denied social welfare benefits due to identification problems. On November 1, Haryana became the first state in the country to introduce the unique family ID, with 456 linked services, such as registration of births, deaths and property; student scholarships; and various welfare programmes. The state's total expenditure for 2021-22 is pegged at Rs 1.55 lakh crore and Khattar hopes the social sector

spending will reach more target beneficiaries through PPP.

SMART DELIVERY

The hub of data gathering for the scheme is the Chandigarh headquarters of the Citizen Resource Information Department (CRID), a nodal agency that directly reports to Khattar. Young professionals can be seen verifying the data collected via manual surveys and processing it for use by various departments. All verified data of residents is available to the authorities via the PPP number. This will do away with the need to present supporting documents while availing any government service. For instance, Haryana resident Shruti Malik and her husband did not have to provide their Aadhaar details while registering the birth of their child. Shruti's PPP number not only furnished the information but also the details of the schemes for lactating mothers she was entitled to, along with her address and the bank account where the benefits could be credited by the government.

The PPP number has two components—a seven-digit family ID, and an eighth digit for individual



> EASY GOVERNANCE

Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar hands the 'Parivar Pehchan Patra' to an eligible beneficiary (August 4, 2020)

family members. The PPP smart cards being issued to citizens holds data on the properties they own in the state, income (ascertained via surveys or the Central Board of Direct Taxes), pension drawn, as well as scholarship, health and other benefits available to them. "The deserving beneficiaries are often voiceless. The idea is to take governance to their doorstep," says Khattar.

The project, though, has also raised apprehensions in quarters about the government becoming privy to people's 'sensitive' information. A petition filed in the Punjab and Haryana High Court in October called for a stay on the scheme, arguing that financial details of families would be at the risk of misuse. Khattar maintains that the information contained in the family

ID is already available in the public domain. Also, given the privacy debate surrounding Aadhaar, the Haryana government says it has not engaged any private agency for collection and processing of the data. “We are not asking for data. It is to be voluntarily shared by people for availing state government

THE BLUEPRINT

The Ashwini Vaishnaw-led Union ministry of electronics and IT is also working to create a Universal Family Registry (UFR), with the aim to have a unique family ID for better implementation of schemes by both the Centre and the states. Work on creating unique

families in Haryana, 6.4 million have been issued a PPP number. “The PPP uses Aadhaar-based authentication to establish the unique identity of individuals. An e-KYC is done at the time of updating data for certain fields. The use of Aadhaar for authentication is central to establishing the



HOW DOES THE PPP WORK?

➤ **STEP 1:** The Citizen Resource Information Department (CRID) gathers core data of family members—names, ages, relationship, family income, professions and education profiles, among other details.

➤ **STEP 2:** Data is verified and a PPP number is assigned to each family. The verified data of each family member—like scholarships, pensions, benefits of social welfare programmes, payments from government agencies—is mapped.

➤ **STEP 3:** The bank accounts are linked to the PPP numbers assigned to every state citizen.

➤ **STEP 4:** Citizens can use the PPP number to avail government benefits they are due. And since the data gathered by CRID is dynamic, providing the state government information in real time, it is able push benefits rather than wait for citizens to apply.

services,” says a top Haryana official.

Kanishk Maheshwari, co-founder and managing director of Delhi-based management consulting firm Primus Partners, feels that a family-based database will help the government comprehend the socio-economic situation better and improve delivery of schemes.

Khattar underscores the importance of family ID in governance: “Aadhaar is individual-centric and has served the purpose of curbing duplicity and leakage of funds, and taking benefits directly to the citizens. But our society is family oriented. We make policies based on the family structure. It (Aadhaar) had not identified dynamic data depicting families’ requirements.”

family IDs began in 2017 in Haryana as well as Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Now, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh are considering it too.

The findings of the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC), commissioned by the erstwhile UPA government in 2011 and published in 2015, forms the basis for disbursal of various social sector benefits by the Centre and states. “Over 100,000 individuals have either got government jobs or become income-tax payees, but continue to draw benefits on the basis of the SECC. The new (family ID) system will weed them out and extend the benefits to the most deserving people,” says Khattar.

Of the estimated 6.9 million

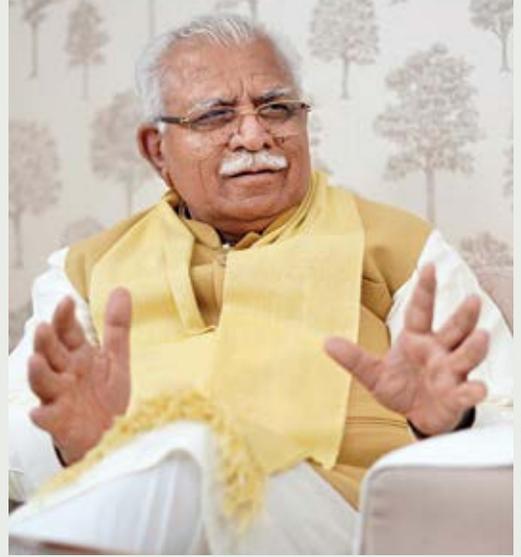
reliability of data in PPP,” says the Haryana official.

First, the CRID collects data from the Atal Suvidha Kendras across the state. Then it is verified by 20,000-odd hyper-local committees made up of five members. Each team verifies data of 300 families. The closest estimates of income made by at least three members are accepted. Households with a total annual income of up to Rs 1.8 lakh are considered below poverty line (BPL) in Haryana, against the national standard of Rs 1.2 lakh. “With this ID, BPL beneficiaries can directly receive benefits in their bank accounts without having to fill any form,” says Khattar.

INTERVIEW »
MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR

‘The task is to bring synergy in data’

Haryana's mammoth effort to provide every family an ID is intended to be a game-changer not in policy-making and governance delivery. Chief Minister **Manohar Lal Khattar** spoke exclusively to **Senior Editor Anilesh S. Mahajan** explaining how Haryana is successfully implementing this initiative when similar ones states like Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have failed to take off. Excerpts



SANDEEP SAHDEV

Q How will the Parivar Pehchan Patra be a game-changer in policy-making?

An Indian citizen is identified with an Aadhaar card, a unique ID that helps deliver directly to individuals. Yet our society is not individual-centric, it's family-centric. Hence a family identity card.

Q. Is it limited to beneficiaries of the state's welfare schemes or is it universal?

It's universal. We have 69 lakh families in Haryana, whose data is with different departments, either as PDS beneficiary, registration of property or some other benefit. The task is to bring synergy in data. We created a separate department, the Citizen Resource Information Department (CRID), to institutionalise it.

Q. How did you capture the data?

Initially, through self-declaration by the head of the family, with basic information like size of family, names, ages, assets owned and income. It was then verified by five-member teams. The data thus collected is fed at the Atal Sewa Kendra.

Q. Have you started linking government schemes with this family ID?

Yes, we have linked 456 services with PPP. The Mukhyamantri Parivar Samridhi Yojana, PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, PM Durghatana Suraksha Yojana, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, PM Laghu Vyapar Samman Nidhi and PM Shramjeevi Samman Nidhi, PM Fasal Beema Yojana are all linked to this ID.

Q. How will the ID help bring changes into people's lives?

The database is helping us

identify the bottom one lakh families in the state—income wise—and focus our resources to uplift them. Under the Mukhyamantri Antyodaya Parivar Utthan Yojana, we help them find employment or assist them in setting up some micro enterprise, trade, or give them two buffaloes to start a dairy. We have identified seven departments in the government and given them the task to work out schemes and strategies to ensure a livelihood of at least Rs 1 lakh per annum for such families.

Q. Is family ID relevant for Centrally-sponsored schemes?

No. It is meant for state schemes or where it contributes on the behalf of citizen. We have identified over 100 such schemes, whether for assistance to girls for marriage or scholarships for school students. This data will keep changing.

Q. How do you identify a family unit?

A family by definition will be husband and wife, children and dependant parents. At present, we are identifying BPL families with an annual income of less than Rs 1.8 lakh; we will gradually factor in per capita income of families. For example, if a family has three members, per capita income will be Rs 60,000, but if it has six members, it will be Rs 30,000. Though we have not got into it at the moment, we will soon come up with a set of schemes where joint families will get more benefits.

Q. How will you protect the privacy of such data?

The data will not be at one location. We will have basic information and the rest of the data will be segregated. So, if the health department wants to use information, it will get access to only the health-related information.

NEXT LEVEL

In April, during the second Covid wave, the family ID system was used to implement the state government's plan to foot the medical bills of the affected BPL families who had availed private treatment, to extend the Rs 1,000 per day per patient incentive for private hospitals treating Haryana residents, and to disburse a lump sum of Rs 5,000 to BPL families treated at home. "The disbursement of benefits was 100 per cent and with almost no leakage of funds. Now, we are scaling up and linking all state welfare

schemes to this ID," says the state official.

The Khattar government has linked the Mukhya Mantri Parivar Samridhi Yojana to the PPP, wherein families are entitled to Rs 6,000 worth of benefits per year in the form of premiums for various government schemes. The government has identified 100,000 of the poorest families in the state to provide them assistance under the Mukhya Mantri Antyodaya Parivar Utthan Yojana, which aims to promote skill development and self-employment. "We have identified seven government departments and

asked them to draw a strategy to increase incomes of such families to at least Rs 1 lakh a year," says Khattar. According to officials, providing these families labour work—at Rs 400-500 daily—for 250 days in a year alone can help meet these income targets.

CRID chief V. Umashankar says Haryana's 28 million people use government services in some form or the other, and standardising their data empowers the government to reach out to the deserving beneficiaries. "Finally, we have the data and it's all verified," he beams. ■

INDIA
TODAY

BREAKING NEWS

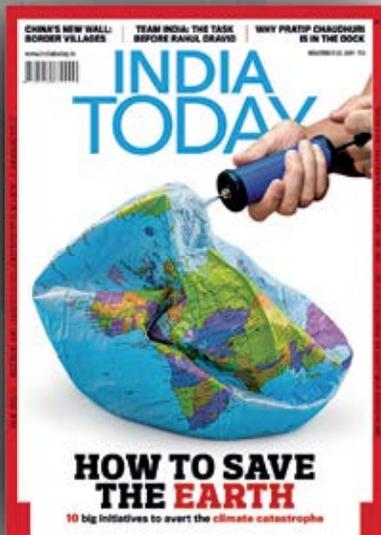
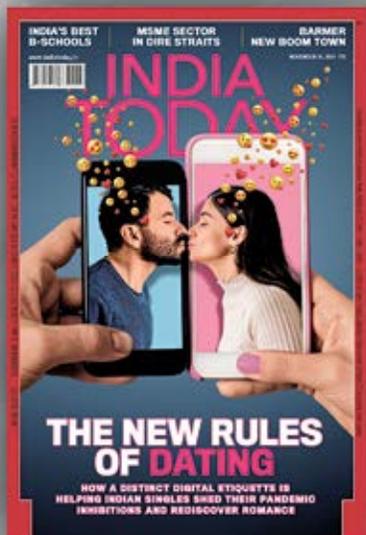
JUST A TAP AWAY



DOWNLOAD THE APP NOW

AVAILABLE ON





**IN DEPTH
KNOWLEDGE
FROM
THE MOST
CREDIBLE
SOURCE**

Subscribe and get upto 55% discount

YES! I WISH TO SUBSCRIBE TO INDIA TODAY

Please tick your subscription choice and send the form to: We Care, Living Media India Limited, C-9, Sector 10, Noida-201301 (India)

TERM-1 YEAR NO. OF ISSUES-52				
PLAN	COVER PRICE	OFFER PRICE	SAVINGS	SELECT
PRINT ONLY	₹ 3900	₹ 3099	21%	<input type="checkbox"/>
PRINT + DIGITAL	₹ 7800	₹ 3499	55%	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please fill the form in CAPITAL LETTERS

I am enclosing Cheque/DD No.: _____ dated: _____
 drawn on (specify bank): _____ favouring Living Media India Limited for
 ₹ _____ (Add ₹ 50/- for non Delhi cheques, not valid in case of at par cheques)

Name: _____ Address: _____
 _____ City: _____ State: _____ Pin: _____
 Mobile: _____ Email: _____



SCAN HERE TO SUBSCRIBE

FOR MORE DETAILS ON THE OFFER, YOU MAY CONTACT THROUGH BELOW OPTIONS

CALL us on Toll Free No. 18001800100 and (0120) 2479900 | E-MAIL wecare@intoday.com | LOG ON TO www.indiatoday.in/subscribe | Whatsapp "Hi" to +91 73030 86006

INDIA
TODAY

**AUTO
REPORT**

BMW's new electric concept car is all about sustainability



**FUTURE CARS
ARE HERE**



**FIRST
DRIVE
MAHINDRA
XUV 700**

**LAUNCHED
THE BRAND
NEW VW
TAIGUN**

**WINTER
CAR CARE
HOW TO
GO GREEN**



YOGENDRA PRATAP

ELECTRIC BATTLEFIELD

ELECTRIC VEHICLES ARE THE NEW BATTLEFRONT BUT HITCHES REMAIN. THAT SAID, THE FIRST COMPANY TO LAUNCH A SENSIBLY PRICED EV WILL BE SURPRISED AT HOW FAST INDIA ADAPTS TO THE NEW TECHNOLOGY

The year has progressed on predicted lines with demand far outstripping supply because of the continuing semiconductor shortages as well as overall logistics and supply chain problems. The bigger the company, the harder have they been hit. Maruti Suzuki, for example, has a waiting list of over 200,000 cars with the only car available off the shelf being the entry level Alto, while the 2nd largest manufacturer in the country, Hyundai Motor, continues to have waiting periods of over six months for many of its



ELECTRIC SCOOTERS ON SALE NOW

BAJAJ CHETAK

Battery pack: Lithium-ion
Top speed: 70 kmph
Range: 90 km IDC
Price: Rs 1.41 lakh (ex-showroom, Pune)



TVS IQUBE

Battery pack: Lithium-ion
Top speed: 78 kmph
Range: 75 km per charge
Price: Rs 1.38 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi)



OLA S1 PRO

Battery pack: Lithium-ion
Top speed: 70 kmph
Range: 90 km ARAI
Price: Rs 1.29 lakh (ex-showroom)



ELECTRIC CARS IN THE MARKET

models. At the other end of the spectrum, the premium and luxury manufacturers have also been hit with waiting periods extending to months for many of the models in their portfolios.

While the supply problems are going to continue for another few months, given the rising fuel prices and multiple states announcing incentives, everyone's attention is turning towards electric vehicles and the plans of the big manufacturers on that front, especially after the Tata Motors announcement of securing US \$1 billion funding for its EV business. Tata Motors actually is already the leader in EVs in the country but with vehicles that are still on the expensive side. Who will be the first to launch

a mass market electric car in the country remains to be seen. Suzuki was the first to announce the setting up of India's first lithium-ion battery plant but Maruti Suzuki will enter the market only when it sees it can get enough volumes though it has been testing an EV based on the Wagon R. Hyundai has been studying an EV based on the i10 platform for a while now but Tata Motors already has a new EV-ready platform, a derivative of which underpins the Tata Punch and the Altroz. Mahindra had a headstart in the field but has been busy renewing its entire portfolio and gone easy on the EV front. However the one company that has an EV ready on a platform that is used in India is Renault. The Renault City K.Ze that is based on the Kwid and a derivative of which was showcased at the auto expo 2020 is already on sale in China at a price of about Rs 6.5 lakh.

It may appear that the country lacks the infrastructure for electric cars but rising fuel costs and Indian driving habits are both conducive for electric cars and the early mover with a sensible mass market electric car will definitely be surprised by how quickly the country adopts electric vehicles. ■



ATHER 450X

Battery pack: Lithium-ion
Top speed: 80 kmph
Range: 116 km per charge
Price: Rs 1.44 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi)



HYUNDAI KONA EV

Battery Pack: 39.2 kWh
 Lithium-ion
Motor: 100 kW PMSM
Range: 452 km ARAI
Price: Rs 23.9 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi)

MG ZS EV

Battery pack: 44.5 kWh HTB
Motor: 142.7 bhp PMSM
Range: 419 km ARAI
Price: Rs 20.9 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi)



TATA NEXON EV

Battery pack: 30.2 kWh
 Lithium-ion
Motor: 129 bhp PMSM
Range: 312 ARAI
Price: Rs 16.85 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi)

MERCEDES EQC

Battery pack: 80 kWh
 Lithium-ion
Motor: 300 kW dual motor
Range: 414 km (WLTP)
Price: Rs 99.3 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi)



AUDI E-TRON 50

Battery pack: 71 kWh
 Lithium-ion
Motor: 230 kW
Range: 379 km WLTP
Price: Rs 99.9 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi)

BYD E6

Battery pack: 71.7 kWh
 Lithium-ion
Motor: 70 kW
Range: 415 km (WLTC)
Price: Rs 29.6 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi)



ELECTRIC FUTURE

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GLOBAL WARMING ARE THE BIG TALKING POINTS AROUND THE WORLD AFTER THE COP-26 SUMMIT. TOP EXECUTIVES FROM THE CAR INDUSTRY SHARE THEIR ROADMAPS FOR EVs IN INDIA AND TELL US WHAT STEPS THEIR COMPANIES ARE TAKING TOWARDS MAKING CLEAN MOBILITY A REALITY

Dr Anish Shah
CEO and MD, Mahindra
and Mahindra Ltd

The penetration of electric vehicles in Indian markets is a few years behind some of the other leading countries in this space. This is basically due to cost of ownership, infrastructure and range-anxiety. All of this is set to change. Cost parity will come with some level of subsidies or lower taxes, and then, over time, it should be addressed by lower costs as production increases. Range anxiety will be addressed with technology. The government's new PLI scheme is also a positive step in this direction. In the three-wheelers space, EVs have achieved cost parity and have enough range and there is infrastructure in place as well, so we have seen a pick-up in this segment. Four-wheelers will see the same momentum and we expect about half the vehicles sold in 2030 to be electric.

At Mahindra, our EV strategy

is multi-faceted. The first phase is last-mile mobility, which is three-wheelers and smaller four-wheelers for goods and people transport. We have some very good products there like the entire Treo range and the eAlfa. In the passenger vehicle segment, we are readying an all-electric SUV strategy and we will launch two new products by 2023-end. We expect higher penetration of EVs in the personal segment by 2025 and that's when our new products built on born EV platforms will be launched in the Indian market.

We have a very good set of electric capabilities from what we have done in India as well as internationally. Having been in the market with EVs for the past 10 years, we have got 300-plus million kilometres on electric vehicles driven in India, which is far higher than anyone else today. ■

Vikram Pawah

President & CEO,
BMW Group India

The global automotive industry is witnessing a paradigm shift from the conventional combustion engine to sustainable mobility solutions. This iconic change is inevitable in India as well, but it will not happen overnight. A comprehensive policy framework implemented in a phased manner is essential to nurture the development of e-mobility and its success in India.

Premium automotive manufacturers like BMW are already progressively taking a lead in e-mobility with radical investments in innovation and technology. Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEV) are the first step towards the eventual transition to Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV).

A framework that only supports BEVs will only make it difficult for effective e-mobility implementation in India. Therefore, we believe that a balanced taxation framework supporting both PHEVs and BEVs is required.

The deciding factor in the success of electric mobility is infrastructure availability. Uninterrupted supply of power to charge the cars at any time is a necessity. There should also be enough public charging stations so that customers are confident about taking their electric cars anywhere, whether in the city or for a long drive.





We don't just do sustainability at BMW, we are making BMW sustainable. By 2023, the BMW Group will have 25 electrified models globally. By 2030, at least 50 per cent of global sales will be all-electric. MINI will be an all-electric brand.

By 2025, as the next phase of its transformation, BMW Group will be launching a radically new product offering—the Neue Klasse (new class). The Neue Klasse forms the nucleus of rethinking the car from the ground up.

In 2022, BMW India will bring the BMW iX, BMW i4 and the MINI Cooper S Electric. BMW i4 is the brand's first electric vehicle focused on driving dynamics. ■

Rajeev Chaba
President &
Managing Director,
MG Motor India

At MG, we are committed to introducing mobility solutions that are both futuristic and sustainable for the Indian automotive industry. Under our CASE (Connected, Autonomous, Shared, Electric) vision, we launched India's first electric SUV, MG ZS EV, which continues to see high demand in the market. With the launch of the electric SUV, we also began our campaign #ChangeWhatYouCan. It encourages people to go for electric vehicles which offer both performance and style. Currently, our electric SUV offers a range of 419 kms. Considering that the Indian market is still in a nascent stage in EV adoption, we have led the 5-way infrastructure development approach. It includes DC fast-charging stations, residential/ office chargers, and an on-the-go charging



facility under our roadside assistance, along with an onboard AC charging cable and charging stations across satellite cities. We will join hands with more like-minded stakeholders to keep improving the EV environment infrastructure. We will be further expanding the charging infrastructure to ease the range anxiety among people. Our core values do not just include innovating but also enabling an environment to nurture new ideas. In line with this thought, we have given a ZS EV to IIT Delhi for further research and development on EV-Tech. We want to see more developments in the EV sector. ■

Ashish Gupta
Brand Director,
Volkswagen Passenger Cars India

India's automobile market is witnessing increased adoption of electric mobility and has gained significant momentum after the implementation of the FAME scheme. Though the infrastructure is being ramped up, it will take time for us to reach a stage where mass electrification will take off. We believe the electric push will happen in the next 4-5 years in a phased manner. For the Volkswagen Group, electromobility is an important cornerstone of its strategy and the brand is invested in the future of electric mobility. As for India, we are closely monitoring and evaluating the business scenario and aim to commercially launch electric cars at an appropriate time. ■



Technology that powers lives

For Maruti Suzuki, human lives form both the core of their inspiration, and the foundation of their approach to innovation. With their technological interventions, Maruti Suzuki strives to make a true, noticeable difference that empowers and enhances the lives of people from all over the country and this, is what they call People Technology.

Every new technology introduced by Maruti Suzuki is the result of years of research and hard work, all focused at ensuring a positive, tangible difference in the lives of the people who choose to put their trust in them.

Spearheading revolution since its inception, Maruti Suzuki celebrates innovations and technologies that delight its customers. The Company's focus is to offer Safe, Environment friendly, Comfortable and Connected Technologies to Indian customers. Maruti Suzuki not only provides advanced technologies in its vehicles but strives to provide the technology offerings at competitive prices. The seven recent path-breaking technologies being communicated depicts the Company's above-mentioned approach.

1. SAFETY

The R&D team at Suzuki Motor Corporation, Japan has developed a next-generation global platform 'HEARTECT Platform' that is designed with a core focus on safety. Built with advanced and high tensile steel, the platform has a smooth continuous design for better impact absorption in case of a collision. At the same time, it offers better stability and control for enhanced driving performance and fuel efficiency. The platform is adopted in all future generation cars globally including cars developed for India. Maruti Suzuki is committed to offer safer cars to its consumers. In view of this objective, the Company took initiatives to upgrade its entire range of vehicles to meet crash and pedestrian regulations much ahead of the defined timeframe.

The Government of India mandated certain additional regulations such as



driver airbags, ABS, Rear parking sensor, seat belt reminder and speed alert system from 2019 apart from crash and pedestrian norms. These regulations are unique for India. All Maruti Suzuki models comply with all these regulations by offering technologies which are valued by consumers.

2. ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY

With the vision to democratize green mobility for its customers, Maruti Suzuki unveiled its 'Mission Green Million' in 2020. Having already sold one million green vehicles, the Company aims to sell the next million green vehicles at a much faster pace and reduce its carbon footprint.

In view of this objective, the Company has taken various initiatives such as upgrading current K-Series engines, the addition of S-CNG technology and the introduction of Smart Hybrid technology in more models. With the above initiatives aimed at continuous improvement, the Company has achieved nearly 20% weighted CO2 reduction across the fleet in the past 15 years.

3. COMFORT AND CONVIENCE

Maruti Suzuki has sold more than 7.5 lakh vehicles with a range of Automatic Transmissions. The Company

democratized the two-pedal technology and challenged several myths related to automatic cars with the launch of Auto Gear Shift (AGS) technology in 2014. Currently, Maruti Suzuki offers three different types of two-pedal transmissions including AT, AGS and Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) on its 12 models. The options are available in each segment to meet the needs of customers.

The next-generation SmartPlay Studio Infotainment system has been introduced across the Maruti Suzuki product portfolio to offer the next level of infotainment experience to the Indian consumers. It is a new-age 17.78 cm (7") connected touch screen infotainment system that connects smartphone, vehicle and cloud-based services to provide a host of features to offer delightful driving experience.

4. CONNECTED CAR

In today's world, it is very important to stay connected as it provides reassurance, a sense of safety, and peace of mind. To keep one always connected, Maruti Suzuki offers Suzuki Connect, a Telematics Control Unit (TCU) solution available in Maruti Suzuki cars. It provides advanced features such as vehicle tracking, emergency alert, driving behaviour analysis, live vehicle statistics, vehicle and alerts, among others.

STAY CONNECTED TO YOUR CAR LIKE YOU ARE CONNECTED TO YOUR LOVED ONES.

Maruti Suzuki's People Technology presents Suzuki Connect. An advanced Telematics Solution that not only improves your driving experience but also helps you connect to your car.

Stay connected always.

**SUZUKI
connect**
ADVANCED TELEMATICS SOLUTION



REVVING IT UP

THE FESTIVE SEASON HAS BEEN GENEROUS, WITH PLENTY OF NEW MACHINES THAT WILL SET YOUR PULSES RACING AND SOME STEADFAST WHEELS TO KEEP YOU GROUNDED



ENGINE:
1.2 L i-VTEC petrol/
1.5 L i-DTEC diesel
POWER:
90 bhp/ 100 bhp
PRICE:
Rs 6.32 lakh-
Rs 11.15 lakh
(ex-showroom, Delhi)

HONDA AMAZE

This is the first facelift the Honda Amaze has received since the second-gen model made its India debut in 2018. Honda has gone for the 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' approach, so apart from a few cosmetic tweaks to the exterior and interior the rest of the car remains largely the same with the same powertrains doing duty under the hood.

AUDI E-TRON GT

With gorgeous styling and unparalleled performance, the e-Tron GT redefines electric mobility.

The all-electric luxury grand-tourer combines its pace, power and driving range to take the fight straight to the Tesla Model 3. The numbers are certainly impressive as the sportier RS e-Tron GT accelerates from zilch to 100 kmph in just 3.3 seconds.

ELECTRIC MOTOR:

Dual AC synchronous electric motors

POWER:

523 bhp/ 637 bhp

PRICE:

Rs 1.8-2.05 crore (ex-showroom, Delhi)

VOLKSWAGEN TAIGUN

The new Taigun is the first model built for Volkswagen's SUVW product line-up for India, underpinned by the MQB-A0-IN platform featuring a bold design, premium interiors, refined engine options and the latest gadgets making it a compelling prospect. It comes in two variant lines, five trim levels, four engine-gearbox combinations and five exterior colors to choose from.

ENGINES:

1.0 L turbo petrol/ 1.5 L TSI EVO petrol

POWER:

113 bhp/ 148 bhp

PRICE:

Rs 10.49-17.49 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi)



HYUNDAI i20 N LINE

The i20's 1.0-litre direct injection turbo-petrol motor offers a nice sporty driving option for those who seek it and now with the N line, Hyundai wants to take the excitement up a notch. The i20 N Line also signals the launch of Hyundai's N performance division in India and we will soon see more N Line models unleashed soon.



ENGINE: 1.0 L

turbo-petrol

POWER: 120 bhp

PRICE: Rs 9.84 lakh-

Rs 11.9 lakh

(ex-showroom, Delhi)



BMW 3 SERIES GRAN LIMOUSINE ICONIC EDITION

Exclusive to the Iconic Edition is the glowing kidney grille that comes as standard fitment as does the crystal gearshift knob, rear seat headrest cushion, Vernasca leather upholstery, parking assist and ambient lighting. The 12.3-inch digital instrument display, a 10.25-inch touchscreen infotainment system, wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are retained.

ENGINE:

2.0-litre turbo petrol/
2.0-litre turbo diesel

POWER:

258 bhp/ 190 bhp

PRICE:

Rs 53.5 lakh-
Rs 54.9 lakh
(ex-showroom, Delhi)

MG ASTOR

A petrol-only derivative of the MG ZS EV, the Astor is the SAIC-owned company's latest contender to challenge the Hyundai Creta and the Kia Seltos. Segment-first features such as Level 2 autonomous driving, coupled with premium interiors and contemporary design could help this SUV carve out a lion's share of the sales pie in this highly competitive mid-sized SUV space.



ENGINES:

1,349 cc turbo-petrol/
1,498 cc naturally aspirated petrol

POWER:

140 bhp/ 110 bhp

PRICE:

Rs 9.78 lakh-
Rs 16.78 lakh
(ex-showroom, Delhi)



LAMBORGHINI HURACAN STO

This hardcore new variant is a road-legal version of the Huracan Super Trofeo Evo race car and sits at the top of the Huracan food chain. Almost 75 per cent of the body is made up of carbon-fibre that not only makes it light-weight but also facilitates 0 to 100 kmph in under 3 seconds. It may not be as elegant as the horses from Maranello, but it is unabashedly Lamborghini.

ENGINES:

5.2 L V10 petrol

POWER:

640 bhp

PRICE:

Rs 4.99 crore
(ex-showroom, Delhi)



FUEL UP FAST

The recently-launched digitally-powered UFill by Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited is a unique initiative that lets the customer control fuel refills, right from payment convenience at the time and place of the customer's choice to auto-presetting the MPD for the amount paid without any manual intervention.

Transparent. Efficient. Zero-contact. In the past two years of the pandemic, customer experience across industries has undergone a sea change to align itself with the newly-emerging parameters. Like others, the highly-competitive fuel retail industry has also had to reinvent itself to make for a seamless customer experience high on convenience and personalization.

Leading from the front is BPCL, who decades ago conceived the 'Pure for Sure' initiative, altering the fuel retailing landscape forever. Now, in the backdrop of shifting technological paradigms, the petroleum major is devising unique ways to leverage technology in delivering the Pure for Sure promise to its customers. One such example of taking digitally-powered initiatives to customers is the recently-launched

UFill initiative by BPCL. What is unique about UFill is that it not only eliminates human intervention from refueling, but also introduces the convenience of paying from anywhere, anytime.

Decoding UFill

Continuously disrupted by innovations and trends which impact the way fueling activity happens, BPCL embarked upon a discovery programme to gain an in-depth understanding of customer experience. What emerged was that customers perceived that the fueling time from entry to exit is much more than what it actually is, while what they really wanted was to make their fuelling journey swift, seamless and efficient.

Thus was born UFill, a game-changing customer solution, conceptualized using Design Thinking methodology and built on a human-centered

How UFill Works

UFill allows customers to pay in advance for your fuel – anytime, from anywhere. They can use any UPI app, like, GPay, Paytm, PhonePe, etc. to pay BPCL digitally for any amount between Rs. 50 to Rs. 5000.

The moment the payment is made, customer receives instant QR code link through SMS for automated fuelling. With this QR code, fuel dispensing unit at the petrol pump gets automatically pre-set for the value customer has paid and auto cuts-off after dispensing the exact quantity paid for, assuring the quantity delivered. There is no manual intervention.

Once re-fuelling is over, there is zero wait time as payment has already been made.

approach. A digitally-driven customer experience, UFill delivers on BPCL's promise of ensuring that their customers have complete control over Time, Technology and Transparency as part of their fuelling experience.

Drive in, Fuel up, Zoom off

With UFill leveraging the latest in digital technology, queues at fuel stations are soon to be a thing of the past. What's more, UFill also obviates the need for looking at zero or final reading and such offline manual interventions, which tend to create creeping doubts around the integrity of the fuelling transaction. Importantly, UFill will empower the customer to take the fuelling payment activity away from the forecourt, enabling him/her to experience zero wait time after fuelling in keeping with the tagline 'Ab Control Ko Feel Kar'.



TWO TO TANGO

SPORTY IS THE THEME AS TWO NEW SCOOTERS AND A COMMUTER SEGMENT BIKE HIT THE ROAD



BMW C 400 GT

Not only does it hold the title of the most powerful and most expensive scooter in India, the C 400 GT marks the entry of BMW Motorrad India into the maxi-scooter segment. Offered in Alpine White and Style Triple Black, the C 400 GT manages 0-100 kmph in 9.5 seconds with a top speed of over 139 kmph.

ENGINE:
350cc,
water-cooled
POWER:
34 bhp
PRICE: Rs 9.95 lakh
(ex-showroom,
Delhi)



TVS RAIDER 125

ENGINE:
124.8 cc, air-cooled
POWER:
11.4 bhp
PRICE:
Rs 77,500 -
Rs 85,469
(ex-showroom,
Delhi)

With the 125 cc sporty commuter segment gaining traction in India, it was only a matter of time before TVS entered it. Sporty styling elements are among the main aspects buyers look for in this space and TVS has delivered. Apart from being sporty, the Raider 125 also comes with an Eco mode for better fuel economy.



YAMAHA AEROX 155

Yamaha also introduced its maxi-scooter for India in the form of the Aerox 155 using the same R15 V4 derived unit albeit with lesser power. It runs on 14-inch wheels at the front/ rear and is said to offer decent stability, especially at higher speeds. A 5.8-inch LCD fully digital instrument cluster shows information in plenty, while a single-channel ABS comes as standard.

ENGINE:
liquid-cooled
POWER:
15 bhp
PRICE:
Rs 1.29 lakh
(ex-showroom,
Delhi)

PRESENTING

Seltos X LINE

A NEW SPECIES OF **BADASS**



Movement that inspires

The Seltos X Line is a bold new species of badass. The **Xclusive Matte Graphite Exterior** combined with **Xclusive Indigo Pera Interior** and futuristic features make the Seltos X Line a force to reckon with. The reimagined species is here to rule the world. So go ahead, drive it and hear it roar on the road.



INNOCENT-106/21

Seltos
Badass by Design

For more information contact: 1800 108 5000 | Visit www.kia.com/in

Book | Look for "Kia India" @

Scan to know more



*The product shown is for representation purpose only and the actual color, features and specifications may vary. *First made in India car with matte exterior color.

SPACESHIP ENTERPRISE

WITH FEATURES AND EQUIPMENT THAT LUXURY CARS BOAST OF AS WELL AS BRAND NEW ENGINES AND A REVAMPED CHASSIS, THE XUV 700, MAHINDRA'S UPGRADE FOR THE XUV 500, LOOKS VERY PROMISING

BY YOGENDRA PRATAP

M

ahindra's next generation 500 turned out to be so far ahead of the game that the company decided to up the ante and name it the XUV700, leaving space for a new car between the 300

and the 700. The 700 continues to be a 7-seater and will come in two distinct lines, the MX and the AdrenoX series. While the MX will be a plain vanilla offering, filling up the space currently vacated by the 500, with an old diesel engine and bereft of any of the class leading features, it is the AdrenoX series that we will be talking about here. The car has remnants of the 500 design language but is a much more mature design.

Powering the AdrenoX series are two brand new all aluminium engines, a 2.2-litre diesel and a 2-litre petrol, both turbocharged with direct injection. While the diesel is quite smooth to drive, and comes with different ECU maps to switch between three drive mode - Zip, Zap and Zoom, it is the petrol engine car that was more surprising and coming from Mahindra, it is a big step forward. Both the engines are available with manual and automatic gearboxes and there will be an option of having all wheel drive as well. The chassis itself has been made with liberal use of high tensile steel to enhance torsional rigidity and reduce weight as well as ensure safety and adequate impact absorption.





DYNAMIC BEING
The XUV 700 is loaded with top-end features and works well with 6-speed auto too

SURESH NARAYANAN

ENGINE:
2.0-litre turbo petrol
2.2-litre turbo diesel
POWER:
200 bhp@5,000 rpm
185 bhp@3,500 rpm
PRICE:
Rs 11.99-16.49 lakh
(ex-showroom,
Delhi)

Added to that is a multiple link rear suspension with frequency selective dampers and a stabiliser bar and Mahindra has the makings of a very dynamically capable SUV.

Mahindra has also loaded the car, although some of the top-end features and systems may only be available with option packs, with a huge number of systems and features including some advanced driver assist systems that run through signals received through both camera and radar—stuff that was till now found only in cars of luxury brands. These systems include adaptive cruise control with start from stop technology, emergency braking with front collision warning, lane assist, traffic sign recognition as well as high beam assist.

Then there is Adrenox itself—the heart of the connected car with Alexa built in. There's also a wireless Apple Car Play and Android Auto in addition to over 60 in-built apps that the system will feature by the time



it goes into production. The interiors are high end as in top-of-the-line cars, there's a panoramic sunroof and for the safety conscious, surround view and turn indicator cameras, 7 air bags, and drowsiness detection. There is plenty of knee room in the second row that is also comfortable and the seats offer good under-thigh support as well, even for people with above average heights.

The 2.0-litre petrol engine churns out an impressive 200 bhp of max power, is smooth and very responsive. It works well with the 6-speed auto too. Along with the 300, the 700 would be the most dynamically sorted of Mahindra vehicles.

Overall the vehicle is well put together and though there may be some small issues like those of ergonomics or of the software acting up, Mahindra has enough time to iron out those glitches before the car goes on sale, possibly later this month. ■

A PROPER PUNCH

Tata Motors has just launched the Punch compact SUV, the production version of the HBX concept from Auto Expo 2020. How has it turned out?

BY RAHUL GHOSH

Tata Motors stole the show at the last Auto Expo by showcasing the Tata HBX, a small SUV which looked ravishing thanks to the macho tyres and off-road accessories bolted on to it. Now, the production version has hit the showrooms and it's called the Tata Punch.

The Punch is immediately recognizable as a Tata SUV. Much like the Harrier and Safari, the Punch too gets a set of sleek DRLs on top and boxy projector headlamp units on the bumper below. What adds to the flair of this rather small vehicle are the black plastic claddings found all across. In profile one can spot the rather high 187 mm of ground clearance which should allow the Punch to take care of the biggest speed humps without fuss.

The Tata Punch comes with a rather bright interior thanks to the dual tone treatment. The dash looks good and the first things to catch your eye are the body coloured AC vent surrounds. The 7in Harman infotainment system sits in the middle and offers a plethora of functions which include Apple and Android connectivity and even serves as a display for the climate control system. It also displays a variety of trips and even a game which can be played while the car is stationary. The instrument cluster comes from the Tata Altroz and is a mix of analogue and digital displays. When



HARVINDER SINGH

ENGINE:
1.2-litre petrol
POWER:
86 bhp@6,000 rpm
PRICE:
Rs 9.09 lakh
(Ex-showroom,
Delhi)

it comes to space, the Punch is impressive as well. There is ample shoulder room up front and at the back, getting in and out is made easy thanks to the doors which swing open 90 degrees.

The Tata Punch comes with a 1.2-litre petrol engine which is tuned to offer 86 bhp and 113 Nm of torque. Gearbox options include a 5-speed manual or an AMT. The Punch is also based on the Alfa Architecture and Tata Motors has tried hard to give it as much off road credentials as possible. Start up the Punch and you might feel that the petrol engine

sounds a bit rough. The Punch also lacks a certain punch while accelerating hard. It takes its own time to get up to speed and Tata claims a 0 to 100 kmph time of 16.5 seconds. The car has the ability to cruise happily at 100 kmph and this means driving longer durations is going to be comfortable.

The AMT gearbox feels a bit slow and shifts are rather pronounced. The good thing is, the gearbox comes with a manual mode where one can take control of the gears and as a result have a lot more fun. When it comes to the manual version, we found it to have a rather light clutch which made things rather comfortable. Quite simply then, driving in traffic will be a breeze. The Punch comes with a well-tuned suspension which absorbs bumps and ruts rather well. The handling too is good and the Punch holds its line well. This is further aided by the steering which offers decent feedback and remains comfortable in tight city spaces as well. ■



Driving Into The Future With MG

MG has emerged as a game changer in India with made in India cars offering the best of technology

It has been just two years that MG has arrived in India and already the company is a dominant force in the Indian auto industry. MG since 1924 has stood for the best of British competition and engineering, and has been at the forefront of innovation. Back in 1957, Sir Stirling Moss broke the land speed record in the MG EX181 at the Bonneville Salt Flats and set the tone for MG's future exploits.

In the 97 years since, MG has continued to evolve while offering the newest of technologies through its products. In India, the company has launched a slew of SUV's with a CASE philosophy in mind. CASE stands for Connected, Autonomous, Shared Mobility and Electric; qualities embodied by every MG model that cater to customers' fast-evolving needs.

Hector was the country's first internet-enabled C-segment SUV. With its i-SMART next-gen technology, the Hector

offered 50+ connected car features – a first in the country. This system is designed to receive over-the-air updates, and today packs in an innovative chit-chat feature and hinglish commands for owners to be able to interact with their Hector in a new way.

The MG ZS EV, on the other hand was the country's first Pure Electric Internet SUV and came with a top spec battery of 44.2kWh while offering a 419km range. With a 5 star NCAP rating, the MG ZS EV is the best one can get. But just getting hi-tech cars to India is not the solution. Electric cars need a very different infrastructure to keep going and hence MG has also focused on strengthening EV charging infrastructure at the grassroots level by teaming up with Tata Power, Fortum Charge, Delta Electronics and



eChargeBays to set up DC fast charging stations and home chargers, respectively.

But the company never sat on its laurels and the Gloster came next. The Gloster emerged as India's first Autonomous Level 1 car which is a luxury 4x4 SUV with ADAS. It offers the ability to tackle terrains while ensuring your safety and convenience.

Continuing the trend of new launches, MG recently launched the Astor. The Astor then has literally revolutionised the mid-size SUV segment by introducing a first-of its-kind artificial intelligence (AI) driven robot, which basically plays the role of the driver's in-car personal assistant. But the cynosure of the Astor sure is the Autonomous Level 2 features which set the SUV apart from the rest.

But it is not just the products which make a difference but also how MG has handled the Indian market. All the MG cars are manufactured out of their state of the art facility in Halol, Gujarat. Additionally MG is rapidly expanding sales and service touchpoints in India with 250+ outlets already in operation. Quite simply, MG offers you the best of all worlds.



LONG LIVE THE KUSHAQ

Skoda is betting big on their newest SUV that's been developed exclusively for India and other emerging markets

BY DIPAYAN DUTTA

The Skoda Kushaq is the first car developed by the VWG group with India in mind. The Kushaq along with its VW badged sibling will be the spearhead of the brand's India 2.0 strategy. Marketed as a mid-size SUV, the Kushaq will be in the same segment as the Hyundai Creta and Kia Seltos in one of the Indian auto industry's most intensely contested spaces.

With the Kushaq (a play on the Sanskrit word 'Kushak' or king), Skoda promised smart functional and utilitarian interiors, and on that count they have absolutely delivered. Storage is well thought out with separate compartments for your phone, bottles, a tag holder and even a cooler/ storage box under the central elbow rest. Features too have not been missed out, the 10.5-inch infotainment system is equipped with the latest

ENGINE:
1.5 TSI MT
POWER:
147.5 bhp@5,000-
7,000 rpm
PRICE:
Rs 16.19 lakh
(ex-showroom,
Delhi)



wireless Android Auto and Apple Car play connectivity suites. The front seat on the Style variant gets the crucial ventilation function which adds to driving comfort especially in humid areas. A unique feature is the 'Valet' mode, which not only locks the infotainment system but also records boot and hood unlocks, passenger door unlocks and number of kms driven. The mode can be deactivated using a secret 4-digit pin. In terms of space, the tall roofline and low floor line allows for a roomy experience on the inside. At the back, there was plenty of legroom thanks to the Kushaq's extra long wheelbase.

It's when you are in the driver's seat that you begin to understand where the Kushaq's true value proposition lies. The 1.5 litre 4-cylinder TSI petrol motor puts out 150 bhp with 250 Nm of peak torque. It's easy to drive in traffic and the Style variant that we have on test also gets active-cylinder deactivation which makes the car as genuinely efficient as it is quick. During a test in peak traffic, the Skoda indicated a very respectable 12.4 kmpl.

Another thing that stands out is the suspension tune. Even before you get behind the wheel, a quick glance at the dimensions gives away the fact that the Skoda Kushaq is likely to have favourable dynamics. The long wheelbase, low floor height and narrower track all add up to a SUV that will be relatively more agile. When you add that to the fact that suspension runs the line between rebound and compression almost faultlessly, being firm enough for quick corners but pliant enough to keep most bumps and undulations from the cabin occupants, you have the ingredients for what is likely to be the most dynamic of the compact SUVs. ■



V O L V O

INTRODUCING

THE SMARTER XC60

Petrol Mild-Hybrid



EQUIPPED WITH

Google Services | Advanced Air Cleaner | Front Massage Seats
Bowers & Wilkins 1100 W / 15 Speakers Music System



SCAN TO KNOW MORE

Specifications, features and colours shown here may not be part of standard equipment. Accessories and features may change from model to model. Colours may not match due to printing limitations. Shot outside India with a left-hand drive car. The model, equipment, and possible vehicle configurations illustrated in this advertisement may not be offered in India.

VOLVOCARS.IN
GREY/2058/21

FUTURE PROOF

ROYAL ENFIELD UNLEASHES THE BRAND NEW CLASSIC 350 WHICH HAS MUCH RIDING ON ITS SHOULDERS. CAN IT CARRY THE LEGACY FORWARD?



BY RAHUL GHOSH

HARVINDER SINGH

Back in the early 2000s, Royal Enfield was in desperate need of a saviour. That saviour came in the form of the Classic 350 and Classic 500. The bikes transformed the perception people had regarding the brand. That was a long time ago and the Classic range now gets a new lease of life. Enter the brand new RE Classic 350.

It is a strange predicament for a company which gets flak if it changes or makes its bikes a bit too modern. So the task at hand was to change everything and yet change nothing. At first glance one might be hard pressed to spot the changes. But look closely and you will spot the brand new twin downtube frame which has come from the Royal Enfield Meteor. As far as dimensions go, the wheelbase remains identical at 1,390mm, but the overall length has gone up by a few millimeters. What is substantially better is the ground clearance which now stands at 170mm. The new Classic 350 comes with larger disc brakes,

dual channel ABS and larger tyres. Tubeless tyres will be offered with the alloy wheel variants. It continues to feature the twin pilot lamps and the round headlamp as seen on the outgoing model but they are differ-

POWER:
20.2bhp@6,100rpm
TORQUE:
27 Nm@6,100 rpm
ENGINE:
349 cc, single cylinder
PRICE:
₹2.15 lakh (ex-show-room, Delhi)

ent. The indicators too come from the Meteor and feature bulbs. The brand new instrument panel features an old school analogue speedo but below it sits a digital readout which displays fuel level, odo, twin trips and a clock—and, finally, a fuel gauge.

The riding position has changed a bit and feels more comfortable than

before. The handle bar falls to hand easy and the seat height too has not changed. Start up the bike and the motor feels rather smooth and silent. There is no roughness anymore and vibrations have been curtailed to near zero. Rev up the engine and it still remains rather smooth. The gearbox shifts crisp and the bike takes off with zest. As you shift up to fourth and fifth cog, the new Classic 350 can be ridden at speeds as low as 40 or 50 kmph. There is no knocking or jerks felt from the engine and it just goes rather smooth. The best bit is that in case one decides to speed, there is enough torque to pull through to 80 kmph with no need of a gear change.

The sweet spot of the new Classic though is between 80 and 100kmph. It gets to these speeds easy and there are literally no vibes to bother you. On the downside, the clutch does feel a bit heavy. The new Classic absorbs bumps well and inspires confidence to take on the rough. The brakes offer good bite and the bike can be hauled down rather easily. ■

IMPACT FEATURE

THE KING IS HERE

Skoda has launched the all new and made for India Skoda Kushaq. But there is more brewing at Skoda apart from the just the Kushaq

Skoda's 'India 2.0 strategy' has brought about a revolution in India called the Kushaq. The Kushaq then is based on the MQB-A0-IN, a variant of the modular MQB-A0 platform, specially adapted by Skoda for the Indian and global markets. This platform provides the technical basis for not just the Kushaq but for other volume models like the upcoming sedan Slavia. To achieve the desired localisation levels up to 95 per cent, Skoda has set up a new MQB-A0-IN production line at its Pune plant. Additionally what sets the Kushaq apart from the rest is its classy interior design which is comfortable and spacious. Safety features on the Kushaq are top notch as well and it gets as many as six airbags too.

Needless to say, the Kushaq has already tasted success in India with over 15,000 units booked already. The Kushaq has already contributed to a healthy increase of 200 per cent Y-o-Y growth for Skoda Auto in q3 and a cumulative 76 per cent growth Y-o-Y. To better serve customers, the automaker has slashed its



gasoline engine oil pricing by 32 per cent in addition to lowering the cost of spare parts and enhancements. This has reduced the overall maintenance costs by 21 per cent. Skoda Auto has extended products like SuperCare and extended warranty for the 5th and 6th year. Customers are also served digitally through the My Skoda App, the

service cost calculator and through appointments. Not just that, the company has also worked to ensure that Kushaq customers have access to service centres throughout the country. It has planned 185 after-sales touch points for Tier II and III cities by 2025. The company will add MobiCare to these sites to make them more accessible. ■



The Kushaq is available with a choice of powerful yet efficient TSI engine options and boasts of striking design, modern infotainment systems, high levels of comfort and safety features, and mySkoda Connect & Skoda Play App



IT'S SHOWTIME

THE WORLD OF CARS IS CHANGING FAST AND IAA MUNICH SHOWED US A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE. WHILE SOME OF THESE CONCEPTS WILL ENTER THE MARKET IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, OTHERS GIVE US A WINDOW INTO WHAT THE MANUFACTURERS ARE WORKING ON. AND YES: THE FUTURE IS ELECTRIC

BMW VISION-I CIRCULAR

The electric four-seater car is intended to provide a glimpse of where BMW sees itself in the year 2040. The body takes shape in gold-anodised recycled aluminum, the bumpers are recycled plastic, while any type of chrome or leather is absent. The tyres are cultivated natural rubber mounted on rims designed to maximise aerodynamics. The glass roof flows into a dark glass tailgate that incorporates the tail-lights and turn indicators. The motor could be powered by a recyclable all-solid-state battery.

MINI VISION URBANAUT

Almost a year after the digital renders were presented to the world, MINI showcased the concept in Munich to give a better understanding of the all-electric lifestyle van. The British cousin of BMW is readying to go all-electric soon and the Vision Urbanaut gives a glimpse of the quirky design the company is looking at for its future electric models. Expect the production version to be far sober than this, but it could retain the clean, swooping lines carried all around. Honestly, the Vision Urbanaut looks more like a futuristic boombox than a mode of transportation, but it gets our vote of approval.



VOLKSWAGEN ID. LIFE

Volkswagen's ID electric vehicle line-up is registering robust sales globally on the back of the ID.3 and ID.4, with the ID.6 recently added to the line-up. Next up is a sub-compact electric SUV designed by Slovak automobile designer Jozef Kaba, underpinned by Volkswagen's MEB platform. The concept previews the 2025 model and will take the ID.2 moniker, slotted as an entry-level product in the EV chain. Powering the concept is a 57 kWh battery pack with a front-wheel motor, giving a range of 401 km and a total output of 231 bhp. The interior is made from recycled materials and natural wood and seats four.



RENAULT MEGANE E-TECH

Renault Group took the drapes off the first of its generation 2.0 electric vehicles, the all-new Megane E-Tech Electric, marking the beginning of a new chapter of the electric revolution that started some 10 years ago. The Megane E-Tech Electric is the first model in the range to benefit from the Alliance's CMF-EV platform, dedicated to all-electric vehicles for each brand's new-generation model. The Megane E-Tech Electric comes in two variants—a 96 kW, 130 bhp and 250 Nm, or a 160 kW, 218 bhp and 300 Nm. It takes the Megane E-Tech Electric from 0 to 100 kmph in just 7.4 seconds.



HYUNDAI ROBOTAXI

A Level-4 autonomous system, a dedicated new battery platform, and a completely driverless car for public transport from Hyundai will hit the roads in 2023. The Robotaxi is based on the Ioniq 5 all-electric crossover, fitted with over 30 exterior sensors, comprising of cameras, radar and lidar that not only gives a 360-degree view but also detects objects at an “ultra-long-range” while on the move. Hyundai's Ioniq 5 Robotaxi will begin transporting passengers via self-driving service Lyft, which claims to have conducted hundreds of thousands of autonomous trips in Las Vegas and will be operational in multiple US markets.





MERCEDES-MAYBACH CONCEPT EQS

If you thought that Maybach would be left behind in Daimler's transition to electrifying its range, then think again. The Maybach EQS is the electrified counterpart of the ICE Maybach GLS and serves as a basis for the soon-to-be-unveiled flagship SUV. The interior promises luxurious travel at the highest level with the rear seats replicating that of a first-class suite with the passenger's feet floating above the floor covering. The exterior is more dynamic than the inside, as the silhouette extends to the entire length of the vehicle, starting with a low front end, flowing over the sloping A-pillar and roof contour. Actually, the picture above presents a far better case for itself.

HERO MOTOCORP

THE JOURNEY OF A GLORIOUS DECADE & THE ROAD AHEAD

IT

was on August 9, 2011, that Hero MotoCorp unveiled its new brand identity at the iconic O2 Arena in London, after an amicable separation from its erstwhile partner Honda Motor Co.

It was a bold and courageous decision for the Indian partner Hero to acquire the stakes of a global giant in the JV, and commence a solo journey. Led by

Dr Pawan Munjal, Chairman and CEO, Hero MotoCorp has been the dominant market leader in India with over 50% share in the domestic motorcycle market. The company achieved the coveted title of being the world's no. 1 two-wheeler company in terms of volume sales in 2001 and has successfully retained this leadership position for 20 consecutive years!

AN ELECTRIFIED FUTURE

With its Vision to 'Be The Future of Mobility', Hero MotoCorp is committed to bringing sustainable mobility solutions to its customers and is accelerating its focus on producing electric vehicles (EVs) as a part of its product portfolio.

The company is in the process of developing EVs at its R&D facility, the Centre of Innovation and Technology (CIT) in the northern Indian city of Jaipur, and plans to launch its first electric vehicle by March 2022.

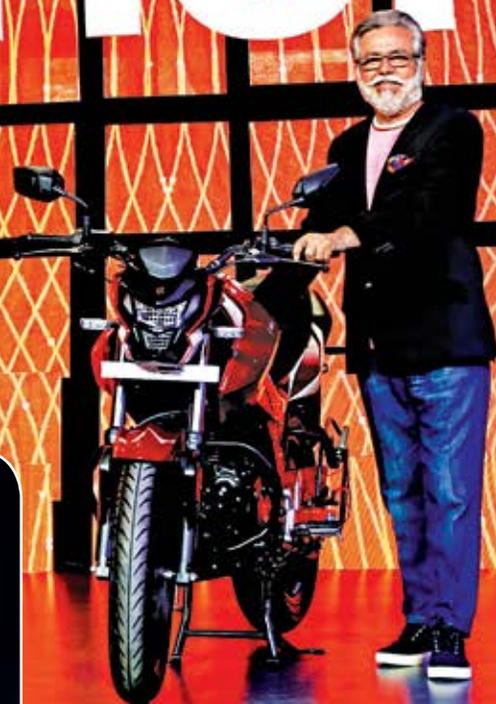
In keeping with its strategic vision of providing battery powered vehicles or EVs to its customers, Hero MotoCorp has forged a strategic partnership with a smart mobility innovation company called Gogoro Inc. based out of Taiwan. Gogoro Inc. owns the world's largest battery-swapping network and through this partnership, Hero MotoCorp will bring Gogoro's battery swapping platform to India and other global markets. Hero will also collaborate with Gogoro on the development of electric vehicles and co-develop Hero-Gogoro powered mobility solutions for the market.

Apart from developing its own EV product, Hero MotoCorp was among the

IN 2011...

- Hero MotoCorp had only three manufacturing facilities. Today, it has eight world-class manufacturing plants
- All its manufacturing facilities were in India. Today, the company has two factories in global locations, one each in Colombia and Bangladesh, with assembly lines in several other countries in Africa and Latin America
- Hero MotoCorp was selling its products in only four countries. Today, its global footprint spans across 42 markets in Asia, Africa, Central & South America and the Middle East, with brand presence in several more countries
- The company had a small R&D set-up. Today, Hero MotoCorp has built up a world-class R&D ecosystem, with state-of-the-art world-class facilities in India and Germany
- The workforce of the company comprised mostly of Indian origin people. Today, the talent pool at Hero MotoCorp comprises nearly a dozen nationalities from around the world, with a strong focus on diversity and inclusion (D&I)
- Participating in international motorsports was a distant dream. Today, its motorsports team, Hero MotoSports Team Rally, is the flagbearer of Indian motorsports, with race wins and podium finishes at several global rallies
- Hero MotoCorp was present only in Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) motorcycles and scooters. Today, the company is on the cusp of launching its own Electric Vehicles (EVs) and modular mobility solutions
- In keeping with its mission to 'Create, Collaborate & Inspire', Hero MotoCorp has forged partnerships with global marquee brands, including iconic American motorcycle company Harley Davidson and Taiwan-based EV maker Gogoro Inc, owner of the world's largest battery swapping network

Hero



LEAD THE WAY

Led by Dr Pawan Munjal, Hero MotoCorp is the market leader in the Indian motorcycle market



THE ROAD AHEAD

The success of Hero MotoCorp has been built on a bedrock of its strong relations and partnerships right from the start

Hero MotoCorp will use this core strength to springboard into 2030:

- It will create success through riding on sustainability internally as well as externally, leading the way on multiple fronts from reducing dependency on fossil fuels to looking at alternatives such as hydrogen solar power

- Hero MotoCorp is aiming for Global EV Leadership by 2030

- Targeting 100% product recyclability, along with Carbon Neutral Dealerships by 2030

- Hero MotoCorp is aiming to launch its EVs in 20 of its global markets

- 15% of the company's total volumes will come from global markets outside of India by 2025

- And 30% of its total sales to come through digital channels by 2030

first companies to see the potential and invested in an EV start-up Ather Energy in the year 2016, and currently Hero holds a 37% stake in the company.

RAPID EXPANSION OF GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

Hero MotoCorp is further entrenching its presence in key geographies with the newly devised strategy called R4 - Revitalize, Recalibrate, Revive and Revolutionize. Hero MotoCorp is also investing in tomorrow across its global markets through brand building, developing an enhanced and geography-specific product portfolio, razor sharp focus on sales, and operational initiatives.

FUTURE READY R&D ECOSYSTEM

Riding on its robust R&D capabilities, Hero MotoCorp continues to develop new and innovative technologies in a constant endeavor towards creating future-ready mobility solutions. The company's Centre for Innovation and Technology (CIT) in the northern Indian city of Jaipur is a world-class facility with more than 1,000 professionals and automotive experts from around the globe, working in an environment of excellence to develop future-ready products. In addition, the Hero Tech Center Germany (HTCG) near Munich is a hub of design excellence. Focusing on new product design and development for global markets, it helps in keeping Hero MotoCorp ahead of the curve and meet evolving customer demands. ■



COLD COMFORT

**WITH WINTER
JUST AROUND
THE CORNER,
HERE ARE OUR
TOP TIPS TO
KEEP YOU SAFE
WHEN DRIVING
IN THE COLD**

D

iving in winters can be tricky. Motorists have to deal with low visibility because of foggy conditions. Low light conditions make it difficult to see far and the cold can play havoc with your car's internals. It's nothing short of a battle between the driver and the open road. There are some maintenance jobs and safety checks that are specific for winter. To make sure you don't end up with a roadside popsicle, have a look under the hood to ensure things are in good shape. As with any weather change, you should go for regular maintenance check-up to make sure your car is up to date on all items that need regular upkeep. Doing this will help minimise or even avoid situations where you have to cope with problems such as cold-starting issues. The following winter maintenance jobs will keep you and your car out of trouble.



READ THE MANUAL: The owner's manual will tell you when to change the tyres, brakes, filters and fluids. Follow the service schedule recommended.

DEMISTING THE SCREENS: Leave enough time to demist the inside of your car before setting off. Make sure the car's blower is pushing out plenty of hot air and that the air-con is on so the mist doesn't build up again. The heater will ensure that any moisture entering the cabin evaporates quickly. Switch on the air-conditioner in refresh mode for improved demisting of the interiors.

CHANGE OIL, FILTER IF NEEDED: High-quality engine oil protects the motor from cold start situations. Never rev the engine immediately after starting up. Let the lubricants circulate through the entire engine.

WINTER DRIVING: THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND



1. Clean or change your air and oil filter if needed

2. The cold can reduce a battery's performance by up to 50 per cent. Get it tested if it's three years old

3. Visibility is key in winters. Check lights, carry extra bulbs and fuses

4. Keep the engine's belts, hoses in good condition

TYRES NEED TO BE FIT: Make sure pressure in the tyres is maintained at recommended levels. If you are driving in snowy conditions, reduce tyre pressure by a few PSI for better traction. Again, don't overinflate the tyres in wet conditions as it will lead to traction loss.

FIT BATTERY: Have your car battery and charging checked. A car's battery tends to work much harder during winter. Cold temperatures can reduce a battery's performance by up to 50 per cent, so make sure you have tested it if it's older than three years. Clean the battery terminals regularly to ensure proper flow of charge. Also, make sure the terminals are free of corrosion.

INSPECT YOUR LIGHTS: Visibility is a key factor in the winters. Check your car's lights (taillights, signal bulbs, brake lights, headlights and even cabin light) to see if they are working properly. Always carry an extra set of bulbs and fuses just in case something goes off. Adjust the headlights to make sure they are not blinding other motorists coming from the opposite direction. Avoid high beam in foggy conditions.

CHECK YOUR BELTS AND HOSES: Your engine's belt and hoses must be in good working condition. Cold temperatures can weaken these to the point of cracking and snapping. Damaged engine belts won't be able to withstand extreme cold, so they should be checked before the onset of winters.

CHANGE THE AIR FILTER: Check the air filter and replace it if it's clogged. Dust and contaminants accumulated over a period of time chokes the air filter. Once you turn on the car's heater, these contaminants could blow through the blower into the car's cabin.

EMERGENCY KIT: Lastly, prepare an emergency kit and keep it in your car in case there is an emergency. Also, have your phone ready with you as well as some food, water, flashlight, flares and a first-aid kit. ■



14 WAYS TO GREEN UP YOUR DRIVE

A HYBRID OR AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE MIGHT BE UNAFFORDABLE RIGHT NOW, BUT THAT DOESN'T STOP YOU FROM EXTRACTING THE MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY FROM YOUR CURRENT CAR. SOME TIPS TO KEEP YOUR CAR'S FOOTPRINT AS SMALL AS POSSIBLE

Not owning an electric or hybrid vehicle shouldn't stop you from contributing to the green cause. You can achieve a lot by doing a few simple things that will not only make your car more fuel efficient, but also help reduce emission of greenhouse gases. Some tips to lend a tinge of green to your car and your driving.

LIGHTEN UP: Cluttering your vehicle adds to the overall weight of the car, and the heavier it weighs the more fuel it consumes. Only carry what you need and leave the rest at home. If you carry extra load on the roof, the air resistance can increase fuel consumption by as much as 20 per cent. Take off the luggage or bike rack when not in use.



देश का नं. 1 हिंदी न्यूज़ ऐप

जुड़े रहिए हर खबर से,
कहीं भी, कभी भी

अभी डाउनलोड करें

aajtak.in/app

उपलब्ध है



KEEP IT TUNED: The best way to reduce exhaust emission is to keep your car well-tuned and properly maintained. With a proper tune-up, you can save up to four per cent on your fuel bill and up to 40 per cent by replacing a faulty oxygen sensor. Do your own monthly checks, and take the car for a professional tune-up once a year.

PICK THE RIGHT GEAR: Driving in a lower gear than needed increases fuel consumption. In a car with a manual gearbox, try to shift up as soon as you car settles to a comfortable speed in any particular gear. In an automatic, try shift to overdrive mode on the highway.

BE KIND: Use fuel with good detergent additives to keep the fuel injectors clean and perform efficiently. Make sure the air intake doesn't have leaks or obstructions and distributors and other electrical parts are working properly. Keep the engine clean as it makes it easier to spot leakages; cover the electrical parts with plastic while washing it.

SLOW DOWN: Fuel consumption increases significantly at higher speeds. Driving at 100 kmph consumes 25 per cent more fuel than cruising at 60 kmph. Aggressive driving also adds to the wear and tear of the tyres, brakes and engine. Try to maintain a steady speed and anticipate stops. Also, avoid a heavy foot on the accelerator. Sudden acceleration causes inefficient burning of fuel and increases emission.

DRIVE SMOOTH: Driving in stop-start traffic conditions is a lot less efficient and causes more pollution than driving at constant speed. Keep an eye on the traffic ahead and slow down gently by lifting off rather than heavy braking. While accelerating, a gradual increase in speed is a more fuel-efficient way of driving than sudden surges of speed. If you can, try to avoid driving

in peak traffic hours.

ROLL UP THE WINDOWS: Avoid driving with windows open unless you keep your speed under 50 kmph. Driving with the windows rolled down at high speeds increases aerodynamic drag, which lowers the fuel economy.

CHECK YOUR FUEL CAP: About 17 per cent cars on the road have broken or missing fuel caps. How does it re-

SMOOTH & STEADY

Driving in the hills need extra care. The thin air means extra load on the engine. Avoid frequent upshifting of gears



ally matter? Escaping fuel vapour not only hurts the fuel economy, but also releases smog-causing agents in the air.

STOP IDLING: An idling engine results in a considerable amount of fuel wastage apart from releasing harmful tailpipe emission. If you are going to stop at a traffic signal for more than three minutes, it's better to switch off the engine.

CHECK YOUR PLUG: Make sure your spark plugs are in good conditions. Damaged or dirty spark plugs can lead to inconsistent firing, which can result in erratic performance. It will lead to excess fuel consumption and leave behind potentially damaging deposits on the cylinder head.

REDUCE BATTERY DRAIN: Make sure to shut off power-consuming accessories before turning off the ignition. This decreases the engine load the next time you start up. Items that are plugged into your vehicle's 12V socket such as phone charger, gaming consoles etc. can increase load on the alternator. This in turn puts added load on the engine affecting fuel consumption.

LAY OFF THE BRAKES: Driving with your foot on the brake pedal will not only wear out brake pads adding to your maintenance budget but can also increase fuel consumption by as much as 35 per cent.

STRAIGHTEN UP: Improper alignment not only causes the tyres to wear out more quickly, it also forces your engine to work harder. Correct alignment enhances fuel efficiency by 10 per cent.

CHECK YOUR AIR FILTER: Nearly one in four cars needs an air filter replacement at any point. A clean air filter can improve mileage by upwards of 10 per cent. ■

THE STUNNING NEW **KIGER**

Renault, which is in its 10th year of operations in India, has launched the stunning and bold new Kiger. We take a closer look



T rue to its trait of launching revolutionary products, Renault has once again set new benchmarks with the Kiger. The Kiger comes with a unique crossover design which will appeal to the masses. The curvaceous lines make sure that one look at the Kiger is enough for you to fall in love with it. Then there is the technology to boot as well. The tri-oc-ta pure vision LED headlamps with LED DRLs day & night and the C-shaped tail lights take care of the lighting. There is

also the shark fin antenna and sporty rear spoiler which coupled with the chrome grille complete the muscular design of the Kiger. Not to forget the 205 mm of ground clearance offered.

Inside, the Kiger impresses with a smart cabin which combines technology, functionality and roominess. There is a touch screen infotainment system which is Apple- and Android-ready along with a plethora of storage options. Best in class rear room apart, the Kiger also offers a spacious 405 litre boot.

When it comes to the engine, the Renault Kiger offers a 100 bhp, 1.0 litre turbo petrol which offers more performance and a sporty drive. It also boasts best in segment fuel efficiency of 20.5 kmpl. There is also an option of the 1.0 -litre Energy petrol engine. One can have the Kiger with a MT, CVT or AMT as well.

Finally the Kiger is loaded with safety features which include four air-bags, ABS and EBD, apart from a host of other safety features. A complete package, we must say. ■



STAND OUT OF THE CROWD
The Renault Kiger features a rather imposing design which makes it unique. Add to it is the two-tone paint scheme

SHORT CUTS

BOOKINGS OPEN FOR THE MINI COOPER SE ELECTRIC

BMW Group India has begun accepting pre-bookings for the MINI 3-door Cooper SE electric hatchback. This will be the group's first-ever electric offering in the market and you can book the car exclusively online for a token of Rs 1 lakh. The 3-door Cooper SE made its global debut in 2019 and is the electrified version of the iconic British hatchback. There's no word on the pricing yet for the upcoming offering. MINI India has confirmed the electric 3-door will be available in four colours—white silver, midnight black, moonwalk grey and British racing green.



MARUTI SUZUKI UNVEILS S-ASSIST

Maruti Suzuki India Ltd launched an industry-first AI (artificial intelligence)-based 24x7 virtual car assistant app, 'S-Assist', for its NEXA customers. The scan and voice-enabled virtual car assistant optimises the application of AI and machine learning. Maruti Suzuki NEXA customers will be able to access S-Assist through the 'Maruti Suzuki Rewards' mobile app available on both iOS

and Android devices. The S-Assist is available free for NEXA customers.

DRAFT RULES FOR CARRYING A CHILD ON A MOTORCYCLE

Motocyclists may soon have to ensure that children between nine months and four years riding pillion are wearing a standardised helmet and that bikes stay at speeds below 40 kmph. Till the time the Bureau of Indian Standards comes out with specifications for such a harness, the Ministry of Road



Transport and Highways specified a lightweight, adjustable, waterproof and durable harness designed to hold weight up to 30 kg.

MERCEDES-BENZ INDIA IMPLEMENTS 'RETAIL OF THE FUTURE'

Mercedes-Benz India has introduced its customer-centric 'Retail of the Future' (ROTF) business model, ushering in a transition in the luxury retail landscape. This new model, first announced in June 2021, was launched after the successful beta testing phase. With ROTF, Mercedes-Benz India will retain the ownership of the entire stock of cars and retail them via appointed franchise partners by invoicing them directly to customers. Mercedes-Benz India will also be responsible for processing and fulfilling

customer orders. With ROTF, there will be one nationally set price uniform across the country.

FORD WRAPS UP INDIA OPERATIONS

Ford India ceased domestic as well as export manufacturing of vehicles for sale as it winds down its Sanand vehicle assembly plant by the end of 2021, and Chennai engine and vehicle assembly plants by mid-2022. Ford in India will restructure its operations with plans to expand its Chennai-based team and bring to market some of its global vehicles and electrified SUVs instead. Following accumulated operating losses of more than \$2 billion over the past 10 years and a \$0.8 billion non-operating write-down of assets in 2019, the restructuring is expected to create a sustainably profitable business in India. ■



WE AREN'T A COURT OF JUDGEMENT

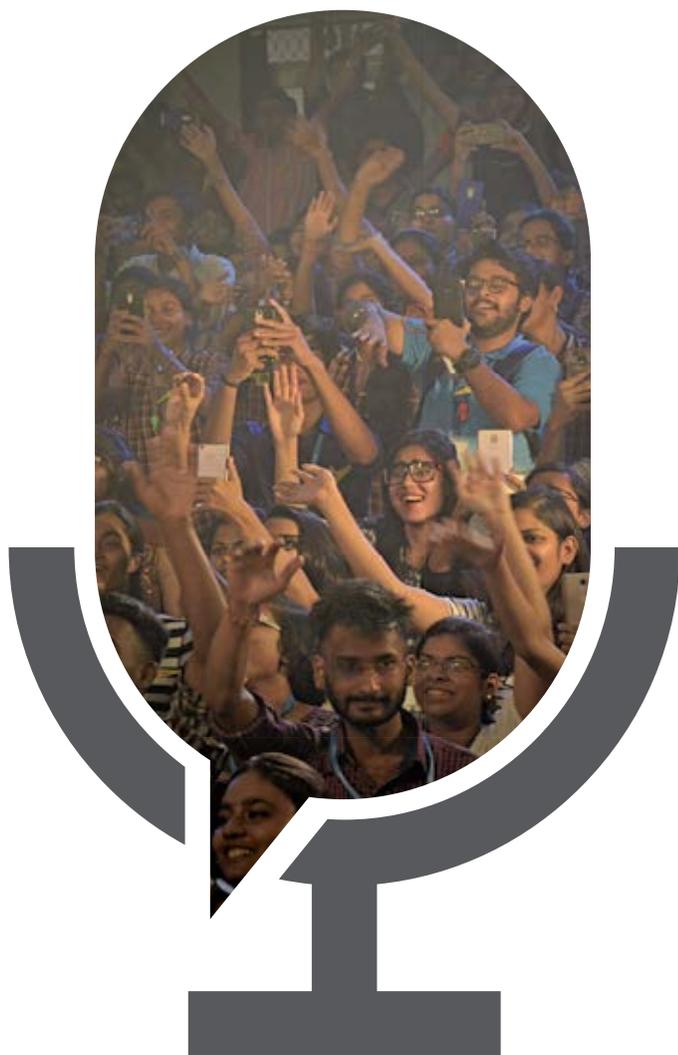
To tell you what's good or bad,
what mindset you should have,
what ideology you should follow,
who is right or wrong.

These are your decisions to make.
Never ours.

We believe in just one thing.
Your voice matters.
Irrespective of who you are,
where you come from,
where you stand,
what you do
and, who you support.

We are the India Today Group.
Where every voice finds its right.
And every right finds a voice.

**WE'RE ALWAYS
IN CONVERSATION
WITH YOU.**



INDIA'S DEMOCRATIC
NEWSROOM



GURDEEP BHALLA

RARIFIED AIR

A few hundred metres from the highest point of Umling La, a BRO signpost reminds you how far you have come

FLYING HIGH

BY DIPAYAN DUTTA

There is no high quite like the drive to the highest of the Himalayan passes. Umling La, at 19,300 feet above sea level, is nothing less than a high class adventure. Our ride on this epic drive was the recently launched Mahindra XUV 700 which rose to the challenge rather well. Despite having the two-wheel drive variants with us, the XUV 700s took on the challenge like they were born for it. Be it crossing the famous Gata Loops in the dead of night or taking on the jagged rocks of Photi La, the XUV 700 never missed a beat. Even as we approached areas higher than the Everest Base Camp, with temperatures around the minus 15 degree centigrade mark and with air so thin that most humans need oxygen support, the XUV 700s soldiered on and emerged, literally, at the very top. ■



Incredible India

CELEBRATING THE ETERNAL SPIRIT OF INDIA

India, amongst the world's oldest, richest and most diverse cultures, is a mosaic of multicultural experiences and has attractions ranging from culture, heritage, and UNESCO World Heritage sites as its traditional USPs. The uniqueness of India lies in the astounding fact that the spirit of the country is eternal and invincible. Even wave after wave of invaders who descended on the country, founded empires and ruled over different parts of the country as kings and emperors could not subdue or subjugate the indomitable soul of Bharatvarsh. The Ministry of Tourism has been promoting the uniqueness of India as holistic tourist destination under the 'Incredible India' brand line over the years.

India's multi-coloured and multi-layered ethos is rooted in its ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. Every region in India is identified with its unique folk dances, food, music, attire, and handicraft, which reflect a harmonious blend of art, culture and religion.

There are deep cultural continuities that tie the people of the country. Indian food is as diverse as its culture. In fact, it is this quintessential aspect of food that helps the people living in the country as well as abroad to relate to India. Apart from attracting tourists with eye-catching beauty, different destinations of the country offer choicest varieties of ethnic Indian food, enriched with historical and cultural underpinnings.

The Tourism Ministry has been over the years holistically promoting niche tourism products of India such as eco and wildlife tourism, sustainable tourism, cruise tourism, golf tourism and wellness tourism. India is a land of plenty and opulence. Benign nature has liberally endowed India with an abundance of natural resources like rivers, mountains, lakes, birds, animals, fishes and so on, which contribute to India's natural wealth. In addition to indulging in material pursuits, India indulges with no less zeal and fervour in spiritual pursuits if only to strike a balance between the needs of the body and of the soul.

Significantly, the campaign of 'Dekho Apna Desh' run by the Tourism Ministry has been very effective in promoting domestic tourism which has picked up considerably. Lesser known destinations have also been receiving good tourist footfalls.

Every nuance of the Indian saga presents itself on a colossal, larger-than-life scale, comparable only with the great Himalayas that overshadow it. The Himalayan range across the entire northern part of India provides a great variety of choices including adventure activities to choose for the wanderlust. Surrounded by the great wall of the Himalayas in the North, the country offers a kaleidoscopic landscape and opportunities – the scenic terrains of Jammu and Kashmir, the fertile plains of Punjab, the Himalayan foothills of Uttar Pradesh and the Ganges river valley to the East; the Thar desert of

Rajasthan, the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat, the Western and Eastern Ghats, the Deccan plateau and the backwaters of Kerala – India thrives in abundance.

India also has an amazing architectural legacy extending back through the centuries. Viewing these majestic monuments is like travelling back in time. The dynasties that ruled over parts of India have left behind many monuments, ranging from towering forts such as the Red fort in Delhi, impressive mausoleums like the mesmerising Taj Mahal, ceremonial parks and gardens such as the Lodi Gardens in Delhi, grand cities such as Fatehpur Sikri near Agra, or Hampi in Karnataka, and majestic temples such as the Sun Temple at Konark and Meenakshi temple at Madurai.

India has achieved the landmark figure of administering 100 crore plus Covid-19 doses. Coupled with a strong and improved aviation and road infrastructure it will help the travel and tourism industry rebound and achieve pre-pandemic levels in this special year as India celebrates its 75 years of Independence.

India is the second largest country in Asia and the seventh largest and second most populous country on Earth. It comprises as much as one third of Asia and supports one seventh of humanity. To know, to understand, and to discover the wonder that is India, tourists need to come innumerable times to this enchanting land. As the celebrated American writer Mark Twain succinctly describes, India is one country 'all men long to see, and having seen it once, would not give up that glimpse for all the wonders of the world.'



Planting Hope

Core Work: Since the age of 12, Jairam Meena has been planting saplings in open public land. He has planted over 1.1 million saplings till now and has no plans to stop

By RAHUL NORONHA

Jairam Meena remembers accompanying his grandfather, Mathura Lal Meena, as a 12-year-old, to go plant saplings around their village, Basond, whenever and wherever they could find space. Around 40 years on, not only has Jairam kept up this practice, but also made it his life's mission.

At the age of 16, Jairam lost his grandfather and planted 11 saplings over the years in his own home compound in his memory. The planting of those 11 saplings gave Jairam a bigger goal to aspire to—planting 1,100 saplings. This was followed by another, to plant 31,000 saplings, and then to plant 1.1 million saplings. He achieved that goal two years ago. “My grandfather would often say that planting a sapling is as pious a task as performing a *yagna*. Years later, I heard a holy man in Rishikesh repeat the same words,” says Jairam.

The road leading to his village from the highway is flanked by neem and *bargad* (banyan) trees—a testimony to his almost fanatical pursuit of the cause. There are trees alongside canals in Basond, on government land, in police station compounds, dispensaries, schools and temple

GREEN THUMB

Jairam Meena plants a sapling



JAIRAM MEENA, 52

Farmer

Basond Village,
Sheopur
district, Madhya
Pradesh

premises—all planted by Jairam as saplings. His plantation work now cuts across states. He has done plantation drives in the neighbouring states of Rajasthan and even the farther off Uttarakhand.

Jairam's work is also self-funded. A small farmer with 11 bighas of land and a family of four to support, he has to be careful about how much he spends on his passion. He has his own nursery where he prepares saplings from seeds and he engages local kids to help him in his cause. “During the season when neem trees bear fruit, I ask village kids to collect them and give them to me. In exchange, I give them biscuits,” he says with a smile. The germinated saplings are planted in polythene bags and plastic containers, all collected by Jairam. “A lot of fertilisers, weedicides and pesticides come in plastic bottles or packets. Farmers usually throw these away after using the content. Some years ago, I decided I would go around and collect these packets and use them to hold the saplings,” says Jairam.

He started his planting journey alone, carrying buckets of water on his bicycle and travelling great distances to tend to the plants, but now he has a community of people



RAJWANT RAWAT

HAPPINESS MANTRA

“Do your thing. The world will laugh at you at first, but eventually when they realise your passion is real, they will laugh with you”

who volunteer to take care of the plants. About 20 years ago, the state forest department stepped in and gave him a bicycle along with seeds to prepare saplings with and also some saplings. “Neem is the ideal tree to plant in these areas, given the shortage of water and slightly rocky soil,” says Jairam. Though educated only up to class 4, Jairam is an authority on the tree species found in the area and how to take care of them.

The compound around Jairam’s house has created an ecosystem for birds and peacocks and grey francolins can be seen roaming the grounds. “In the initial days, most of my family and friends, even my wife and children, felt I was mentally ill because of my obsession with planting saplings. They eventually realised that it’s not just a phase,” he says. Receiving the prestigious Amrita Devi Bishnoi Award in 2006 for working in the environmental sector changed the way everyone looked at him. “Some derive happiness from drinking alcohol, eating fancy food or from accumulated wealth. I get happiness from seeing saplings planted by me growing into trees,” he says.

So what is his next big goal? “I want to spend the rest of my life teaching people, especially kids, about trees, birds and animals and their importance in our lives. Agriculture is the mainstay of this region. Cropping patterns have changed over the years and subsoil water is being drawn at an unprecedented rate. Trees will play a crucial role if agriculture is to be sustained,” says Jairam.

A recent flood in July washed away a large part of Jairam’s nursery and destroyed a part of his house. He is now busy rebuilding his nursery and trying to salvage whatever he can. The flood has clearly not dampened his spirit. ■

WHAT MAKES ME HAPPY



BHUVAN BAM

YouTuber and comedian

“I am happy if I am able to do what I want to do without any hindrance. *Kyunki dimaag mein already bahut chalta rehta hai* (because there’s already a lot going on in my head). If I want to eat something when I am hungry, I don’t eat it. If I want to shoot or write something and I can’t find my phone, I stop. I like living in the moment. It keeps me sane. I have stopped thinking about what’s going to happen. This lockdown and the past few months have made me realise that there’s no point thinking about the future. You can never predict what will happen next”

Happiness Quest: A joint enterprise of India Today and the RPG Group celebrating exemplary initiatives to spread happiness



BACK ON ITS FEET

The tourism sector, among the hardest hit by Covid, is in reboot mode. The India Today Tourism Survey and Awards 2021 recognised the work done by states to revive the industry

BY SHELLY ANAND



THE VICTORS Winners of the India Today Tourism Survey and Awards 2021. (From left to right) Vikas Kamble, Nishant Jain, Santosh Kumar Mall, Milind Borikar, Satpal Maharaj, G. Kishan Reddy, Raj Chengappa, Dr Jagmohan Singh Raju, Sanjay Kumar, Sindhu Rupesh, J.D. Pushparaj and Trupti Vyas

CHANDRADEEP KUMAR



Travel not only opens one's mind and heart, but a change of place and pace can also impart new vigour into one's life. With Covid, lockdowns and restrictions on travel somewhat behind us and thanks to a massive vaccination drive, the tourism sector is opening up. There is a renewed optimism in people keen to experience things and places.

Tourism plays an important role in India's economy and will be central to a full economic recovery. The sector generates a massive number of jobs with over 40 million people directly or indirectly working in it, contributes over \$200 billion (Rs 14.87 lakh crore) in revenues and shores up our GDP. As per the India

Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), the tourism sector in India is expected to grow by 6.7 per cent by 2029, accounting for 9.2 per cent of the total economy; and international tourist arrivals are expected to reach 30.5 million by 2028. However, it is domestic tourism that is expected to drive the growth post the pandemic.

Riding on this positive outlook and to celebrate and recognise the different facets, culture, history and geographies of the country, the India Today Tourism Survey and Awards 2021, held in New Delhi on November 12, brought together experts and stakeholders to debate and discuss how the travel and tourism sector has evolved and the changes it needs to

further bring in to shore up demand. The on-ground event saw panelists share insights on what travel and tourism will look like in the months ahead—and what to expect of the changing preferences of the post-pandemic traveller.

A highlight of the event was the presentation of the awards by G. Kishan Reddy, the Union minister for culture, tourism and development of the northeastern region.

In his introductory remarks, Raj Chengappa, Group Editorial Director (Publishing), INDIA TODAY, reflected on the fact that the summit was being held at a time when tourism is coming out of a long, dark night that lasted almost a year and a half. How-

“2022 will be the year for tourism in India and we are working on a comprehensive policy towards it”

G. KISHAN REDDY

Union minister for Culture, Tourism and Development of the Northeastern Region



CHANDRADEEP KUMAR

THE WINNERS



UTTARAKHAND

- **BEST ADVENTURE DESTINATION**
*Rishikesh, Dehradun**
- **BEST SPIRITUAL DESTINATION**
*Kedarnath Dham**
- **BEST WILDLIFE DESTINATION**
*Jim Corbett National Park and Museum, Ramnagar**



MAHARASHTRA

- **BEST HERITAGE DESTINATION**
*Ajanta Caves**
- **BEST MOUNTAIN DESTINATION**
*Mahabaleshwar***



PUNJAB

- **MOST SCENIC ROADS**
*Nangal to Bhakra Dam Road**
- **BEST ICONIC LANDSCAPES DESTINATIONS** *Nangal Dam, Ropar***



TAMIL NADU

- **BEST MOUNTAIN DESTINATION**
*Coonoor, Nilgiris district**
- **BEST FESTIVAL DESTINATION**
*For Pongal**
- **MOST SCENIC ROADS**
*Kolli Hills, Namakkal district***



GOA

- **BEST ADVENTURE DESTINATION**
*Bungee Jumping, Mayem Lake, North Goa***
- **BEST BEACHES & COASTAL DESTINATION**
*Ashvem Beach, Mandrem, North Goa***



BIHAR

- **BEST SPIRITUAL DESTINATION**
*Both Gaya, Gaya district***



GUJARAT

- **BEST BEACHES & COASTAL DESTINATION**
*Shivrajpur Beach**
- **BEST WILDLIFE DESTINATION**
*Gir National Park***
- **BEST HERITAGE DESTINATION**
*Dholavira, Kutch***



RAJASTHAN

- **BEST ICONIC LANDSCAPES DESTINATION**
*Garadia Mahadev, Kota**
- **BEST FESTIVAL DESTINATION**
*Desert Festival, Jaisalmer***



KARNATAKA

- **BEST FESTIVAL DESTINATION**
*Mysuru Dasara***
- **BEST MOUNTAIN DESTINATION**
*Nandi Hills***

*Winner; **Runners-up

ever, he added, holiday travel is back in a big way and 2022 could be the year of great revival for the industry, especially for domestic tourism that accounts for 90 per cent of the earnings from the sector. So, it's time to go, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi says, "vocal for local" and be a part of the 'Dekho Apna Desh' programme that he launched just before the pandemic.

Boost to Domestic Tourism

In his keynote address on 'Domestic tourism and the next big steps for growth in the post-pandemic

"Uttarakhand is focusing on promoting winter tourism in the state, both in the religious arena and the adventure tourism space. The infrastructure is in place to receive tourists at Char Dham...plus we are pushing Auli winter sports in a big way"

SATPAL MAHARAJ

Minister for Tourism, Uttarakhand



CHANDRADEEP KUMAR

world', Union minister Reddy said that the tourism sector was among those that took the biggest hit during the pandemic. He thanked the India Today Group for working towards promoting tourism and recognising the work done by states during such critical and challenging times. He also spoke of the impressive vaccination milestone India has achieved—of having administered a billion vaccine shots—and how it has instilled a sense of confidence in people to travel to tourist destinations again. "It's a victory of Indian democracy and cooperative federal system," he said. He described 2022 as the year of tourism for India and talked about the government's plans to open about 30 museums and how different government departments will come together to aid the tourism sector next year. "We have discussed that there should be a comprehensive tourism policy. We have spoken to stakeholders, tour operators and hotels, and written to different state governments for their inputs," he said.

The Union minister further added that in view of the pandemic, the government aims to provide financial assistance to tour operators through loans. He also said that it has been decided by the government that the first 500,000 international tourists would receive complimentary visas. "We have started the e-visa programme as well for tourists coming in from 70 countries," Reddy added.

Vocal for Local

The session titled 'Dekho Apna Desh—How States are Leading the Tourism Revival', touched upon the fact that states have played an important role in fighting the virus and working toward getting the tourism industry back on its feet. The panel had three speakers—Mil-



MILIND BORIKAR

Director, Directorate of Tourism,
 Maharashtra Tourism

“We have given industrial status to the hospitality industry, with a lot of facilities. We are giving a free hand to the tourism sector”

SANJAY KUMAR

Additional Chief Secretary (tourism),
 Punjab Tourism

“Every state is getting conscious about the dry waste management system. This has become a part of our lives. We are moving towards electric vehicles”

SANTOSH KUMAR MALL

Tourism Secretary, Bihar Tourism

“Gaya has lakhs of people visiting it. It always accounts for the lion’s share in our tourism but there are several untapped locations too”

ind Borikar, director, directorate of tourism, Maharashtra Tourism; Sanjay Kumar, additional chief secretary (tourism), Punjab Tourism; and Santosh Kumar Mall, tourism secretary, Bihar Tourism.

All three speakers spoke of the need for eco-friendly or responsible tourism while agreeing that tapping new locations with an environment-friendly approach is imperative for the health of the sector in the long run. To this end, Kumar suggested states look into issues of dry waste and vehicular movements in order to promote eco-tourism. Bori-

kar mentioned how changes in policy have helped Maharashtra. For instance, the number of permissions one needs to get in order to open a hotel has reduced to 70 from 100. He also talked about the state’s focus on adventure tourism in order to attract the young, agricultural tourism for the urban tourist, and its focus on promoting its 400 forts, beaches and wildlife to give tourism a post-pandemic makeover.

The Big Shift

All walks of life have been touched by the digital revolution and the tour-

ism space is no different. During the session titled ‘Domestic Tourism in the Digital Landscape’, the speakers talked about how there had been a big shift—from offline to online. Digital travellers are the by-product of the pandemic and, going forward, tourism will include both physical and virtual experiences. On the panel were Dhruv Shringi, CEO, Yatra.com; Rohit Kapoor, CEO, OYO India and South East Asia; and Babu Panicker, managing director, Panicker’s Travel. Talking about the revival of the sector, Shringi said that in the past three

FROM CABIN CRITICS TO THOSE MAKING INDIA SHINE

We believe in just one thing.
Your voice matters. Irrespective
of who you are, where you
come from, where you stand,
what you do and, who you
support. We are the India
Today Group. Where every
voice finds its right. And
every right finds a voice.

**WE'RE ALWAYS
IN CONVERSATION
WITH YOU.**



INDIA'S DEMOCRATIC
NEWSROOM



DHRUV SHRINGI
CEO, Yatra.com

“A seismic shift in behaviour from offline to online is phenomenal not just from an industry perspective, but also from the perspective of a customer”

ROHIT KAPOOR
CEO, OYO India and South East Asia

“Travel is all about experiences. The allocation of money now is much more towards experiences and it is an accelerating trend and not a descending one”

BABU PANICKER
Managing Director,
Panicker's Travel

“Revenge tourism will definitely pick up and people will be out from next year onwards. It's happening already but will gradually increase”

months, there has been 30 to 40 per cent growth in general travel, bringing it close to the pre-pandemic levels. Domestic travel is almost back, and while business travel is slightly muted at present, it should pick up by early next year, he added. Highlighting that the post-pandemic traveller is concerned about sanitation and cleanliness and that hotels need to introduce contactless check-ins, Kapoor also talked about the need to reduce

emissions and for tourism destinations to reinvent themselves. He also mentioned that a key post-pandemic trend, due to the 'work from anywhere' concept, will be people taking frequent and short breaks, maybe even eight to 10 in a year. As per Panicker, who runs a travel agency that is dependent on travellers through surface transport, business has been badly affected and he has yet to see light at the end of the tunnel.

Awards and Accolades

The summit ended with Reddy presenting the awards to the representatives of the winning states. To determine the winners, a nationwide poll was conducted. The destinations under several categories were publicised on a multimedia platform and readers were requested to cast their votes. The results were collated by IPSOS, which also conducted an on-ground survey, to arrive at the final results. ■

IndiaContent

**SEARCH FOR
EDITORIAL IMAGES
ENDS HERE**



FROM THOSE WHO ARE FULL OF HOPE TO THOSE WHO NEED IT THE MOST

We believe in just one thing.
Your voice matters. Irrespective
of who you are, where you
come from, where you stand,
what you do and, who you
support. We are the India
Today Group. Where every
voice finds its right. And
every right finds a voice.

**WE'RE ALWAYS
IN CONVERSATION
WITH YOU.**



INDIA'S DEMOCRATIC
NEWSROOM

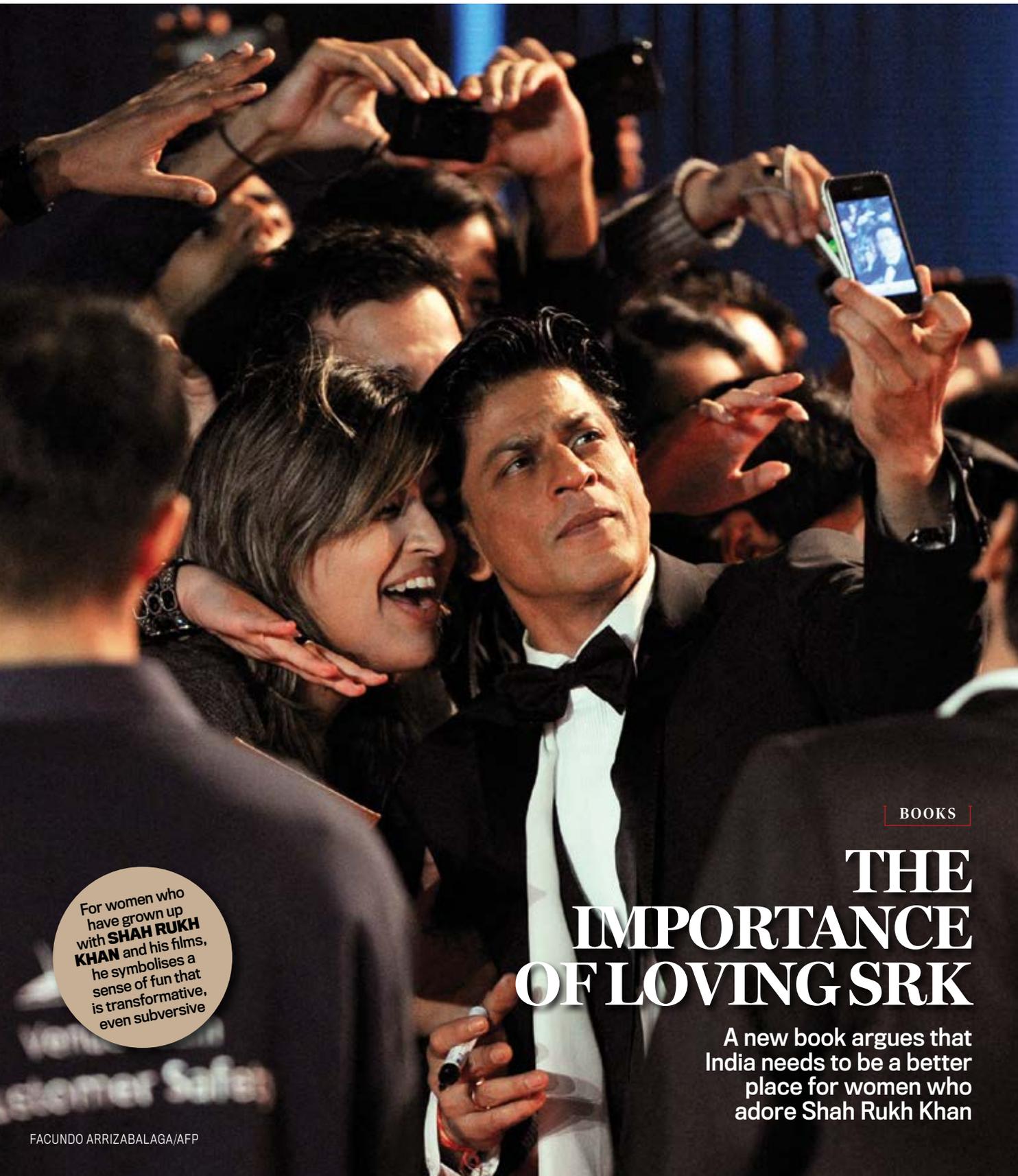
STATE AND
THE ART
PG 113

LEISURE

THE BEATLES: THE
BETTER BRITISH
PG 114

THE ROAD APU
TRAVELLED
PG 116

Q&A WITH
KARTIK AARYAN
PG 120



BOOKS

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVING SRK

A new book argues that India needs to be a better place for women who adore Shah Rukh Khan

For women who have grown up with **SHAH RUKH KHAN** and his films, he symbolises a sense of fun that is transformative, even subversive

The law makes commoners of us all. When Shah Rukh Khan visited his son Aryan at Mumbai's Arthur Road jail on October 21, he did so as an ordinary citizen. Barring noises about a fall from grace, social media that day seemed to put all its weight behind the hashtag #StayStrongSRK. By simply greeting those outside the prison with folded hands, Khan again proved to his fans his charm was authentic, his politeness unshakable. Even in his worst crisis, the actor, they cried, hadn't forsaken his affability.

In her recently released book, *Desperately Seeking Shah Rukh*, Shrayana Bhattacharya makes clear that to those who love Shah Rukh, everything about him matters—films, songs, quips, gestures. Khan's "core appeal", she says, "is that he has always been open and public in being vulnerable—in movies, interviews, while talking about his family, his insecurities. That has been a source of tremendous comfort for women, in particular. This ordeal, I think, has amplified the idea of his fragility."

The familiarity with which Bhattacharya speaks

of Khan does inarguably stem from fondness. He is, after all, her favourite actor. But *Desperately Seeking...* is proof enough that the author knows how to both look *through* and *at* the rose-tinted glasses of fandom. In a book where the adoring gaze of women fans consistently boomerangs, throwing light on their romantic, social and economic yearnings, fandom, Bhattacharya writes, does seem like a legitimate 'way to cultivate a self'.

The hundred-odd women Bhattacharya interviewed over a period of 15 years (2006-2021) all belong to different income groups and demographics. "And yet, we were able to find this one topic [Khan] that united us in conversation, in connection," says Bhattacharya. At times, *Desperately Seeking...* seems to burst with secrets.

An accountant's motivational scrapbook, we read, is filled with all things SRK. She obsessively follows his interviews to better her grammar. Hearing a *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) song makes a future flight attendant realise her fiancé will give her neither love nor travel. In an Ahmedabad slum, Zahira watches *Dil to Pagal Hai* (1997) only when her group of garment and



DESPERATELY SEEKING SHAH RUKH
India's Lonely Young Women and the Search for Intimacy and Independence
 by Shrayana Bhattacharya
 HARPERCOLLINS INDIA
 ₹699; 464 pages



Shrayana Bhattacharya, an SRK fan, knows how to both look through and at the rose-tinted glasses of fandom



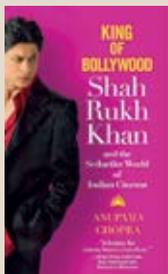
agarbatti workers have saved up enough to hire a generator. For nine-year-old Manju in Uttar Pradesh's Rampur, Khan's films are practically her only education, what Bhattacharya calls a 'Shah Rukh Shiksha Abhiyan'.

"Each time these women were talking about Shah Rukh, praising him or even complaining about him, it was always accompanied with a comment on the men in their immediate life," says Bhattacharya. The men they describe all dot disparate points of the patriarchy spectrum, ranging from emotionally inert to physically violent. Bhattacharya writes that each SRK fan she met had a common complaint: "Few experienced emotional equality or domestic parity in their relationships with men. Each turned to Shah Rukh iconography for consolation or diversion." Khan, some might argue, is an impossible yardstick, but for the women, he's often the only lasting recourse.

A Harvard-trained

DECONSTRUCTING BOLLYWOOD'S BADSHAH

Three more entry points into SRK and his celebrity



KING OF BOLLYWOOD: SHAH RUKH KHAN AND THE SEDUCTIVE WORLD OF INDIAN CINEMA In this 2007 book, journalist Anupama Chopra makes the case that in finding Shah Rukh, India found its identity



THE INNER AND OUTER WORLD OF SHAH RUKH KHAN Released in 2005, this two-part Nasreen Munni Kabir documentary examines both Khan's private, everyday life, as also his public, superstar persona



MY NEXT GUEST WITH DAVID LETTERMAN AND SHAH RUKH KHAN: When Khan appeared on Letterman's Netflix show in 2019, he gave fans everything they like to see—wit, self-deprecation and oodles of charm

STATE AND THE ART

Rochona Majumdar's study of India's art cinema makes the complex relationship between film and nation-building easier to understand

economist, Bhattacharya doesn't just want to know why women in India are under-loved, but also why they are underpaid. Though the theories she presents are without jargon and the data she provides never profuse, it becomes hard to miss her obvious point: India's women have not been adequately cared for by its economy or its men. Wanting to understand the economic lives of women from "the perspective of love, intimacy and relationships", she decided to choose fandom as her lens. "Because fandom is about desire, hope and aspiration, yes, but at the same time, fandom is an economic activity, too. To follow the life and work of a star, you first need money, but you also need free time, technology. You need access to markets."

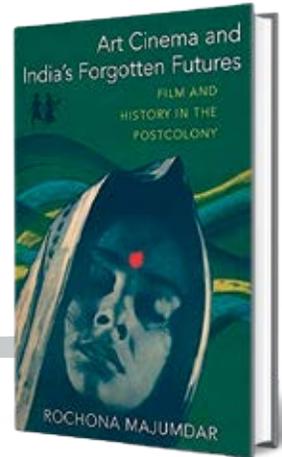
Though liberalisation made Khan ubiquitous, fans were forced to love him differently. Middle-class devotees devoured his TV interviews, while low-income fans made do with only a cassette of his film's songs. The structure of Bhattacharya's book—her fans become poorer with every section—does make stark that disparity, but Khan seems to bring delight even where there is deprivation. For women who have grown up with Khan and his movies, he undeniably symbolises a sense of fun that is transformative, even subversive.

It is easy to imagine Khan as beleaguered today. He obviously has his own set of problems to contend with, but Bhattacharya's book is a reminder: when his women fans find themselves in times of trouble, the star almost always comes to them, whispering those familiar words of assurance: *main hoon na*. ■

—Shreevatsa Nevatia



**ART CINEMA
AND INDIA'S
FORGOTTEN
FUTURES**
Film and History
in the Postcolony
Rochona Majumdar
COLUMBIA
UNIVERSITY PRESS
₹699; 307 pages



It sounds counterintuitive, but there isn't a large body of literature on India's "art cinema"—even as the more popular forms have drawn plenty of analysis in both academic and general publishing. This new book helps fill the gap and makes broadly this argument: that the initial attempts at serious cinema in the first decade or so after India's independence were closely tied to "a narrative of transition to modernity" as well as the larger aspiration of making good citizens. However, at some point in the 1960s and '70s, this approach gave way to one that entailed a more complex, sometimes cynical understanding of both the political present and the possible futures that lay ahead.

Majumdar is aware of the need to establish a definition of "art cinema" and, in her opening chapter, mentions some important historical moments in the "good cinema" discourse in India: such as a 1951 report by the Film Enquiry Committee, a harbinger of many conversations about balancing escapism with realism, art with commerce; or the influence of the writer Marie Seton, who visited India in the mid-'50s and wrote about the befuddling complexities of the country.

While the book's first section is a general history of the development of art cinema and the institutes that helped sustain it, the second section looks at the work of three important filmmakers: Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak and Mrinal Sen. Some readers may

carp at this emphasis on Bengali directors, but Majumdar isn't claiming a comprehensive study of art cinema movements across the country (as if that were possible in a single book). Instead, she discusses their differences in sensibility and motifs from their films—with close analyses of works like *Komal Gandhar* (Ghatak), *Calcutta 71* (Sen) and *Pratidwandi* (Ray).

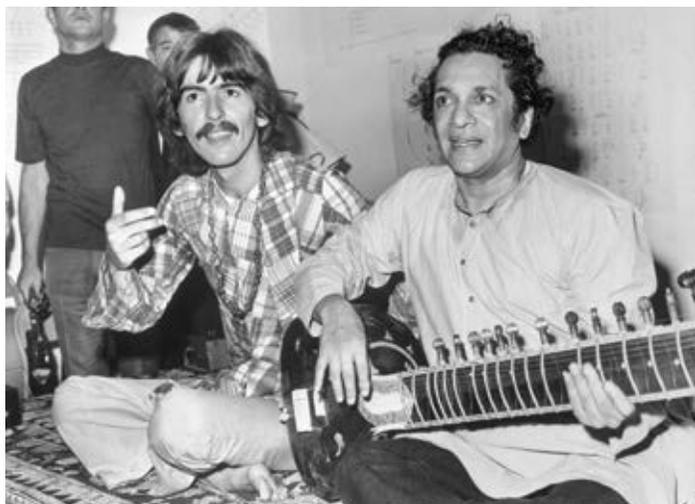
Along the way, many talking points weave into the book's larger thesis: how, for instance, Ray's city trilogy of 1970-75 saw a movement away from his "abiding interest and commitment to women's position in modernity"—the female characters in the city films served as ciphers whose interiority was not much explored—and what this suggested about his sense of history. Or why Sen—a chronicler of angry young men before Bachchan—was perceived as more "political" than Ray. Or how Ghatak, arguably the most uncompromising of the three, fell outside some of the schema used to classify art cinema—"His films were not cosmopolitan; they mixed elements of the regional, popular and folk with those drawn from high culture."

All this adds up to make a pleasingly accessible academic study. While some familiarity with the works of the directors discussed is preferable, even without that familiarity, there is enough here that whets one's interest and provides insights into the relationship between cinema and the nation-building project. ■

—Jai Arjun Singh

**ROCHONA
MAJUMDAR'S**
book is a pleasingly
accessible academic
study on Indian
art cinema

BETT MANN ARCHIVE



DOCUMENTARY

THE BETTER BRITISH

A NEW DOCUMENTARY SHOWS THAT THE BEATLES' RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA HAD IT ALL—MAGIC, MYSTERY AND SOME TOURS

WHILE IT IS, OF COURSE, well known that India fascinated the Beatles, no historian has yet been able to decisively solve the obvious riddle: How did four working-class Liverpool boys come to find comfort in Indian music and mysticism? A new documentary, *The Beatles and India*, proffers a few possible answers. Long before the Beatles came to Rishikesh in 1968, India had started travelling to the Beatles.

In 1965, when filming *Help!* in the Bahamas, the Beatles encountered Vishnudevananda Saraswati. The yoga teacher rode up to them on a bicycle, leaving them with copies of his book, *The Illustrated Book of Yoga*. That year, George Harrison would play the sitar

on 'Norwegian Wood', and, expectedly, when he met Pandit Ravi Shankar soon after, there would be what Shankar called an "explosion". As Indian music began to afford Harrison a new "freedom", his other bandmates—Paul McCartney, John Lennon and Ringo Starr—would also start to think of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's teachings as remedies.

Though *Beatles and India* tells compellingly the story of how India impacted the Fab Four, it seems to tell the story of how the Beatles influenced Indians with an even greater relish. Actor Kabir Bedi, for instance, narrates the story of the day he managed to interview the Beatles during their 1966 Delhi stopover. He says in



the film, "They didn't just symbolise a new kind of music, they symbolised a new kind of life. They represented the '60s." Born in 1952, journalist Ajoy Bose agrees with Bedi's assertion.

"We were this first postcolonial generation of young people," Bose tells INDIA TODAY. "My father was a senior bureaucrat during the Raj and the Beatles were very different from the Britishers he worked with. To see them be so reverential about Indian culture was fantastic for us." When directing *The Beatles and India*, Bose used his 2018 book, *Across the Universe: The Beatles in India*, as both foundation and starting point. Researching the book, rediscovering a band he was so fond of, Bose found the Beatles' India relationship was "a three-year saga, far more than that one trip to Rishikesh".

We have all seen pictures of the Beatles' 1968 trip to Rishikesh. Clad in kurtas, flanking the Maharishi, Paul, John, George and Ringo seem to have found their preferred aisle in the



HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



(from left) George Harrison with Pt. Ravi Shankar; The Beatles in Rishikesh with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1968); a poster for *The Beatles in India*; and John Lennon in Rishikesh (1968)



ROLLS PRESS/GETTY IMAGES

divine supermarket. In *Beatles and India*, we see a British reporter rightly ask if they are “victims of a fad?” Bose doesn’t buy this cynicism. Harrison, he says, was altogether sincere in his embrace of all things Indian—everything from the sitar to Transcendental Meditation. Lennon, he adds, found in the Maharishi’s mantra a sort of “inner peace” psychedelic drugs could not afford. McCartney believed “Rishikesh was a good way for them to recharge their batteries”. Their immersion, Bose suggests, was never in doubt.

Having premiered in London earlier this year, *The Beatles and India* is expected to stream on several international platforms soon. In Spain, where the film was screened most recently, it received much applause for the glimpse it provides into the interiority of the Beatles—George Harrison, especially. But it is only by showing that “influence is a two-way street” that Bose’s documentary truly becomes comprehensive. He says, “Even as the Beatles were coming to India, seeking ancient wisdom, we looked

upon the Beatles as symbols of modernity. This was a paradox for us, the Beatles generation.”

Rather than look for India in the Beatles discography, this documentary surprises us with its evidence of a more holistic cross-cultural exchange: Shammi Kapoor donning a Beatles wig in *Janwar* (1965); Biddu telling stories of how he would bring the house down in Kolkata with renditions of ‘Please, Please Me’. Towards the end of *Beatles and India*, singer Benny Dayal talks about how he felt pride when he first heard that some of his favourite Beatles hits—‘Blackbird’ and ‘Dear Prudence’—were written in Rishikesh.



“EVEN AS THE BEATLES WERE COMING TO INDIA, SEEKING ANCIENT WISDOM, WE LOOKED UPON THEM AS SYMBOLS OF MODERNITY”

—AJAY BOSE



Dayal, along with artists like Farhan Akhtar, Anoushka Shankar and Karsh Kale, features on the recently released *The Beatles and India* soundtrack. Their interpretations of Beatles classics, much like Bose’s documentary, only shows India is far from done with those winsome Liverpool boys. ■

—Shreevatsa Nevatia

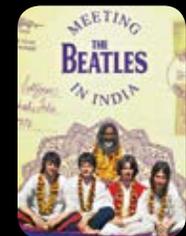
THE BEATLES (ON) RECORD

Other Fab Four documentaries to watch



THE BEATLES: GET BACK (2021)

By 1970, the Beatles, it is said, were barely getting along. Coming to Disney+ Hotstar on November 25, this Peter Jackson film dispels that myth by showing the band’s camaraderie while making *Let it Be*



MEETING THE BEATLES IN INDIA (2020)

Paul Saltzman’s film tells the story of how he and the Beatles found themselves in Rishikesh together, all of them asking big questions about life



GEORGE HARRISON: LIVING IN THE MATERIAL WORLD (2011)

George Harrison was known as the ‘Quiet Beatle’, but as this Martin Scorsese documentary shows, there hid under his soft disposition a mind restless with doubts about fame, fortune and spiritual fate

CINEMA

THE ROAD APU TRAVELLED

Subhrajit Mitra's *Avijatrik* concludes the story of Apu that Satyajit Ray had immortalised

A

purba Kumar Roy urges his five-year-old son, Kajol, "Dadu ke bolbana. Esho... (We won't tell Grandpa. Come...)" The child runs across, flinging himself up his father's arms. Last we saw them, Kajol was sitting on his *baba's* shoulders, chin on his head, while *dadu*

was left clutching a toy train and looking on with a half-smile. That final scene of Satyajit Ray's *Apur Sansar* (*The World of Apu*, 1959), is, perhaps, one of Indian cinema's most enduring and memorable images.

For most, that's where the story ended, but author Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay's *Aparajito*, on which Ray's Apu trilogy was based, still had a good 150 pages left. It is that bit of the novel—never filmed by Ray—that director Subhrajit Mitra obsessed over for nearly 10 years before he made *Avijatrik: The Wanderlust of Apu*. Speaking ahead of the film's December 3 release, Mitra says, "I wanted to complete Apu's journey on the big screen, but I had to grow as a director before I attempted it. I had to research the era. I made it a point to study how Bibhutibhushan wrote the scenes and characters. I re-watched the original trilogy, so that I knew how Ray took it from story to screen."

Mitra's research is what set the tone for many of the



THE END (clockwise from left) A still from *Avijatrik*; filmmaker Subhrajit Mitra; another still from *Avijatrik*; and one from *Apur Sansar*



actors, including Arjun Chakraborty who plays Apu. A rising star in Tollywood, Chakraborty admits he isn't one to plough through Bengali tomes like *Aparajito*. "I relied firmly on the script. Subhrajit da's briefs are very clear and detailed, so that helped me get under the skin of the character. I tried not to get too hung up on things like whether I was walking too much like a 21st-century man." Like other Ray creations—Feluda and Byomkesh Bakshi—Chakraborty says Apu is a dream role. "It was a huge honour to be approached to play Apu."

Since much of the pre-Independence era visual footage we have seen is in black and white, Mitra says his decision to shoot *Avijatrik* in monochrome served more than one purpose: "Firstly, it would help the audience connect to the 1940s timeline. Secondly, it would look like a visual continuation of the trilogy. And, finally, I felt that colour would mean that the emotions of the story would get lost. People would get so lost in the external beauty of places that they would miss out on Apu's inner journey."

Though Mitra has mostly stayed faithful to Bandopadhyay's *Aparajito*, he does confess to having taken a few liberties that were "essential to translate the written word to screen". One of them was the addition of Shankar Ray Choudhuri to the story (another Bibhutibhusan character from his book *Chander Pahar*, played in the film by actor Sabyasachi Chakraborty, also Arjun's father). "In the book, there's a European traveller who Apu comes across while working in the coal mines. Later, when they meet again, he inspires Apu to travel the world. Instead of having a European traveller expound on the wonders of travelling within India, I thought it best to keep an Indian character."

For percussionist Bickram Ghosh, creating a score for *Avijatrik* "meant creating a synergy between Ravi Shankarji, my own guruji's sound and yet maintaining my own perspective," he says. Speaking of the film's minimalist music, he says, "There is a certain clarity of sound with either only sitar or sarod or both, with maybe outlining elements like *ektara* or *dotara*. This sparse approach was the style of Ravi Shankarji, and also Ray's when he scored music for his other films. I took that as a template." The soundtrack also includes a tribute by Anoushka Shankar who plays her take on the *Pather Panchali* (1955) theme, originally composed and performed by her father.

Releasing in Satyajit Ray's birth centenary year, *Avijatrik*, it must be said, is first a tribute, one that proves that in Bengal the master filmmaker's influence is still very much a live, tactile thing. ■

—Malini Banerjee

SUBHRAJIT MITRA WANTED THE FILM SHOT IN MONOCHROME SO THAT IT WOULD SEEM LIKE A VISUAL CONTINUATION OF THE APU TRILOGY



CINEMA

Nifty Shades of Grey

Actor Jisshu Sengupta on playing good guys, bad guys and drum sets

Q. We'll soon be seeing you in Salman Khan's *Antim: The Final Truth*. What was that experience like?

It's a lot of fun working with him. He's a great guy. He shared his own experience while working with us. We all know he is such a big star but you don't feel that while working with him. He is very down to earth.

Q. Your role in *Gharey Bairay Aaj* had shades of grey, but apart from that, do you feel you get type-cast as a good guy a lot?

I don't think so. I have done many roles with shades of grey. Srijit Mukherji's *Rajkahini* was one of the first major films I played a negative role in. Even in *Zulfqar* (also by Srijit), I played a grey character. Same with *Gharey Bairay Aaj* and *Sadak 2*. If you look at my work down south—*Acharya*, *Bheeshma*, *Maestro*—I have played negative, greyish characters there, too.

Q. Is it more interesting to play greyish characters? Always. Villains are bigger than heroes. There are more things for them to do. You can play around with how you express their emotions and make them

believable. A hero doesn't quite stand without them.

Q. What was it like playing Soumitra Chatterjee in his biopic *Abhijaan*?

Scary. I was playing his younger version, so we didn't have any scenes together. Whenever he would be shooting, I would run away. On the second last day of the shoot, he called me out. He said he had seen rushes and that I was 'doing a fabulous job'. So that in itself is like an Oscar for me. Someone pointed out that I'm the only actor to have played both Uttam Kumar and Soumitra Chatterjee and that is a proud feeling.

Q. We hear you have formed a band and played in Tollygunge club recently?

My band is called Jisshu and the Retrodictions. I was a professional drummer before I started acting. I played in a band called *Paraspathar* which was very famous in its time, but that was two decades ago. Music is something I always wanted to get back to and now I have. We play old Hindi, Bengali and English songs and try to create new sounds with it. We are planning to launch our band formally with a press show soon. ■

—with Malini Banerjee

JISSHU SENGUPTA will next be seen in Salman Khan's *Antim: The Final Truth*

Guts and Glory

ART

An ongoing exhibition in Mumbai reveals **F.N. Souza** as both an iconographer and an iconoclast



F.N. Souza once said, “Renaissance painters painted men and women making them look like angels. I paint for angels, to show them what men and women really look like.” Walking into the Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation (JNAF) gallery at the CSMVS museum in Mumbai, Souza’s words make more sense. On display until January 3, 2022, the exhibition *F.N. Souza: The Power and the Glory* can take one’s breath away. Your eyes are immediately drawn to ‘Death of a Pope’. In JNAF director Puja Vaish’s view, it is the show’s “indispensable centrepiece”. Painted in 1962, it recreates—rather “satirises,” as the exhibition’s curator Ranjit Hoskote puts it—Pope Pius XII’s death.

Souza, Hoskote says, based his rendition (see pic) on a newspaper photograph of the Pope Pius XII, whose papacy was forever tainted by his actions during World War II. Not only had he turned a blind eye to the Holocaust, he had also earlier signed a treaty with the Nazis. A “savagely take on religious authority”, ‘Death of a Pope’ is being shown alongside 16th and 18th century Christian relics and objects from Goa’s Portuguese past, which underscore Souza’s conflicted relationship with his own Roman Catholic roots.

Francis Newton Souza was born in Saligao in 1924. Though he spent extended periods of his life in Bombay, London and New York, the

SHAKING THINGS UP

(clockwise from top) ‘Death of a Pope’ (1962); ‘Still Life with Eggs’ (1984); ‘Landscape in Red’ (1961); and a portrait of F.N. Souza by Oswald Jones

PAINTING

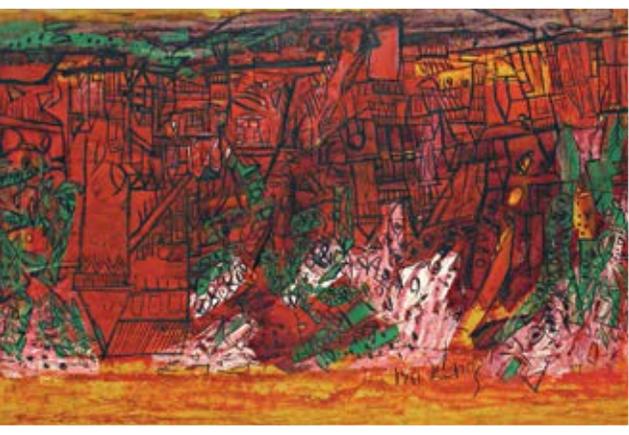
Under the Hammer

Three F.N. Souza paintings that set the world’s auctions houses afire



Birth (1955)

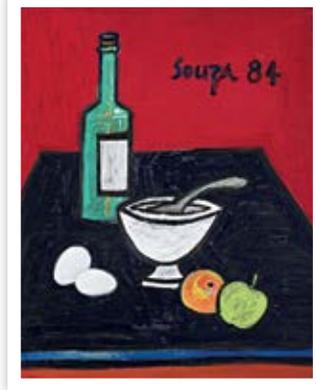
This large painting made history at Christie’s New York auction in 2015, going for a record-shattering Rs 26.5 crore



childhood experience of his native Goa dominated his imagination till the end of his life. The sacred and the profane are the contradictory forces that give his art its pulsating thrust. He was known for twisting saints to look like sinners. On the other end of the spectrum stood landscapes

of harrowing power with deserted church-towns and erotic female nudes.

Expelled from St Xavier's College and later from the Sir J.J. School of Art for participating in the Quit India movement, Souza would soon go on to become the paterfamilias of another movement, one



that shook up the art world. As co-founder of the influential Bombay Progressive Artists' Group—that included M.F. Husain, S.H. Raza and K.H. Ara, among others—Souza was seen as the resident wizard of the post-Independence Indian art scene, and also, at times, its 'enfant terrible'.

Stray persecution for his 'obscene' art, combined with a personal ambition to find a larger audience, prompted Souza to move to London in 1949. While in India, he was the quintessential misunderstood artist, but the West was quick to recognise his genius, says Dadiba Pundole, who has lent 13 works to the JNAF show from his family collection. Later, in 1969, he relocated to New York where he experimented with chemical alteration, a process that further distorted his grotesque figures. "These works are vital in our show, because they attest to his turbulent relationship to the image—he was both iconographer and iconoclast, a maker of fierce and memorable images, and a destroyer of images given

readymade by established religion and by the culture of consumerist capital," says Hoskote.

Though Souza's output remained prolific, he was beset by alcoholism and failed marriages. The artist's last years were particularly bitter, claims Pundole. "He was frustrated because he felt he didn't get the success he deserved," he says, even as peers such as Husain, Akbar Padamsee and Raza were gaining repute across Indian and European markets.

Souza had once declared, "Now that Picasso is dead, I am the greatest." Yet it was only after his own death in 2002 at age 77, that the commercial valuation of his work shot up dramatically. Today, Souza's darkly mysterious art is instantly identifiable and, certainly, expensive. But this is precisely the narrative that *F.N. Souza: The Power and the Glory* seeks to challenge. While calling him a "whiskey priest"—a nod to Graham Greene's protagonist in the 1940 novel *The Power and the Glory*—to hint at the tension between the blasphemous and blessed in Souza's personality, Hoskote goes on to emphasise that the exhibition "is an invitation to respond to Souza once again, afresh, viscerally and critically, in nuanced ways—an attempt to rescue him from the kind of uncritical miasma that shrouds an artist, once s/he begins to do well at auction". ■

—Shaikh Ayaz



➤ **Man and Woman Laughing (1957)** Typical of Souza's 'heads' series, it fetched Rs 16.84 crore at the Saffronart auction in 2015



➤ **Red Building (1955)** This landscape, created during the artist's hard-up London years, sold for Rs 9.5 crore at the Sotheby's auction in 2021



Q+A STAR ANCHOR

In the Netflix film *Dhamaka*, **Kartik Aaryan** plays an unlikeable news anchor. And in real life, the actor says he is in a phase of his career where he is getting all he wants

Q. *Dhamaka* centres on a TV news anchor who is hard to root for. Did you like his shades of grey?

I liked that he wasn't a vanilla character. He's an opportunistic guy who is lost in his mind. He just wants to get there.

There are some choices he makes and some which are forced upon him. He is one of those guys who doesn't have a moral compass. What I like is that he compels you to question yourself and that the big picture is shown through the anti-hero.

Q. Do you follow TV news?

My family does. My papa, in particular, is an avid viewer of Hindi news channels.

During the lockdown, I ended up watching a lot of it. What I have noticed is that journalism is a job that comes with great responsibility. As an actor, I think I do a lot of work, but journalists work 24x7. I respect the amount of work they put in, most times by putting their personal lives on the back foot.

Q. How did you prepare to play him? Was there any reference?

I had conversations with a lot of anchors, reporters and radio jockeys to gain insight into the world. We spoke about how they covered certain cases, what they feel, what they say and don't. *Dhamaka*, though, is not just about the TV journalism industry but about life itself.

Q. *Dhamaka* and also your upcoming line-up shows that you want to go beyond the romantic comedy path which made you popular...

I am focused toward my work. Of course, I like attention, but I want it [channelled] towards my work. I think it can be seen with the films I am doing, be it with Hansal Mehta or Shashanka Ghosh. The filmmakers are showing belief in me. I am a kid in a candy shop who is getting what he wants and I am not complaining.

—with Suhani Singh

Photograph by BANDEEP SINGH, Jacket M&S Winter Collection, Location courtesy The Quarry CO:LAB

INDIA
TODAY

BREAKING NEWS

JUST A TAP AWAY



DOWNLOAD THE APP NOW

AVAILABLE ON



A change of Air

Set yourself free on the sandy shores.
Meander along a sea of cascading palms.
Drift away into the blue on a country boat.
It's time to step out and get away from the new normal.
It's time to step out into Kerala.

