

Firstpost.

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RBI versus Centre is about 2019 elections

MODI GOVT WANTS CENTRAL BANK TO HELP THEM TO BOOST GROWTH, WHICH IS SHOWING SIGNS OF SLOWING DOWN, BEFORE POLLS



Residential evil of Yogi's hometown

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TV PRODUCER-WRITER

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NOW NO.1 IN INDIA

16 CHANNELS | 66.9 CRORE VIEWERS
15 LANGUAGES

Source : BARC | TG : 2+ | Market : All India | Period : 15th July 2017 to 13th July 2018



THALAIYAR CLARIFIES STAND

Rajinikanth hints PM Modi is stronger than the Opposition

Actor-turned-politician Rajinikanth has issued a clarion call to the opposition, saying, "If opposition parties believe BJP is dangerous, then it must be." Rajinikanth hinted that PM Narendra Modi is powerful than the Opposition. "If 10 people get together, they can't beat a single person (Modi) who is powerful," he told reporters in Chennai.

I don't lie... We chose Ambani'

DASSAULT CEO ERIC TRAPPIER HAS RUBBISHED ALLEGATIONS MADE BY RAHUL GANDHI THAT HE LIED ABOUT DETAILS OF THE DASSAULT-RELIANCE JV FOR OFFSET CONTRACTS IN THE RAFALE JET DEAL



76%
was the voter turnout in the first phase of elections in Chhattisgarh covering 18 Assembly segments. The polling percentage in these 18 seats in the 2013 Assembly polls was 75.93 %

APP-SOLUTE DOMINANCE

NAMO APP: How Narendra Modi is using technology, data, and targeted comms strategy to stay ahead of the political pack



SREEMOY TALUKDAR • NEW DELHI

As a politician, Narendra Modi brings a CEO's approach to his communications strategy by applying tools that are well-suited to schools to the manner in which he addresses specific constituencies localising his political messaging. His methods may

have evolved from an intuitive space but operate on principles that are relevant to those used in the corporate world.

This evolving strategy of innovation and assessment has helped the Prime Minister stay ahead of his political rivals. To better understand this model, we may take a look at his decision to launch a survey on the NarendraModi App on the occasion of his government's fourth anniversary. The ostensible aim of the survey is to promote a public assessment of the Centre's four years of work—its

different schemes, programmes and initiatives—on a regular basis while waiting to request appraisal of BJP legislators at different levels of governance. As we shall explore, the layered exercise goes much beyond its stated aims.

The app-based survey, according to a media release, enables people to rate the Modi government's performance, the execution of its flagship schemes and the conduct of MPs and MLAs. It seeks voters' opinion on three most popular

BJP leaders at constituency and state levels—considering their popularity on their availability, honesty, humility and popularity. It also asks people about issue that concern them the most and the condition of various amenities and infrastructure in their constituencies.

At one level, the survey is an innovative stratagem to seek accountability from BJP lawmakers, forcing them to leave their cocoon and go among the people, engage and work towards earning good ratings. The parameters of "availability, honesty,

formance and functioning of schemes is aimed at helping the government to improve and address grievances more effectively. With an year to go before Modi seeks a return mandate, the timing is an indication that Modi wants to run a campaign that is as scientific as possible instead of the common "something for everyone" strategy. Politics is not a perfect science and voters do not cast their ballots for refrain from doing so out of emotion instead of logic; yet Modi seems to believe that a degree of

humility and popularity" are designed to discourage lawmakers from becoming scant, insular, arrogant and disconnected from people—the common trappings of power—and encourage them to be kind and be accountable for their actions and filtering out those who are unable to do so.

Consider the purposes of this exercise. One, it will ensure a two-way feedback system where leaders get an idea of their strengths and chance to work on them. Two, it will, tactically, some lacunes in last-mile implementation should automatically correct itself. It may also promote a healthy competition among lawmakers.

Two, the survey allows Modi to bypass the secondary communication system invariably followed by the top leadership from the media houses and enables the PM and party national president Amit Shah to open a direct channel of communication with people. Primary feedback lawmakers' per-

HAVING HER WAY

Raje's stamp on first list of BJP candidates



The BJP's first list of candidates for Rajasthan has the imprimatur of chief minister Vasundhara Raje. The BJP high command has fielded 85 sitting legislators in the first list of 131 candidates it has released to Rajya Sabha, pressuring her loyalists and making other top leaders like Arjun Ram Meghwal and Jagendra Singh irrelevant.

FACTS About NarendraModi App



Tweets	8,064
Followers	50.3K
Likes	1,320
Following	315

Features of the app

- An opportunity to receive messages and emails directly from Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- There is also an option to contribute and earn 'badges' through to-do tasks
- Receive live news updates of the Prime Minister. One can tune-in and listen to the various 'Mann ki Bas' editions of Prime Minister Modi
- Interact with the PM and share ideas and suggestions. Read Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday wishes. Get the unique insights in the biography section. Comprehensive information on initiatives taken and achievements of the Union Government, including an 'infographics' section



rationalisation is possible.

The other major opportunity in the party who rely on networking and 'influence peddling' to seek tickets during elections. It sets clear eligibility criteria that should make Shah's job easier. Four, the survey is also an inspired marketing strategy. One of the biggest problems of developing an app is to entice users to download it. An app without downloads is just vanity. People/corporate houses/political parties spend millions to increase app down-



The only 'shell' firms identified after the great demonetisation tragedy are: Jay Shah's Temple Enterprises... Anil Ambani's Reliance Airports

RAHUL GANDHI
Congress president



Narendra Modi

"Mother and son out on bail questioning demonetisation but forget it is due to demonetisation they had to seek bail"

ADDRESSING A RALLY IN BILASPUR, CHHATTISGARH

loads. Here, by virtue of creating an accountable environment, Modi is ensuring free downloads.

The NaMo app has 50 million users and is available on a range of 4G on the Android platform. It is already among the top 10 of 'Top Free News and Magazine' category in Playstore. A certain number of voters might feel encouraged to download the app and take part in the survey on their own. Even if that number is small, a greater number of downloaders may be encouraged by leaders who will ask followers to install the app. However, mere installations won't lead to favourable ratings. Anonymity of survey procedure will force leaders to work for their popularity and be among people—the primary objective of this exercise—and yet disclaim responsibility of this.

At another level, the survey goes deeper than all these objectives. It intensifies the connect between the party and electorate and seeks to develop the bond of trust that the prime minister has sought to pursue. It may create over his leadership a sense of trust. Modis political acumen as the art of communication and tries to constantly refine and innovate this art. He uses a number of platforms (social media, radio, TV,



raillies, apps, etc.) a number of events (public addresses as well as speeches on different forums) and different modes (direct and indirect) to disseminate his political messages. The survey is the latest attempt of this immersive communication strategy. This relentless engagement with the people and the bond it creates that he has carefully built and nurtured allows Modi to defy all popularity curves and punch above the weight of his party.

In survey after survey, we find Modi's

popularity outstripping the BJP's. He naturally lies at the centre of his party's campaign strategy often acting as a force multiplier. As the election in BJP's favour in the tight electoral contest as we saw in Gujarat or Karnataka.

This is important because as the incumbent, Modi needs a new 'developmental' narrative to reflect a progressively higher development bar", as this article points out. To mitigate the challenges arising out of a combination of high expectations and low performance, Modi must continue to prove that he is still the best bet to take the country forward despite some inevitable shortfalls in performance. This is where immersive communication strategies such as the survey fit in because it creates a sense of continuity and strengthens around Modi. Voters may be willing to go with him despite some shortcomings because they trust him. These persuasive strategies may affect the final outcome in 2019.

NAMO APP DATA PRIVACY CONTROVERSY

IN MARCH, THE NAMO APP, A MODI GOVERNMENT FACED THE IRE OF PRIVACY VIGILANTES FOR ILLEGALLY SHARING DATA FROM THE APP WITH A THIRD PARTY COMPANY IN THE US

The FAQ section of the app promises that data that users provide is strictly "private", housed safely and not passed on to anyone else. But a French vigilante hacker in a series of tweets alleged that the personal data including email IDs, photos, gender and names of the users of the app were being sent to a third-party domain without their consent.

"When you create a profile in the official @narendramodi app, all your device info (OS, network type, Carrier [sic], IP address, date, location, photo, calendar, etc.) are sent without your consent to a third-party domain called <http://www.nwkt.com>," the privacy vigilante who goes by the name Elliot Alderson tweeted on March 23.

Fact-checking website Alt News later backed up Alderson's finding.

Alderson claimed that this domain belongs to a US-based company called CleverTap, a mobile marketing solution provider with offices in San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles, Mumbai and Bengaluru.

Co-founded by entrepreneurs Sunil Thomas, Anand Jain and Suresh Kondamudi in 2013, CleverTap says that it provides insights that their clients need to keep users engaged and drive long-term retention and growth

The BJP responded to the allegations by saying that the data is being used for analytics using third party service, similar to Google Analytics.

While saying that using an analytics solution is standard in the mobile development world, Alderson pointed out that sharing personal data without consent of the users is illegal."

Moreover, collecting personal data of users without their consent is against the TOS (Terms of Service) of Google Play Store."

"Thing is, @narendramodi's app is sending personal data to a third party company without user consent. The rest are just suppositions," Alderson said in another tweet.

The NaMo app mentions "exclusive opportunity to receive e-mails and messages directly from the PM" and receiving "personalised birthday greetings from the PM" among its highlights.



Comment

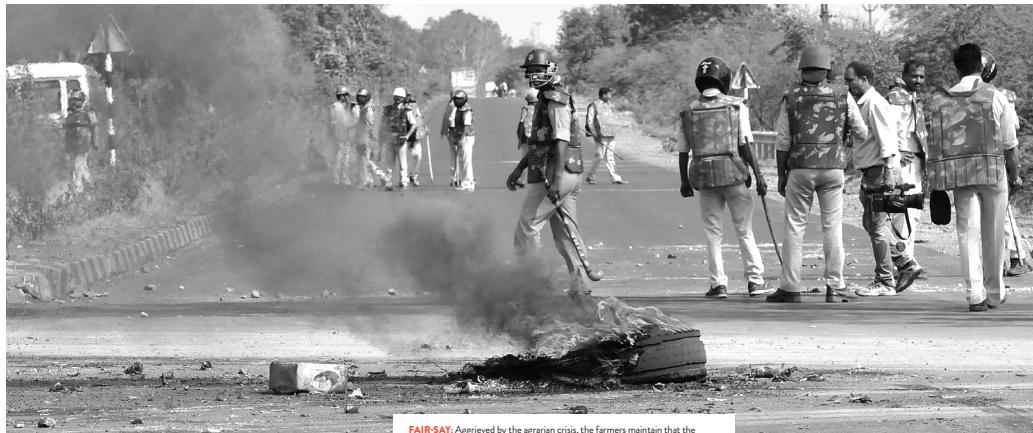
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Forbes

Politics AND POLICY



FAIR-SAY: Aggrieved by the agrarian crisis, the farmers maintain that the Mandsaur protests were justified

GETTY IMAGES

Can Shivraj Bhaiyya count farmers' votes already?

JUDGMENT DAY: Come December 11, the Congress will know whether it has done enough to tap into the simmering anger over agrarian distress to dislodge the 15-year-old BJP government

PRAKHYA SINGH •

To Asha Ram Patidar, an onion and soya farmer and in Madhya Pradesh's Sehore district, Shivraj Singh Chouhan is not just a three-time chief minister. He, like many of his community members, calls him "Shivraj bhaiyya," thanks to the political career he cultivated son of the village.

Chouhan, who is battling triple anti-incumbency, projected himself as a farmer's son in the run up to the single-phase MP polls, which concluded on November 28. The Judgment Day of Indian politics has arrived, whether the pro-farmer image turns out to be an electoral masterpiece or a dud.

Chouhan's image, as an able administrator and a champion of agrarian cause, was never stronger than in 2012, when farmers were killed in police firings in Mandsaur district – about 300 km from Asha Ram's village – during a violent protest.

Ever since, farmers in the far-off Malwa region have been instrumental in helping BJP gain electoral gains since 2003 have come on the back of a strong farmers' support. Farmers mainstream Mandsaur protests were justified. They vented their frustrations against a dramatic drop in prices of farm produce like onion, soya, garlic and other crops

widely grown in Malwa.

Asha Ram belongs to the region's dominant Patel caste, an agricultural community. And, with the OBC quota, the BJP would struggle in Malwa, which sends 60 MLAs to the 230-member MP assembly.

Admittedly, MP's political landscape has undergone a change as the stronghold of the OBC quota has weakened. In 2014, Chouhan's party colleague, ex-CM and Union minister Uma Bharti's heyday.

Chouhan's move to play up his farmer's son image – rather than as an OBC leader – reflects a conscious bid to change the BJP's perception of its rural base.

In a role reversal, the rival Congress played up its Hindu identity. These two contrasting strategies have a singular cultural factor, which is unique to MP, not known for its overtly caste-based politics.

"Unlike Rajasthan, U.P. and Bihar, MP doesn't visibly practice caste-based politics," says S. N. Chaudhary, a sociologist and Rajiv Gandhi chair professor at Bhopal's Barkatullah University.

Though, the usual Brahminical castes – Brahmins, Biharis, etc. – were waged in parts of the state such as Rewa, Chhattarpur, Bhopal and Bhind-Morena, "ordinary folks don't care about the petty caste calculus, when they vote." For instance, one of Mandsaur's four assembly seats was wrested by a Sikh candidate from

movement in Madhya Pradesh can have political salience, if parties can build social movements around relevant issues.

The Congress' failure to tap the anger in Malwa to embarrass Chouhan, but a "shivraj bhaiyya" loyalist like Asha Ram voted from Rewa in eastern Madhya Pradesh. "Some farmers may switch from the BJP to Congress because of a significant transfer of votes for the Congress," he claims. Congress is banking on the poor record of Chouhan's flagship Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana (BBY), a price difference scheme for the farm produce of 10% of CMR and much farrago in August 2017.

In fact, government owes Rs 1 lakh to Bhatar under the BBY.

There have been complaints galore about the BBY's implementation as only around 25 per cent of the targeted farmers could avail of the scheme's benefits. An ICRER report on the BBY says if MP fully implemented the scheme, it would have made a payout of Rs 4,770 crore. So far, the Chouhan administration has paid Rs 1,936 crore, or a paltry 22.8% of the total due.

Girija Shankar, a Bhopal-based political analyst, sums up the mood. "Farmers are, indeed, unhappy with Chouhan, but opposition failed to tap it into the anger. And unless voters are angry, they remain a committed lot," he says.

If Asha Ram's views are a reflection of the overwhelming mood among the farmers, the Congress would be disappointed because the party made farmers' distress a major poll issue. How many springs will there be for the Congress?

"The BBY has nothing concrete to show for farmers," says Congress's Paras Sakech from Rewa in eastern Madhya Pradesh.

"Some farmers may switch from the BJP to Congress because of a significant transfer of votes for the Congress," he claims. Congress is banking on the poor record of Chouhan's flagship Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana (BBY), a price difference scheme for the farm produce of 10% of CMR and much farrago in August 2017.

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New superfood

AT LEAST TWO BILLION PEOPLE EAT AROUND 1900 SPECIES OF INSECTS, AND CRICKETS ARE AMONG THE MOST POPULAR

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Sachin's take

IN AN INTERVIEW TO FIRSTPOST, SACHIN TENDULKAR SAYS 'MATURE' PIRTHVI SHAW IS READY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CHALLENGE

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The flames of Mandsaur lick the capital



The 2017 farmer's agitation, which was harshly suppressed by the Madhya Pradesh government in the Mandsaur district, is now reverberating in Delhi. The Mandsaur fires were washed ashore one. Farmers' protests first took place in Maharashtra, which trickled across the border and pushed further north in a matter of weeks to explode in Mandsaur.

A key trigger for these protests is the visible difference – to farmers' eyes – between what state governments have been claiming to have achieved for the agriculture sector and what is actually happening.

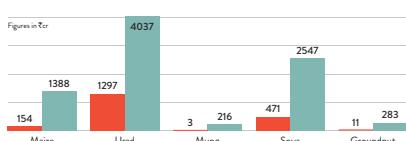
"Higher production from the fields can make anybody look like a winner," says Sardar VM Singh, founder of All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee, a grouping of 200-plus farmer's groups under whose banner lakhs of peasants and farmers have arrived in Delhi and plan to march to Parliament on Friday. "We believe Madhya Pradesh is fudging agricultural data to pad up its numbers."

The protesters in Madhya Pradesh have raised two specific demands: they want the government to calculate the minimum support price based on 'C2' costs – which is an all-inclusive expense incurred by farmers to raise a crop, as detailed in the MS Swaminathan Committee Report. Swaminathan, a former director of the International Commission on Agriculture and Development, had delivered a series of reports between 2004 and 2006. At present, state governments calculate the MSP on the basis of 'A2+FL', also detailed in Swaminathan's report, as a metric that does not include rent for land or the total cost of input and labour in farming.

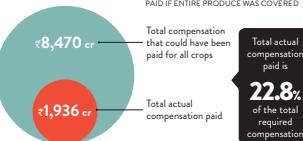
In 2017, Maharashtra farm leaders compromised with the state government after assessing a loan waiver which was a key demand of the farmers. The anti-farmer measures adopted by the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government in Madsaur had escalated its tensions with farmers. After the agitation, the state government assured a "price difference" scheme to cover the difference between what farmers were actually earning for their produce and the MSP. This too wasn't effectively implemented in Kharif 2018.

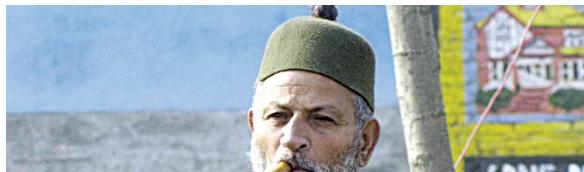
"Frankly, MP's Bhugtan scheme is a gimmick for election. The mood of farmers in Madhya Pradesh is anti-BJP despite not being pro-Congress," says Singh.

HOW THE BHAVANTAR BHUGTAN YOJANA HAS WORKED



Source: Computation based on data from sagnarkriti portal (accessed on 13th February, 2018), DES and State Government of Madhya Pradesh by Ashok Gulati, Tirtha Chatterjee, Sajiv Hassan, ICRER, 2018





The Kashmir village that keeps its peace

RAYAN NAQASH ●

Seventeen-year-old Mukreen Bhat was buried twice. The Class 12 student from Laroо village in south Kashmir was killed in a blast along with six other civilians a few hours after a gunfight at the same spot between security forces and armed separatists.

Days have gone by, and Laroо is still in shock. Residents recall picking up scattered pieces of human and animal body. Bhat was missing an arm, some residents said, as he was perhaps the one who accidentally set off the explosive. "There were fingers and pieces of flesh scattered at the spot," said a resident. "We found them in those and buried them later."

Soon after the blast, the village was rife with rumours that the explosives were planted by the withdrawing security forces to accuse separatists of disrupting elections and the sites of gunfights – a trend that has picked up significantly in recent years. Still, Laroо kept its cool and there were no rallies, no sloganising, and no stone pelting.

"The calm was remarkable as observed by a resident of a village in Kalgan's militant-cy-hit belt of Qaimbrah. "They (residents of Laroо) even stayed away from the funerals of the civilians killed in the blast." Had this been any other village of Kulgam, he said, "green flags and posters would have appeared overnight."

MAINTAINING DISTANCE Laroо is a quiet village close to the town of Kulgam. Here, residents say, gunfights are rare – the last being in the late 90s – and Bhat's mishap everything went wrong. "The village has been quite fortunate for more than a decade," said a government employee wishing anonymity. "Our boys have never been involved in stone pelting either."

At a time when south Kashmir is seen as one of the most challenging and volatile regions within the troubled Valley, Laroо has the distinction of being a village where less than a dozen youths have turned to militancy since it erupted nearly three decades ago.

"About nine or 10," said the relative of a slain militant commander. "All had joined in 1992-93. Three of them later surrendered and the rest died in gunfights."

The deaths of these militants – the last in the late 2000s – did not evoke heroic worship or a collective sense of grief unlike the recent trend in the Valley, where such events have become political hot topics.

Laroо residents point to two major factors behind the village's indifference – education and the lack of strong base for the Jamaat-e-Islami, one of the driving forces behind the separatist movement.

The elders of the village say the main reason the Jamaat could not make inroads in Laroо was because the vil-

lage "had faith in the awliyas – saints".

Kashmir's traditional Islam, to which shrines are central, is despised by the Jamaat.

"We have had that friction always," the government employee added.

The younger generation finds the Jamaat unreasonable as most of their members in Laroо are illiterate, said a student from Laroо at Kashmir University. Srinagar.

"They would talk of unscientific things which they had themselves simply heard," he said. "They have always failed to inspire us."

The student said his generation is poorly educated and has had to struggle. "They don't want the same for their children. They had a big role in pushing us towards education. Even those who couldn't continue their studies looked for opportunities to make ends meet," he added.

The village's indifference has earned it some disrepute among the sympathisers of the separatist movement, who call the village a "den of alcoholics", but employees, transporters, daily wage workers and mechanics – the major sources of livelihood – continue with their lives keeping fair distance from all sides.

"The Hurriyat has very little influence here," said a relative of a slain militant. "People expected our party to lead the protest, but we do not want kids to suffer because of this."

In the infamous elections of 1987 – widely believed to have been rigged in favour of the Farooq Abdullah-led National Conference – Laroо voted for the Congress. Unlike elsewhere, in an amalgam of various separatist outfits, including the Jamaat, which united to contest the Assembly elections. The candidate Laroо voted for was also a Jamaat member. In 1996, residents said they were forced to

LAROO has kept itself away from Jamaat-e-Islami, one of the driving forces behind the separatist movement

FED UP WITH VIOLENCE

In the adjoining village, Shurat, the Ikhwan – a militia comprising former militants backed by the Indian Army – has a strong hold. In 2014, the Ikhwan reportedly dumped bodies of murdered civilians, mainly Jamaat activists and former militant rivals, in Laroо. The Ikhwan has added to Laroо's disillusionment. One militant commander of the village's two "hit" militant jodis', Fayaz Ahmad, was killed in 2013. He was already affiliated with militant outfit but joined up in earnest only after his militant brother Manzoor Bhat was killed. The other commander was Reyaz Ahmad Bhat alias Afrah.

Manzoor Bhat was during a crackdown on the village. He was identified during the rampage from all sides. "The Hurriyat has very little influence here," said a relative of a slain militant. "People expected our party to lead the protest, but we do not want kids to suffer because of this."

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PEACE PIPE: A Kashmiri villager enjoys a hookah.

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About nine or 10 had joined (militancy) in 1992-93. Three of them later surrendered and the rest died in gunfights

A RELATIVE
OF A SLAIN MILITANT

vote by the security forces, but in 2002 and 2014 they voted for the People's Democratic Party. "Because they showed us the green," said one young man.

The party, however, did bring in some repression. Since the 90s, Laroо has been surrounded by security forces camps within a few kilometres of the village. The constant and heavy presence of security forces near Laroо has helped maintain calm, but makes it vulnerable to the militant movement's desertsers.

Instead, a few years later, rather himself joined the Ikhwan militants. "First, we saw them (militants) come with the Pakistanis and then the Indian army," the government employee said. "We have had that friction."

The stories of these militiamen are lost on most in Laroо. But the blast and the growing influence of social media have some in the village worried.

"The younger generation," the university student said, "is being programmed to think that the militancy is the only solution."

DRIVE DATES:
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GROUP 2: Aug 12 - 20, 2019

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Leadership skills of Indian Army were born in the bloody battles of WWI

MANVENDRA SINGH •

Growing up in a military family in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, we were surrounded by tales of service life, and regimental memorabilia. There were photos of the dozen. Conversations always had some Army element as an integral part. But none was repeated more often than the brave saga of late Major Dalpat Singh, MC, and his extraordinary feat of 23 September 1918.

Commander of Jodhpur Lancers' squadron, he led the last great cavalry charge in Haifa, Palestine. His sacrifice is recorded in posterity and the day is marked annually across Rajasthan by citizens besides its members of regiments. That is in India.

This is in stark contrast to an inane debate amongst the Englishtalking types in India. In a country that has no concept of national service, which doesn't have a prevalent military culture, and which hasn't yet made a national war museum, a debate about honouring its brave soldiers who fought in World War I can certainly be expected.

But the large crowds that throng Rajpath on Republic Day Parades know that India Gate, around which the contingents march, is actually a memorial for Indian soldiers who fell during the First Great War. So, it shouldnt come as a surprise that some are questioning the validity of the commemorative WWI commemoration.

As defence correspondent for *The Indian Express* in 1995, I spoke to then PRO Ministry of Defence about military commemorations. The 50th anniversary of WWI was approaching then. We were falling daily weeks apart. When I asked about MoD plans to mark the anniversaries, the curt reply was that the MoD "is not in the business of promoting militarism". Rest dispassionately, the rep was an aside of government's focus towards its military, their story, and their contribution to nation building.

Indian troops had, in fact, been sent out of the country for expeditionary operations to South Africa and China before they saw major combat in WWI. The Indian Army had many midwives during its early days—from the native princely rulers to the East India Company, and finally, the lasting contribution of the imperial authorities. Each contributed to developing the institution into what it stands for today, and its enduring national integration message that continues to stand firm. By the time WW I broke upon the colonised country, a reasonably professional Army existed to contribute to its due share.

to the war effort.

Indians of a particular type get quickly about native troops who went to either of the two world wars. Over a period of time, various labels have been used, rather indiscriminately, in describing them. It is an appellation as efforts. The most often used, and merciless, is of course to call all of them 'mercenaries'. This is as unkempt as it is ignorant of the uniform. In villages and small towns Bharat, the attraction of wearing the uniform supersedes all other options. It is an apprehension that it was a hundred years ago. The only change being that the current socio-economic elite has ceased to join the armed forces thus contributing to this innate debility.

More than a century and a half were Indians at war during various conflicts during WWI. The Indian Army and its brethren from the princely states fought alongside other nations from the Euphrates in Mesopotamia to the Atlantic coast of Europe.

As many as 100,000 Indian soldiers—Assyrian, Scots or Irishmen under German shelling. Seeing the same level of combat stress across skin colours was to have far-reaching socio-psychological ramifications for all those who came back.

This aspect requires greater study than a mere article can hope to accomplish. But the telling, and instant contribution, was the issue of Indians and the question of leadership. Indians comprised almost half the combatants in the Indian Army in combat—a breakthrough that was to have a lasting impact on institution building and native responsibilities. Indians handling responsibilities across the spectrum of performance was the greatest achievement of the empire because independent in 1947. The turmoil of partition, integration of princely states, and the first Kashmir War were handled only because there were some Indians trained in leadership, civilian and military. The birthplace of challenging leadership of the Indian Army was in boggy Somme or dusty Kut, WWI.

POSTSCRIPT
During the WW I, the Indian Army sent thousands of volunteers to serve elsewhere in Europe. And that milestone has yet not been crossed, and unlikely to be so in the future. They fought with great élan across a larger part of the globe against the two threats of Nazism and Japanese militarism. Yet India is likely to have the same innate debate come 2045.

The author is editor, Defence & Security Alert, and a member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence, 2004–2009



**DESERVED
RECOGNITION?**
What were the Indian soldiers who fought in the Great Wars? Teen Murti-Haifa Chowk in New Delhi, where three bronze statues represent the Hyderabadi, Jodhpuri and Mysore Lancers.

A bridge too far for Indian WWI heroes

facts first

THE INDIAN ARMY and its brethren from the princely states fought alongside other nations from the Euphrates in Mesopotamia to the Atlantic coast of Europe

THE BIRTHPLACE OF challenging leadership of the Indian Army was in boggy Somme or dusty Kut, WW I

BY VALORIZING THE sacrifices of India's Great War dead, we insult the memories of those who did resist empire—and exonerate those who sent soldiers to fight and die for a foreign king

TEN FACTS ABOUT INDIANS IN WORLD WAR I



Around 1.4 million soldiers from British India served in World War I, of whom, at least, 74,187 were killed in the line of duty



Four divisions of troops fought on the murderous fronts in France, notably Flanders (the Flemish Region) and Ypres (Belgian province)



The Indian soldiers said that they received good medical care, but their basic pay was just ₹11—a quarter or so of what a British soldier made



The troops were drawn from traditional British Indian Army-linked provinces like Punjab, the North-West Frontier, and Maharashtra, Gujarat and elsewhere



Large-scale lifting of wheat and rice for the war effort caused immense hardship in India especially since the wet years saw poor harvests

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The battles in Europe saw the largest number of fatalities of Indian soldiers with 22,000 deaths and another 67,000 wounded



Large-scale casualties were caused because Indian troops were not well equipped and equipped to fight in the cold, wet weather of Europe



Nationalist leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore helped in recruitment thinking it would lead the Empire to grant political concessions



Fearing revolt, two infantry divisions were sent out of France in 1916—but Indian troops served in East Africa, East Asia and West Asia



The famine-like conditions, caused by food shortage, forced millions of people to live directly and by weakening the resistance to diseases like influenza

The Indian fallen in France should evoke rage, not remembrance

PRAVEEN SWAMI •

In one speech at Ahmedabad, Gandhi invoked memories of its conquest by Muslim warlords: "To wipe out the blot on the face of Gujarat, people should take to careers in army. This is the best way of learning to defend our country," he said, at Ras, written to his brother on March 18, 1915, as the 125th Baluchi fought to breach the maze of German trenches facing them at Neuve Chapelle. "There is now a deluge upon bodies upon bodies, and blood flowing", he commented. "God grant us grace for grace is needed. Oh God, we repeat."

This month, as the world marks the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War of 1914–1918, Indians are being called on to remember the sacrifices of the 1.4 million of their countrymen who fought in it.

Fallen soldiers from British India, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh, have already been honoured at memorials in United Kingdom. In Paris, India's prestigious Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute has even joined the British High Commission in New Delhi to mark the occasion.

This ought to be an occasion for rage, not nostalgia—suffused rage against the Empire, and not the Praetorian and politicians—among them Mahatma—making Mohandas Gandhi—who collaborated in sending them to die in a foreign land for a foreign king.

Indian troops landed in France at the end of September, 1914. The outcome, though not clear, would be won by the side that had more soldiers available to feed the trenches. Providing half the attacking force at Neuve-Chapelle and handing key operational tasks to British Loos, Indians also participated in the final gas attack at Ypres after Germany's epoch-defining April, 1915, use of chlorine poison gas.

From historian David Omissi's letters home, we have some sense of how it must have felt to be there: "At some places corpses are found of men killed in 1914, with uniform and accoutrements still on," soldier Daya Ram wrote to his family in Ambala. "Large flies which have become poisonous through gas and dead bodies infest the trenches and huge fat rats run about there."

Rajbir Singh, twice injured in battle, and about to go back to the trenches again, made this pithy observation: "The butcher does not let the gassed soldiers play dead while the dead bodies lie in the trenches and huge fat rats run about there." Rajbir Singh, twice injured in battle, and about to go back to the trenches again, made this pithy observation: "The butcher does not let the gassed soldiers play dead while the dead bodies lie in the trenches and huge fat rats run about there." By valorising the sacrifices of India's Great War dead, we insult the memories of those who did resist empire—and exonerate those who sent soldiers to fight and die for a foreign king.

That we are commemorating the fallen of 1914–1918, not the millions starved during that war, illustrates that something is profoundly wrong at the core of our culture. Indians who failed to avenge empire in 1914–1918, it is true, ought not be reviled—they were victims of a culture of servility that sustained the Empire. It is important to remember serving the Empire was a pride; others joined the ranks of Ghadar movement, or the Bengal revolutionists. By valorising the sacrifices of India's Great War dead, we insult the memories of those who did resist empire—and exonerate those who sent soldiers to fight, and die, for a foreign king.

Family curse on INLD, war of succession hits Chautalas

NEXT IN LINE? OP Chautala is seemingly backing his younger son, Abhay, who is being challenged by nephew Dushyant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA •

Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) chief Om Prakash Chautala Thursday dissolved the party's student and youth wings, days after a group of youths created ruckus at his residence over the party's internal politics.

The development has brought to the fore an apparent rift within the Chautala family as Abhay Singh Chautala, younger son of OP Chautala, was booted during the October 7 Gohana rally. In contrast, there were cheers when Hissar MP Dushyant Chautala, son of Ajay Singh Chautala, spoke at the event.

Ajay is the elder son of INLD chief OP Chautala. Dushyant and Digvijay – head the party's youth and student wings, respectively. By dissolving the party's student and youth wings, 83-year-old senior Chautala has thrown his weight behind his younger son, say political observers.

"Om Prakash Chautala in his capacity as INLD's national president, has dissolved the youth wing of the party and the national and state units of Indian National Students Organisation (INSO) – party's student wing," a party statement said.

The development comes at a time when elections in union polls are taking place in the state after a gap of 22 years and the Lok Sabha and assembly elections are not far off.

"Both wings of the party were found to be lacking in discipline and commitment to the ideals of INLD. While the youth wing failed to play its role during the Gohana rally of October 7, the INSO was found indulging in blatan[sic] anti-party activities. The party is entering into a conspiracy with anti-party forces to disrupt the Gohana rally and smear the name of INLD," he told PTI.

Asked to comment on the developments, Digvijay said, "A lot of people will like us to comment at this stage, but we won't."

Political observers have also linked the developments within the Hariana's main opposition party to a "succession war" between Abhay and his nephew Dushyant Chautala. Ajay Singh along with his father OP Chautala are currently serving jail term in the teachers' recruitment scam.



"Vote for INLD and I assure you that Harryana will be self-reliant."

OP CHAUTALA

INLD chief on October 15



• UPNISH

TS SUDHIR •

If the first two election meetings addressed by Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao are to go by, he thinks the route to Hyderabad for a second term passes through Amaravati.

Every political party needs a punching bag and KCR has decided to make Chandrababu Naidu the target of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) campaign. KCR has called his former boss in the Telugu Desam a "Telangana droti", traitor, thief, backstabber, wicked person and several other names.

Civilly it is the first encounter in a high stakes election, but politicians usually pick on their main adversary, which in this case



He Naidu is an evil person, a thief who got caught. Do we want such a person to still rule us

K CHANDRASEKAR RAO
Telangana chief minister

should have been the Congress.

After the Telangana cabinet recommended the dissolution of the assembly, KCR called Ra hil Gandhi "the biggest thief in the country". But after the formation of the anti-TRS alliance, it has been a case of Chan-

dra calling Chandra names.

This is surprising because in Telangana, the TDP is not the main rival to the TRS. Over the past four years, 12 of the 15 TDP legislators crossed over to the TRS, weakening the party. Then why reserve such virio-

for Naidu?

The TRS argument is that Naidu, despite having his base in Amaravati, has an eye on Hyderabad. It is trying to paint Naidu as the man obstructing Telangana's development.

In the run-up to the 2014 elections, KCR had attacked Naidu, accusing him of standing in the way of development for Telangana. A allegation then was not unfounded.

But when KCR reuses a speech on four years, it makes people suspect if he fears that his developmental works are not good enough for an election win. Is KCR for all his bravado worried about the Congress & TDP? CPM Telangana Jana Samiti arithmetic trumping the

BLAMING Naidu and Andhra for Telangana's problems won't impress voters as Telugu Desam is not the main rival of TRS

TRS? KCR's intention is to raise the Andhra bogey again to spin the narrative of Andhra interests sabotaging that of Telangana. The TRS is trying hard to trust an opposition alliance that has an Andhra man remote-controlling it from Amaravati.

Holding the flag of Telangana pride, KCR is once again hard-selling the element of fear of Andhra's hand from across the border. Will this anti-Naidu drabrie get traction?

While the narrative may be able to sway some votes in hardcore Telangana areas like Warangal and Karimnagar, it runs the risk of boomeranging in the pockets like Hyderabad, that is also home to people from Andhra.

Fresh claims set off Congress-BJP slugfest over Rafale deal

BHAVIKAPAOOR

@Bhavikapoor5
Hashtag #ModiRafaleVictory is an eyewash. #RafaleDeal is the last nail in #Modi govt coffin.

ANTHONY SALDANA

@AnthonySaldan
The No 2 in Dassault in internal document said 21K offset contract to Armaan's company was "Quid Pro Quo" for obtaining contract. This confirms Holland's statement Modi forced French to give offset contract to Armaan to get contract.

SATISH KAPUR

@SatishKapur4
First they denied #TeflaTala bill. Then they openly declared Congress as muslim party. Now a paid #TalkToAMuslim hashtag for muslim appeasement. Congress divided Hindus and wants to get 100 % muslim votes in 2019. And communal Modis says "Sabka sath, Sabka Vikas"

DESH BECH KHANE WALA DALLA

@mandirChowBP
Wah kya hua has tag hask #ModiRafaleVictory, Navika diya already clean Jaisley's underarms today?

SANDHAKUMAR

@ModiRafaleKumar
#ModiRafaleVictory... can't do much with our media, media which have high TRP points are supporting modi



twitter debate

ABHIJEEET

@aprimist_ That's how the Pig (Supreme Leader of Animal Farm) defends the scam of Milk and Apples. Replace Milk with #RafaleDeal & Mr. Jones with Congress. The resemblance is uncanny!

HARDEEP SINGH PURI

@HardeepSPuri
Congress has clearly not heard of the saying in Hindi about how a wooden pot cannot be put on fire again & again, or the many ways a lie does not become a truth simply by repeating it continuously. #RafaleDeal #Dassault

THEGNIKHAN

@giniromet Supreme court says there is nothing wrong with #RafaleDeal. Congress exposed in politics over Rafael. A nation security matter...

IMAGE WAR



Pass or Rafale?

PROFILE CHANDRASHEKHAR AZAD ACTIVIST



THE YOUNG GUN

The knotty affair of the man in the blue scarf

E.
EXCLUSIVE

The confrontational and rebellious streak that Azad takes no measures to conceal has drawn to him thousands of supporters, mostly young Dalit men

PRAGYA SINGH • DELHI

When Dalit activist Chandrashekhar Azad stepped out of Saharanpur jail at 2.40 am on September 24, he found a large crowd had gathered to meet him. The Bhim Army founder, sporting his trademark blue scarf and fez-moustache, was exhausted to the point of repeatedly passing out. But hundreds accompanied him to his home in nearby Chittimurukur village and cheered for all the world to see. Amongst the Dalit Hindu devout supporters see him. Critics though view Azad more as the Great Dalit Hype following in the footsteps of several others who have failed to unseat the reigning champion of the backward castes in Uttar Pradesh, Mayawati.

Azad's political career has been jaded by a political prison. As one of six men—three among them Rajput—who were arrested after last year's Dalit-Rajput clash in Saharanpur, he could have chosen to lie low. His imprisonment was one of the triggers for the nationwide Dalit protests on April 2, which were marred by violence and led to several arrests. They too could have prompted Azad to leave town. Yet, he insisted that he would do all he can to ensure that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) loses the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

"The Bahujan Samaj is very harassed by the BJP. Farmers are committing suicide. They even drink their own urine to attract the Prime Minister's attention. This government couldn't find work for two people leave alone the two crore promised jobs. And it isn't me—it's people who are saying that they are angry with the BJP," he said.

That why it was a rude shock when the still-youthful Azad—he is only 30—and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati got into a public spat. Their confrontation started the moment he emerged from jail and started calling her "Buji," or father's sister. The widely accepted moniker for her is "Maiya." In a press conference, if, Chandrashekhar is making a statement, that is. Mayawati's genealogy is such that Mayawati could not let the remark pass. That she chose to attack Azad speaks volumes about the effect of the appeal. "I have no relation with people like Chandrashekhar," she hastily retorted. "I only call her Buji out of respect, and said nothing else."

Bhim Army brings emotional zest to the Dalit social movement while Mayawati, though she is aggressive, has been facing electoral defeats which make her seem unable to move with the times. The BSP's political decline has blunted the Dalit social movement and Azad fills this void. "But without a political party, the Dalits will not be able to do so much," said Vivek Kumar, who teaches sociology at JNU. "Emotions cannot beat organisation and cadre, which the Bhim Army lacks. In the end, rationality will dictate that Dalits won't want to waste their vote—they will support Mayawati."

Samajwadi Party (SP) president and former UP chief minister Akhilesh Yadav was the first to meet Mayawati after her release. The 35-year-old, her prime-time, young and dynamic, was destined to lead the state. That was in 2014 and ever since the soubriquet has been extensively caricatured.

As the SP does not represent Dalit politics or aspirations in the same way as the BSP, its use of the term at a time when they were political allies seems to emphasise the party's commitment to the two followers of both parties. Now that the SP and BSP are trying to forge an electoral alliance, they seek to paper over the antagonism between SP's Yadav voters and BSP's Dalit voters.

Akhilesh Yadav only calls her "Mayawati ji" now. He is very careful about it," said SP leader Sudip Parikh. "Once upon a time, Chandrashekhar was a very popular leader. At this juncture by calling her buji, and undermining her in its AUM amounts to helping the BJP." Yet, Azad hasn't stopped insisting that Mayawati is his buji. When he visited BSP founder Kanshiram's family in Punjab on September 24, he said "Mayawati buji" should

be the next PM.

Kanshiram's family and Mayawati are bitterly estranged. The family had accused her of not letting them visit Kanshiram in his last days in 2006. This rift, they feel, helped Mayawati inherit BSP. However, Kanshiram, in a 24-page letter to his party, has denied this. "I have never broken my job. He never broke this pledge. Hence, Mayawati would have inherited the party but when Azad reminds his followers of this controversial history, he is being more political than he admits. "What politicians carry no weight," Azad said. "That's why I don't want to join politics."

The community leaders insist that Azad takes no measures to conceal has drawn to him thousands of supporters, mostly young Dalit men. His outspokenness has made him a symbol of the pressure that Dalits are putting on their leaders and parties to contest elections on the social justice plank to voice their anti-establishment demands. "Azad is a role model for the political sphere who view his combative ness as social assertion rather than expediency. "Martyrs are always revered in India," said Kumar. "And Chandrashekhar is being seen as a person who has taken on the upper castes, that too in Modi Raj."

Any declaration of Mayawati as future PM should not take away the momentum that has been created. It is anti-BJP and anti-Mayawati. Such an article would also play into polarisation and Dalits are shunned to cement the so-called Dalit-OBC social alliance. Without this they cannot challenge BJP's post 2014 electoral sweeps.

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Who is Azad?

- **CHANDRASHEKHAR AZAD** is the co-founder of the Bhim Army, an organisation that works for the emancipation of Dalits from caste.

- **ATAD** was arrested by UP Police in June 2017 over caste clashes in the state and booked under the stringent National Security Act.

- **HE** was released from Saharanpur jail last month after being lodged there for about 15 months.

- **ATAD** Azad says he has no political ambitions, many in the BSP feel he aims to unseat Mayawati as champion of Dalits in the state

countered. He said he will "not join the Congress, not even any party close to the Congress."

It's important to note that Mevani and Udit Raj, once strongly critical of Mayawati, are no longer as strident in opposing her. This is because, to criticise the BSP is an established blueprint for new Dalit leaders to rise. "Dalit leaders are aware that leaders face what they can only appeal to Dalit voters and so must fight Mayawati, their super-leader, for garnering voters." We know that Chandrashekhar is preparing grounds for his own future political growth by attacking Mayawati," a BSP leader from UP said. Dalit leaders continue to write for OBC or Mayawati. In the community, there is a compulsion—their political salience depends largely on their own community's votes. "That's why Mayawati cannot ignore Chandrashekhar. She feels that the challenges he poses to her outside the political sphere today in future become a political challenge too," said Prakash. "He is a threat to Mayawati's political power with his Janta Congress in Chhattisgarh, Supreme Court advocate Prachant Bhushan predicted she will lose Dalit voters. 'Dalits must stand with young Turks of Dalits like Chandrashekhar and Mevani,' he tweeted. The assumption behind this perception is that Dalits are more or less united in supporting BJP as a power and that if Mayawati fails, Dalits will turn to ally with other opposition parties, Dalits would split."

That's why there's a haunting feeling in the BSP that Azad is a threat. This is also because the BSP is an unsatisfiable place for leaders keen to cultivate their own base. When in the April 2 protests, Dalits did not involve their political parties or leaders. They were asked to come and protest alongside their existing representation. This is where Azad draws sustenance. Defty, he claims that he is related to Mayawati, for example: "We're both Dalit. That's why she's my buji." What he means is, they are both Dalit, or belong to the same sub-caste that constitutes around 65 per cent of UP's Dalit population. Dalits are the BSP's last loyal block. They have been alienated and abandoned already, especially to the BJP in recent elections. "This gives Chandrashekhar hope—he thinks he will eventually win Jatavs from her [Meenaji]," said the same BSP leader.

This doesn't mean Azad's policies are easy: should he win in the 2019 elections, he would be forced to govern in a highly fractured Dalit social movement. And if he does, he would perhaps do little but serve the purpose of splitting BSP votes. "On average in UP, a Lok Sabha winner gets 4 lakh votes. Several lakh people have come to meet me just since I left jail. So why would political parties want to compete with me?" Azad said. What he means is that the presence of Dalit social movement, he does not need to contest elections to prove his popularity.

If this unarmed combat between the Dalit social movement's newest icon and its political movement, the BSP, continues, Dalits could split in two—those who are with the BSP and those who are with the Bhim Army. Dalits want the BSP and Bhim Army to stick together but whether they can actually make this happen is a test they still have to face.

Let those who spoke about Bahujan interests until yesterday go to BJP or Congress. Please, don't tell me what to do because of their choices.

CHANDRASHEKHAR AZAD

Dalit leader

Comment

To post your comment, log on to firstpost.com/interview

YOUNG LIVES MATTER No end to a 40-year-long nightmare

Gorakhpur's resident evil

Despite the Yogi Adityanath government's claims of having vaccinated every child in Uttar Pradesh against Japanese Encephalitis and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome, the chief minister's home district continues to remain stricken

ANIRUDH GOSWAMI

F. Insight

She remembers her six-year-old son's body stiffening in her arms. She remembers the certificate issued with which his death certificate was filled out. But 25-year-old Shyara Begum doesn't remember if she cried that afternoon. The death certificate summarizes the final 49 hours and 48 minutes of Dr Mohammad Kaifi's life concluding that his heart stopped beating due to "Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES)". For the remaining hours and minutes, she has only her memories.

That was eight months after 71 children had died at Gorakhpur's Baba Raghav Das (BRD) Medical College in 10 days. The then-six-month-old Uttar Pradesh government, with former MP from the district Yogi Adityanath at its helm, found it fit on the face of it. The inevitable outrage of probes, arrests and deflection followed and, in January, the chief minister announced his intention to "radicalise" AES and Japanese Encephalitis (JE), responsible for the death of 25,000 children since 1978.

The Action Plan 2018 was rolled out and the government claimed in August that deaths had dipped. But when this reporter visited Gorakhpur, doctors and experts and grieving families painted a different picture.

Since last October, the hospital has been shrouded in secrecy. The daily bulletin of cases, along the lines of what agencies in Delhi and Kerala release routinely, for vector-borne diseases was discontinued. Administrators were told explicitly to not speak of the cases or deaths while health care activists and a section of doctors alleged that numbers were being falsified. In a state where nearly 80% of mothers like Shyara Begum still have no idea about how to protect their children. When they do realise what is wrong, it is inevitably too late. "I don't even remember crying. All I wanted was to understand why, to understand if I could have done anything to help my son. I had never even heard of this disease," she said.

It was 40 years ago that Gorakhpur saw the symptoms for the first time. High fever, convulsions, confusion, rigid limbs, nausea and finally death. The first patient was an eight-year-old boy who went into a coma soon after being admitted and died the next day. Dr RN Singh was a 28-year-old paediatrician at the hospital then. "We just didn't know what he died off," he said. "No one had seen anything like it, and then that is all we saw." More than 3,500 cases were reported that year and 1,100 died, as per records.

A FAMILY OF SICKNESS

It wasn't until 2008 that the World Health Organization (WHO) defined AES as the "acute onset of fever and change in mental status" leading to symptoms such as fits, brain damage, temporary speech or seizures. In other words, it is not a single disease and AES, including JE, is the grouping of clinically similar neurological manifestations.

In India, viruses have primarily been attributed as the cause, but recent research indicates varied sources. Between 2009 and 2017, 1,000 cases were reported from 22 states and union territories with a fatality ratio of 44 per cent of them from UP; mostly in Gorakhpur.

The deaths have persisted and while data from private hospitals isn't available, two children, on average, die every day from 2016 to 2017. The year past, the government claimed, has seen unprecedented results through its efforts: a vaccination drive, an awareness campaign and a new hospital structure at BRD Medical College has yielded "success".

But there is where things get murky. These claims are based on a written response to the UP Assembly in August claiming 113 deaths and 1,427 cases due to AES and JE at the hospital. While this doesn't take into account the fact that cases, among many other things, are not always reported in full, data released by the National Vector-Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP). Until the end of July, the Central government agency reported that the total number of deaths in UP due to AES and JE was 124 with AES accounting for 100 deaths. But the data released in September pegged the total deaths so far in the state at 113, of which 110 were due to AES and 3 due to JE. NVBDCP director Dr PK Sen didn't respond to a request for comment.

Rajesh Mani, whose non-profit Manav Seva Sansthan has been working for the prevention of AES in Gorakhpur for decades, said, "This in itself proves the way in which the numbers are being fudged. What pressure has prompted them to now say that there are 100 cases...this numbers game has always been there...But the bigger truth is that even these numbers don't account for the cases in private hospitals, so, there is just no point going by the data."

Anam Bhar, researcher, global health, policy and bioethics, explained that data had multiple uses, ranging from



learning trends and outcomes and argued that "transparency" was the best policy. "Especially for institutes, where there had been past controversy," he said.

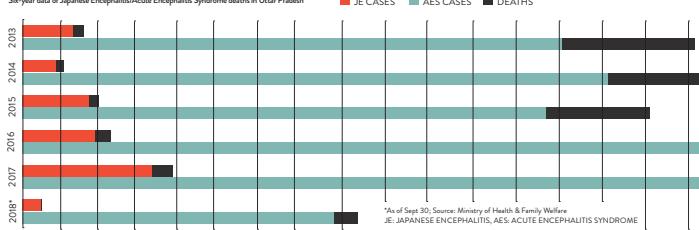
While laying down the foundation stone for the hospital in 1969, former CM and Congress leader CB Gupta had promised that the tertiary centre would be key in improving health care in Gorakhpur. Last month, Adityanath made

Comment
To post your comment, log on to [firstpost.com/feature](http://firstpost.com/)

identical promises as he laid down foundation stones for, not one, but 36 schemes. Gorakhpur has changed, and so has the hospital. A new multiplex, a high-rise apartment next to the sprawling hospital campus where work is underway for 80 new specialty wards, and an upcoming All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). But with the state still spending Rs 655 per person on health care roughly

FEVER PITCH

See year-wise data of Japanese Encephalitis/Acute Encephalitis Syndrome deaths in Uttar Pradesh



COMMENT
Sonal Matharu
 SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT



GETTYIMAGES

Going viral: What is killing children in Gorakhpur?

We still don't know why children in Gorakhpur are dying. Corruption, poor management, lack of funds, resources and manpower consider every problem a health facility in India. The situation looks particularly grim in Gorakhpur because in four decades, thousands of children have perished in this region where Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) are rampant. Poor hospital management only amplifies the epidemic.

Last year, a team at Baghav Das Medical College, the lone public medical college in this Uttar Pradesh district, made news for alleged insufficient backup of liquid oxygen that killed children - not the disease but medical negligence. However, the real problem in the district is not poor facilities at the hospital, or corruption, or even lack of hygiene and sanitation in the region, though these are all important factors.

The biggest challenge is dearth of reliable scientific evidence on the disease.

Since the first JE outbreak in the region in 1978, Gorakhpur has become a hub of devastating infections, and scientists have not been able to pin down what exactly is behind so many deaths.

In 2005, a particularly virulent form of JE affected over 6,000 people in the district, killing 89 per cent of those infected.

After the mayhem, the infection was largely under control with two JE vaccination drives, in 2006 and 2010. Yet, children were being brought in with acute brain fever, vomiting, unconsciousness and seizures that left doctors in the region baffled. Numerous studies and research showed the infections may have mutated.

A doctor from BRD Medical College explained that the laboratory tests for JE were negative after the vaccination rounds. The suspicion was then on a different breed of viral infections called enterovirus, a family of a hundred strains. JE could be prevented because a vaccine for it was available. But for enterovirus, doctors were not sure which strain was causing the disease. So, no vaccine or drug could be used to prevent it.

In 2011, while the institute sent samples for tests to renowned medical centres and labs in Lucknow and Gwalior, and confirmed enterovirus, experts at National Institute of Virology in Gorakhpur were not convinced. A scientist at NIV had explained to this reporter in 2011 that for three years, the institute tested the cerebrospinal fluid of children who die, as the virus reaches the brain through it, and recall swabs that show the virus present in the gut. The recall swabs tests were positive for enterovirus but the CSF tests were not.

Till a consensus was reached, all brain fever cases in BRD Medical College started getting clubbed as AES. In 2012-13, the cause of almost 42 per cent of AES was unknown, according to a study published in Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta. It went up to about 60 per cent in 2013-14.

In 2016, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) tested 3,402 specimens and found only nine per cent to be JE. In the same year, mortality because of AES was 27 per cent: two per cent higher than 2015. In 2017, scientists at NIV in Bengaluru published a study in PLoS Medicine showing that AES cases were increasing. The recall swab tests were positive for enterovirus but the CSF tests were not.

The team found the high proportion of AES cases were because of *Ornithobacterium mucilaginosum*. This meant scrub typhus, a bacterial infection transmitted to humans through mites, was causing AES. Follow-up studies threw up a whole gamut of infections clubbed under AES, such as dengue, human herpesvirus, enterovirus and rickettsia.

These studies are, however, contested. So, the mystery remains even as the debates continue.

The time science rigorously and accurately identifies that one or multiple strains which are afflicting children, the debate will not stop. And BRD Medical College will keep making headlines, for all the wrong reasons.



THE TRUTH ABOUT AES

WHAT	SYMPOMTS	CAUSES	PREVENTION	TREATMENT
ACUTE ENCEPHALITIS	HEADACHE FEVER CONFUSION	VIRAL BACTERIAL IMMUNE SYSTEM DISORDER	MAY TAKE ANYWHERE BETWEEN A WEEK TO A FEW MONTHS	ANTI-VIRAL MEDICATIONS ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATION
INFLAMMATION OF THE BRAIN	NAUSEA AND VOMITING			



ACTION PLAN 2018 was rolled out and the Yogi govt claimed in August that it had stopped. But when our team visited Gorakhpur, doctors, patients, experts and grieving families painted a grim picture.

the price of eight litres of petrol, around half the nation's average - the scene at the hospital hasn't changed much. Patients negotiate serpentine queues, families wait gloomily for loved ones, and overworked doctors do what they can.

THE HUNT FOR DATA

Gaway from the hospital, at his office, Dr Ganesh Kumar, the principal and dean of the institution, said he isn't authorised to release figures on AES cases. He denied allegations of data manipulation. Underscoring that the hospital is a "tertiary centre", he explained that preventive measures were the purview of other departments ranging from education to irrigation. "As a tertiary centre, when patients come to us, they are usually at a serious stage. We have to give them better treatment and care," he said, adding that the hospital is "not perfect".

Bhan concurred. "The data needs to be contextualised. In a tertiary centre, extreme cases come and mortality is usually higher. But for the data isn't transparent, then

people will stop trusting the institute and not come to the hospital at all."

Despite repeated attempts, Freshan Trivedi, principal secretary (health) of UP, couldn't be contacted for comment.

Outside the AES ward at the hospital, families wait with an air of knowing finality. Many camp through the night, mosquito nets and paltry blankets providing little protection from the elements. Some cradle prescriptions, others hold on to each other - there is little comfort in either. A security guard constantly, quick to stop anyone "behaving like outsiders".

Sources at the ward maintained that from January till October 1, there have been a total of 218 deaths due to AES and JE while 766 patients were admitted. Gorakhpur and Deoria accounted for more than half of the cases while Gorakhpur has seen, at least, 36 deaths.

A doctor who didn't wish to be named said, "What is most striking is that mortality rate is very high at more than 28 per cent. Last year, where there were a lot more deaths, this hovered at around 21 per cent."

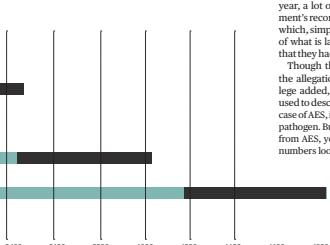
The reason, a doctor claimed, was partly diagnosis. "This year, a lot of patients are being entered into the government's records as suffering from Acute Febrile illness (AFI), which is similar to AES. The records don't mention the names of who later turn to be AES; the records don't show that they had AES. This is a factor in the skewed numbers."

Though the hospital denied officially commenting on the allegations, a former doctor from BRD Medical College added, "AFI is not a disease. It is the medical term used to describe a sudden increase in temperature. So, in the case of AES, it happens when the body is trying to fight off the pathogen. But when you enter a patient's records as suffering from AES, you don't have to enter it into your records. The numbers look fine."

In this murky picture of health care at Gorakhpur, there is one uncontrollable fact: of every five children that die in the world, one dies in India, and UP, according to a 2017 study mapping neonatal health in India by Manipal University, accounts for over half of these. Not unexpectedly, Gorakhpur is among the worst districts.

"Data needs to be contextualised. In a tertiary centre, extreme cases come and mortality is higher. But if data isn't transparent, then people will stop trusting the institute"

ANANT BHAN
Health researcher

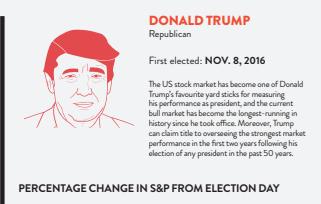
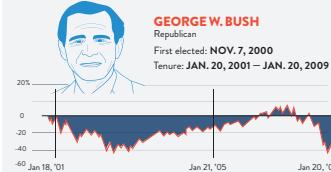
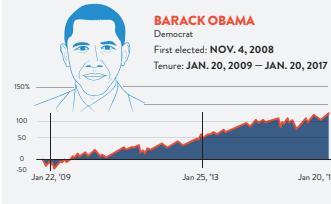


"I sent DG (health) to Gorakhpur. I also sent my health minister & minister for medical education, asked for a report"

YOGI ADITYANATH
UP CM to the media in August 2018

THE TRUMP RUN

The US President has taken credit for the stock market's gains during his nearly two years in the White House. The S&P 500 has risen 28% since his election in November 2016 to the eve of the mid-term polls



PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN S&P FROM ELECTION DAY



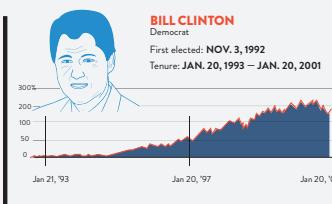
Administration Performance: 21.0%

Above: 100%
Below: 0%

Jan 20, 2017

Jan 20, 2019

Jan 20, 2021



PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN S&P FROM ELECTION DAY



Administration Performance: 21.0%

Above: 100%
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Jan 20, 2017

Jan 20, 2019

Jan 20, 2021

THE BIG FIGHT A prolonged stand-off or the governor's resignation may provoke a rout in the bond and equity markets.

the flow of credit to the economy. Never mind the fact that Union finance minister Arun Jaitley publicly criticised the RBI for "looking the other way" as banks lent recklessly during the first United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, the current government wants the banks to open the lending taps to push growth.

Already, there are signs that growth will slow. Although first quarter GDP growth was at a 15-quarter high of 8.2 per cent, high-frequency indicators point to a slowdown.

Nomura Research's leading indicator for growth says that data is showing early signs of demand which are led by rural and urban consumption demand.

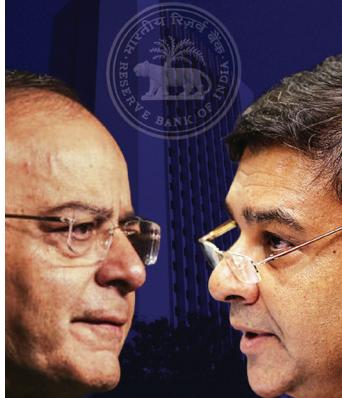
For instance, growth in sales of two-wheelers, cars and tractors were well below their long-term average in September. Anecdotal evidence shows dull sales in Dussehra and Diwali, which account for about a third of sales in categories such as auto and consumer durables. GDP growth to slow to 6.9 per cent in the March quarter because of weaker global demand, higher oil prices, tighter financial conditions and a negative fiscal impulse with risks tilted to the downside.

Increased credit flow could give a leg-up to growth in an economy that is becoming more reliant on the single engine of consumption. Raising the RBI's reserves will provide some spending cushion for the government without breaching the fiscal deficit. Hence, the desperate decision to invoke powers never used before. However, such a move may well backfire if RBI governor Urjit Patel resigns as is being speculated. But a continued economic slow-down, a prolonged stand-off or the governor's resignation, may provoke a rout in the bond and equity markets. That in turn will not only increase borrowing costs for the government, but also negatively impact the real economy, dampen growth and hurt the government's re-election prospects. It could be a case of winning the battle, but losing the war.

Revi Krishnan is deputy executive editor
moneycontrol.com

RBI versus Centre is about 2019 elections

The Narendra Modi government wants the central bank to relax lending and part with some of its reserves to boost growth, which is showing signs of slowing down as India heads into the general elections next year



NEWS ANALYSIS

RAVI KRISHNAN

The gloves are off in the spat between the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the government, according to media reports. The Centre has invoked powers under the Section 7 of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, to issue directions to the Central bank. Former Union finance minister and Congress leader P Chidambaram was quick to point out that the clause had never been used.

Quarrels between the Central bank and the government are not new. There have always been differences of opinion. The main issues between the two now seem to be this: the RBI should re-

strict restrictions on lending by weak banks, open a special liquidity window for non-bank financial companies (NBFCs) and be lenient on loans to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Moreover, the Central bank should part with some of its reserves, which the Centre deems excessive, or increase its dividend to the government.

What's prompting the government to invoke these powers now? India is not in a crisis or an emergency situation. Even the liquidity crunch in the NBFC space is not turning out to be India's mini-Lehman Brothers moment as some feared, going by current data. The RBI has assured the government that the situation is under control and liquidity remains normal. Most of the issues have come out by management commentary of the financial firms too. For instance, HDFC Asset Management Co said that inflow to its liquid funds in

October has increased. Similarly, Gasleesh Shah of Edelweiss, who has an NBFC business, said, "The kind of fear psychosis or confidence crises or whatever people are calling it which was there a couple of weeks ago has started abating now."

The consensus seems to be that there is no severe crisis as of now. Yes, the NBFC business model will continue to be a finance source until its debt is settled. They are unlikely to replicate the already 40 per cent growth of the last few years. With NBFCs increasingly becoming significant in the overall flow of credit to the economy, growth is sure to take a hit. That seems to have worried the government in an election year. Lower growth and fewer jobs will take the sheen off the government's performance.

Indeed, the common thread in most of the Centre's demands is that they will increase

the ease of doing business index.

At a time when mobility is driving economic growth in the country, 80 percent of commuters feel first and last-mile connectivity holds the key to improving public transport infrastructure according to an Ease of Moving Index 2018 report by Ola's Mobility Institute.

Almost 70 per cent of the public transport users rely on cabs, autos, and non-motorised transports (NMTs), says the report. It means users have to travel a bus stand, local station, or metro terminal. Commuters believe that the first and last-mile connectivity gaps are taken care of, riding cabs will not be around as much as 50 per cent of the non-users will be forced to shift to public transport.

At present, public transport accounts for 34 per cent of the transportation across India. About 58 percent of the commuters use their personal vehicle or two-wheeler. The report reveals shared transportation, especially shared transportation, and better pluming of routes.

According to a World Bank report, India's rural areas are home to almost 70 per cent of India's population but 33 percent of the villages do not have access to all-weather roads and remnants of the monsoon season. The problem is more acute in India's northern and northeastern states that are poorly

Increased credit flow could give a leg-up to growth in an economy relying heavily on consumption

linked to the country's major economic sectors.

Good-quality infrastructure is critical to ensuring ease of moving and infrastructure development has been one of the key interest areas of this government as the allocation has jumped approximately 40 percent in three years. The 2018-19 budget may also push national high-

ways as the allocation was pegged at ₹71,000 crore, up from ₹61,000 crore in 2017-18.

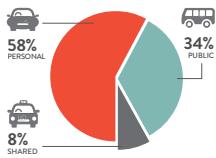
In India's World Bank's latest Ease of Doing Business rankings, India leaped to the 7th rank mainly due to improvement in granting of construction permits. In this segment, it has moved to 52nd position from 100th in 2017-18.

Over 80 per cent of the 43,000+ respondents report an improvement in the mobility scenario over the last five years despite rising congestion and travel times. The improvement is mainly on the back of initiatives such as Smart City, Aatma Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), and Metro Rail projects, the report says.

Last-mile connectivity remains the key to better ridership

SHARE OF TRANSPORTATION ACROSS INDIA IN 2018

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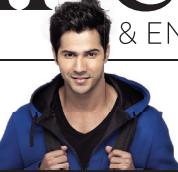
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Cinema

& ENTERTAINMENT

No to daddy

SUPERSTAR SON VARUN REJECTS DAD DAVID DHAWAN'S IDEA TO REMAKE COOLIE NO. 1. HE WANTS AN ORIGINAL SCRIPT FOR THEIR NEXT.



Kat's banking on Sallu again

AFTER A TWO-GIG ROLE IN THUGS OF HINDOSTAN, ACTRESS LOOKS FORWARD TO SALMAN KHAN'S BHARAT FOR A BIG BANG.



movie review



MOHALLA EHTIYAT

USER RATING

CRITICS' RATING

CRITICS' RATING

123 crore
1st WEEKEND EARNING OF THUGS OF HINDOSTAN

Opening on Friday

VINAYAK CHAKRAVORTY •

House of Cards Season 6



CAST
Robin Wright, Michael Kelly, Patricia Clarkson
DIRECTION
Alkash Sakhav

With Kevin Spacey fired for sexual misconduct, Robin Wright, returning as Claire Underwood, will be the sole star in the final season of the blockbuster Netflix show. As the political suspense hits crescendo, Diane Lane and Greg Kinnear join the cast.

LAST WORD

Over five seasons, the show has emerged as one of the most enjoyable web series there is. That makes the finale unmissable.

The Nutcracker and The Four Realms



CAST
Keira Knightley, Mackenzie Foy, Morgan Freeman
DIRECTION
Lasse Hallström & Joe Johnston

Acclaimed Swedish filmmaker Lasse Hallström teams with *Captain America: The First Avenger* director Joe Johnston to create a family-oriented remake of the renowned works of art — ETA Hoffmann's book *The Nutcracker* and *The Mouse King* and Tchaikovsky's ballet *The Nutcracker*.

LAST WORD
Great directors, great source material and a fine cast unite to create family fun.

Lupt



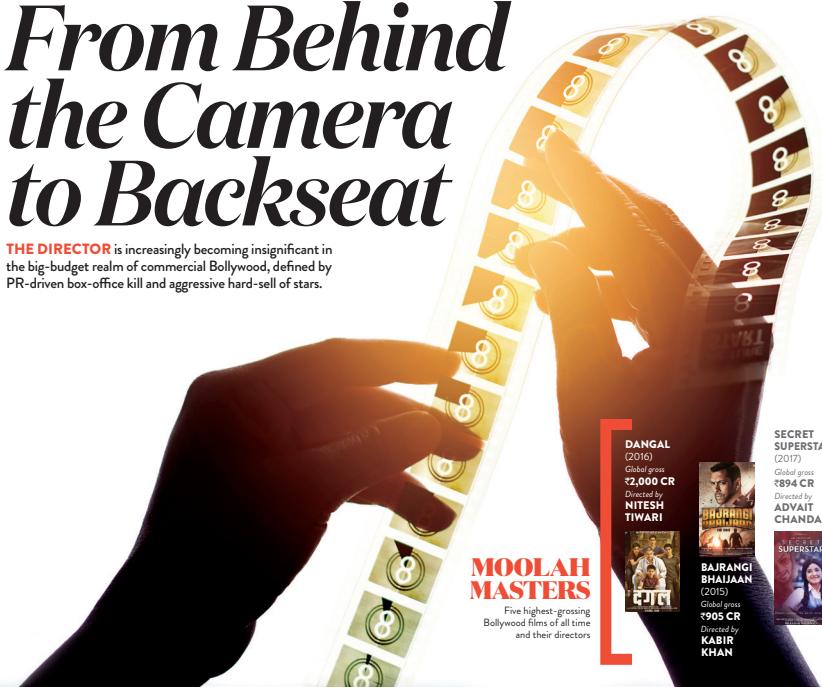
CAST
Javed Jaffrey, Vijay Raaz, Meenakshi Dixit
DIRECTION
PrabhuRaj

The supernatural horror thriller marks the return of Javed Jaffrey on the big screen after a long time. He has gathered interest with its title song — a remix of the *Bhoot* main number from Ram Gopal Varma's 2004 superhero, *Bhoot*.

LAST WORD
Horror is its audience, as common film trade knowledge goes, given that the genre has a loyal fan base the world over.

From Behind the Camera to Backseat

THE DIRECTOR is increasingly becoming insignificant in the big-budget realm of commercial Bollywood, defined by PR-driven box-office kill and aggressive hard-sell of stars.



MOOLAH MASTERS

Five highest-grossing Bollywood films of all time and their directors

DANGAL

(2016)

Global gross

₹894 CR

Directed by

NITESH TIWARI

SECRET SUPERSTAR

(2017)

Global gross

₹894 CR

Directed by

ADVAIT CHANDAN

BAJRANGI BHAIJAN

(2015)

Global gross

₹905 CR

Directed by

KABIR KHAN

SECRET SUPERSTAR

(2017)

Global gross

₹905 CR

Directed by

ADVAIT CHANDAN

T

VINAYAK CHAKRAVORTY •

Thugs of Hindostan (Tolh) is about Amitabh Bachchan's swashbuckling return to the screen. After a roguish slapstick and Karina Kaif's oomph on the dance floor, that's what the just-released official trailer tells the audience.

The trailer, which has garnered record-breaking views on YouTube, also flaunts a super-expensive set of spectacular stunts that reportedly account for a chunk of the film's reported Rs200+ crore budget. Smart PR machinery has drilled all such trivia into the fan's mind and the words leading up to the film's release.

Amid the zing and buzz before the launch, the helmer is 'missing in action' from audience's minds. For a film billed as the costliest Bollywood production yet — and also potentially the biggest blockbuster in 2018 — lack of awareness of its creation is symptomatic of Bollywood. Creativity has never been a priority in a glamour and

gimmick-driven industry that primarily obsesses over filling the coffers with hundreds of crores.

The emergence of small-budget, content-driven fare has carved a sort of space for the director, but that works within the parameters of the game. The man at the little-end-of-Hindi cinema, which continues to drive Bollywood economics, has learnt to ignore the person who wields the megaphone over the years. In the realm of the hard-corn masala movie, the director no longer matters.

If cinema of any kind is essential to the vision of its director, Tolh director Vijay Krishna Acharya would perhaps not be amiss at the idea that most among his films have been made on a shoestring budget.

The obvious retort is that big stars attract crowd. So, they are publicised — and the scene has not been different over the years. Big B, Aamir Khan, Shahrukh Khan, the pillars of the industry, have ticketed their hits growing by the year.

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There are many more such in pack. Salman Khan's *Race 3* and the Tiger Shroff-starrer *Baaghi 2* have been among the most hyped commercial releases in 2018, but Remo D'Souza and Ahmed Khan, the respective directors of these films, would

struggle to garner familiarity. The scene is no different for directors of the 50-odd Bollywood releases this year so far that qualify as traditional formula fare. Chances are you may not know the names of most of these films, unless you're a die-hard fan of the likes of Sela Bhamali, who made Padmaravat and Rajkumar Hirani, the director of *Tanu*. These names are but exceptions having carved a space with distinct cinematic idioms. For most mainstream directors, recognition is not much of a concern, as they are probably haven't even heard of his/her name.

Acharya, whose friends at Kirori Mal College would recall as a campus bright spark, could actually be deemed the inadvertent face of a breed of mainstream directors who call the shots without being the creative heads of commercial blockbusters, but swell in a zone of near anonymity.

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directors of these films, would

Subhash Ghai held on their own thanks to trademark filmmaking style. Stamp of that trademark seems to be dying lately.

The truth is that by now, the audience has figured out being a typical Hindi commercial director is not a guarantee of success. Acharya himself perhaps underlines that notion. He returns as director with *Toll* five years after his last release *Dhoom 3*, both films being produced by the mighty Yash Raj Films (YRF).

Amazingly, YRF has allowed Acharya to do what he does best — direct a super-budget biggie. *Dhoom 3* despite the fact that he had given the banner the expensive flop *Tashan* on his debut in 2008. Insiders say Acharya bagged *Dhoom 3* because of his reputation as a reliable caretaker in *Saawariya*, the original director of the *Dhoom* series. Despite the first two *Dhoom* flicks becoming blockbusters, Gadvi reportedly had creative differences with YRF, which made him expendable. So Acharya, who had worked on the screenplay of the earlier *Dhoom* flicks, suddenly found

himself helming the franchise's third film. YRF scuttled project till then.

What follows only underlines the waning significance of the director in Bollywood. Gadvi, after exiting *YRF*, directed a couple of films — *Shivaay* and *Shaitaan* — and though the blockbuster success of *Dhoom 3* was attributed to neat marketing of its stars Aamir and Katrina, Acharya would go on to play *Toll* with the same stars.

The truth is most modern-day commercial directors are less of auteurs and more of caretakers of film projects — for stars who agree to work with them and also for producers. Aamir and Katrina, who have largely been inclined towards small films, and the director as a name worth recognising thrives mainly in small-budget crossover entertainers. Sriram Raghavan (*Andhadhun*), Meghna Gulzar (*Raanjhni*), Showkat Sircar (*October*) or Sharat Kataria (*Sui Dhaaga*) would testify that fact in the recent months. The breed is only growing with time.

Most modern-day directors of star-studded biggies are mere caretakers of the film projects they handle rather than creative heads

Lupt



CAST
Javed Jaffrey, Vijay Raaz, Meenakshi Dixit
DIRECTION
PrabhuRaj

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LAST WORD
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Those who do not imbibe change will be left behind. All of Bollywood, particularly filmmakers, has to realise this

'Brainless masala makers are becoming irrelevant'

ANAND L. RAI ●

Ever once in a while there is change in the world of cinema, and right now is the time for the traditional mainstream director in the Hindi film industry to understand that fact, if he does not want to be rendered wholly insignificant.

The question is, how much change is going. Every film made marks some growth for filmmakers as well as the audience. Anyone who does not understand change, or make an effort to imbibe the process of change, will be left behind. All of the Hindi film industry – particularly filmmakers – has to realise this.

The reason for this is that, looking

within the film industry, there is a sharp understanding of this change, and in recent times there is a clear signal from the audience to filmmakers that they need to buck up. The demand of the hour is to create cinema that enter-

tains without losing track of content, sense and logic.

For years now, one would have

imagined films such as Shubh Mangal

Saavdhan and Andhadhun could be-

come big hits. Even a decade ago,

when we first started talking of 100-crore hits,

we would only refer to big, star-studded formula films. Today, a small and unique audience base is small.

Directors who plough on star-studded experiments, on the other hand, cannot risk

experimenting.

My gut feeling is the traditional main-

stream film will not go away. But for the

hardcore masala director to survive,

he must learn to balance glamour with fresh

content. The process has already started.

As told to Vinayak Chakravorty

There are the low-end multiplexes, which are replacing single screens, and the high-end multiplexes. A, B and C centres account for radically different cinema economics. The digital process of change is affected by this variety, film directors have to keep this in mind.

Filmmakers who experiment are forced to work with limited budgets because the audience base is small. Directors who plough on star-studded experiments, on the other hand, cannot risk

experimenting.

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As told to Vinayak Chakravorty

Anand L. Rai is the director of the *Tanu Weds Manu* series. His next release is *Zero* starring Shah Rukh Khan and Katrina Kaif.

REDEFINING BOLLYWOOD

A BAND APART

10 OFFBEAT ENTERTAINERS who have redefined new-age Bollywood cinema within limited budgets and with content-driven efforts

VINAYAK CHAKRAVORTY ●

ANURAG KASHYAP

GANGS OF WASSEYPUR SERIES, DEV
Kashyap is the man every budding filmmaker, who wants to carve a different niche, looks up to. His foray into film production has been a boon for budding directors with out-of-the-box ideas.

RITESH BATRA

THE LUNCHBOX

He redefined Bollywood romance with *The Lunchbox*, before venturing into global cinema with *The English Sentence*. *Dev* and *Chhichhore* followed. *Souls at Night* (which starred Robert Redford and Jane Fonda) last year. Coming up is *Photograph* starring Nawazuddin Siddiqui.

ANAND L. RAI

TANU WEDS MANU SERIES, RAJANJANA

Rai is credited with the surge of realistic, middle-class entertainers that are currently a major draw for directing the *Tanu Weds Manu* films, his productions include *Shubh Mangal Saavdhan* and *Tumbbad*.

DIBAKAR BANERJEE

LOVE SEX AUR DHOKHA, KHOSLA KA GHOSLA
The maverick who keeps you guessing, and has an unusual idea every time. His resume includes films as varied as *Khosla Ka Ghosla*, *Love Sex Aur Dhoka*, *Oye Lucky! Oye Lucky!* and *Detective Byomkesh Bakshy!*



SHOOJIT SIRCAR

PINK, VICKY DONOR

Few Bollywood directors fuse realism and entertainment as he does — a fact that he repeatedly proved, with films like *Pink*, *October*, *Vicky Donor*, *Madras Cafe* and *Iヤhaho*.



AMIT MASURKAR
NEWTON, SULEMANI, KEEDA

Masurkar went to the Oscar with his second film *Newton*. The film did not make it, but the third, *Sulemani Keeda*, has been considered one of the best Indian films of the year.



VISHAL BHARDWAJ
MAOBOOL, OMKARA

A versatile mind, the compactly crafted drama in *Maobool*, *Omkara* and *Hader* out of Shakespeare's plays. He is widely known for his brand of twisted suspense.

VIKRAMADITYA MOTWANE

TRAPPED, UDAAN
Motwane's unusual cinematic approach and directorial efforts, such as *Udan*, *Trapped* and *Lootera*. He also co-created the web series *Sacred Games*.

SRIRAM RAGHAVAN

ANDHADHUN, BADLAPUR

No one cocktails surpise with humour and angst like Raghuveer does. He revealed the sparks early, winning the National Award for his FTII drama short film, *The Eight Column Affair* (1987).

'Stars and their gimmicks have taken over limelight'

ADIL HUSSAIN ●

Formulaic commercial cinema is here to stay. The mechanism is set and there is no room for a director's mind if content-driven, small films are flooding the market right now.

The entire system of shooting, funding, distribution and exhibition, as well as the existence of stars who drive the trade, are here to stay for what you can imagine. That is why I have never really been an important part of this mechanism and, with time marketing logistics of films and PR skills of the stars have grown stronger, only diminishing the significance of the person who calls the shots.

The bigger a film, lesser the significance of the director's vision and other gimmick factors including, dances, CGI effects and promotions hijack entire limelight. But that only partially

explains the situation.

What we need to understand is that many hardcore commercial directors have been consciously chosen to work in putting together glamour, talent and finances in one package. Their priority is big business.

Are such filmmakers losing their space in Hollywood right now? I would think so, what with the increasing string of being given the boot from the studios.

I have always respected merit over stardom, and I will point out one thing: More than directors of star-studded blockbusters, it is the breed of directors who come up with new ideas in small films that is changing the course of cinema everywhere in the world. These are the filmmakers who can read the taste of the audience by initiating them to new ideas. These are also the directors who survive the test of time

and their time has come in India, too.

Commercial cinema banks on stars. My opinion is stardom should fade away and make way for actors. In turn this will bring back the passion in making his cinema and his director's irrelevant.

Cinema of any kind is about teamwork and not just about either actor or director. You can make a good film only if cast and crew cumulatively work at it. So far, cinema has been considered either a director's vision or the star's medium (in Hollywood or Bollywood). This is because cinema is still a young art. The medium is yet to fully understand the importance of the entire team.

As told to Vinayak Chakravorty

Adil Hussain's body of work includes *Life Of Pi*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, *English Vinglish* and *Mukti Bhawan*.

Figures sourced from Wikipedia

Marketing logistics of films and PR skills of stars have only grown stronger, diminishing the director's significance.

'Bollywood flicks never get the sexual harassment plot right'

DIPTIKIRITI CHAUDHURI ●

Popular Hindi films themed around sexual harassment at the workplace are rare, mostly because the corporate world is not a preferred setting. The focus on exploitation of women has mostly been restricted to the small, still-military rape.

Basu Chatterjee's *Sheesha* (1986) was an unusual film in

this context. In the mid-'80s, when sexual harassment wasn't even a standard phrase, the film narrated the story of a hotshot executive (Mithun Chakraborty) who is arrested for assaulting his firm's telephone operator (Mallika Sarabhai). The conflict never leaves the office, as the protagonist goes free while the victim's reputation lies in tatters.

Abbas-Musran's *Altaaz* (2004)

projected Priyanka Chopra's protagonist as non-manipulative and fastidious woman. She is the hero's ex-lover and ends up as his boss. The hero (Akshay Kumar), a married man now, rebuffs her advances and she cries rape. As his ex-lawyer wife (Kareena Kapoor) fights the case, the hero becomes all about how a honourable man is framed by a shriv.

Sudhir Mishra's *Indaaz* (2013) projected Priyanka Chopra's protagonist as non-manipulative and fastidious woman. She is the hero's ex-lover and ends up as his boss. The hero (Akshay Kumar), a married man now, rebuffs her advances and she cries rape. As his ex-lawyer wife (Kareena Kapoor) fights the case, the hero becomes all about how a honourable man is framed by a shriv.

TAMING THE SHREW Priyanka Chopra and Akshay Kumar in the 2004 film *Altaaz*

was probably Bollywood's most ridiculous effort as far as the #MeToo issue is concerned. The film is about an ad-agency CEO (Arjun Rampal) fending against harassment charges leveled by a creative director with whom he has shared a romantic relationship. The allegations seem to stem from professional jealousy. Ultimately, the relationship is revived. The women lost in all three films. This realism is reflected in real life, too, all over India.

The MeToo movement shows that there is drama in the accounts of sexual harassment. Storytellers are forced to tap these, to create stories of courage and hope.

Diptikirti Chaudhuri is a salesman by day, writer by night. He has written four books on Bollywood.

arts & CULTURE

Ananga-Ranga: The ancient roots of the #MeToo malaise

F.
INSIGHT

THE PURSUIT
of pleasure, in
the Ananga-
Ranga, involves
the subjugation
of women for the
pleasure of men

SYED MUBIN ZEHRA *

Awoman who was burning with love and desire, satisfied her inordinate desire, threw off her clothes and swore she would wander the world naked till she met with her match. In this condition, she entered the levee-hall of the Rajah upon whom Koka Pandit was aiming. When she met him, she was not ashamed of her body, the woman looked insolently at the crowd of courtiers around her and scornfully declared that there was not a man in the room. The King and his courtiers were all abashed. But the sage Koka Pandit, apalled by her conduct, forbade her permission to time the shrew:

"He then led her home and worked to persuasively that whole night fainting from fatigue and from repeated orgasms she cried for tears. And Koka Pandit inserted gold pins into her arms and legs, and, leading her before his Rajah, made her confess her defeat and solemnly veil herself in the presence."

The Ananga-Ranga – Stage of Love in English – was written by Kalidasa, the poet laureate of India, 400s or 500s. The poet wrote the work in honour of Lad Khan, the son of Ahmed Khan Lodi. Translated into English in 1885 by the traveller and scholar Richard Francis Burton, and burned, it is believed, by his son, he died within the weeks after his death – is often compared with the Kama Sutra.

Frank, guilt-free sex is one great legacy of Indian tradition: sensual pleasure, addressed with poetry, wisdom and humour, is seen as an expression of life's possibilities. But this is also a tradition that imprisons.

The Ananga-Ranga, and works like it, are not simply sex manuals. They represent particular ideologies about gender. The pursuit of pleasure, in the Ananga-Ranga, involves the subjugation of women for the pleasure of men

– a story that haunts us today, as the #MeToo movement unfolds.

First published in the 1400s, and into Arabic and Hindustani as well, the Ananga-Ranga travelled well over the centuries, appearing in Persian and even Turk. Its stated intent is to protect the institution of monogamy. "Great and powerful monarchs have numerous wives and their retainers, their desire to enjoy the wives of others," it warns. "Let none, therefore, attempt adultery even in their thoughts."

Kalyana Mala, the author of the Ananga-Ranga, is an obscure figure, though he deserves his "auteur" status. He was a Lodi House. He was a sea, having for waters the rivers shed by the winds of his state. And he rose to just renown and wide-spread fame. May his son, King Ahmad, the Ananga-Ranga tells us, "was the ornament of the Lodi House. He was a sea, having for waters the rivers shed by the winds of his state. And he rose to just renown and wide-spread fame. May his son, King Ahmad, the Ananga-Ranga

victorious!"

It involves, among other things, performance: the Ananga-Ranga, and other works in this genre, are manuals to demonstrate masculine virility and feminine objectification. She has no right to either seek or express her pleasure; that would render her, like

the woman at the Ananga-Ranga, a shrew to be tamed.

The representation of the human sexual organs in some Mughal-era paintings is remarkable. There is one of particular interest, representing the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah, where he displays a phallus of a wholly improbable size. The painting, obviously, is not just about representing pleasure; it is true subject-matter.

In the Ananga-Ranga, the signifier of masculinity is quite different. "The man whose lingam is very long, will be wealthy and successful. The man whose lingam is very thick, will ever be in distress. The man whose lingam is thin and lean, will be very lucky; and the man whose lingam is short, will be a Rajah."

Leaving aside minor details like the penis-size which signifies power, these tropes remain with us. It is not just pornography which limits the role of women in Indian culture, but the vipers of male pleasure. The recent controversy around a Bollywood scene where actress Swara Bhaskar was seen to be masturbating is a case in point. There is no similar outrage at expressly sexual sequences or songs, as long as the women perform for the pleasure of men.

Thus, our mindsets have not moved on from the time of the Ananga-Ranga. We still are deeply embedded in the medieval thought of how women wherein it's the wife's duty is to satisfy her husband sexually.

Never ever is there a straight question asked or posed to female sexual satisfaction and her pleasure.

Syed Mubin Zehra is author of Sexual and Gender Representations in Mughal India

The Ananga-Ranga, and works like it, are not simply sex manuals. They represent particular ideologies about gender



Comment

To post your comment, log on to firstpost.com/interview



Stand-up by Nitin Gupta Rivaldo & Kishore Dayani

DATE NOV 9 VENUE AKSHARA THEATRE, GURUGRAM

Heartbreak is all set to get a wacky twist when two very unlikely stand-up comedians come together for a live performance in the city. Nitin Gupta Rivaldo is a big draw among lovers of the comic genre and, come Diwali weekend, he will team up with the imitable Kishore Dayani, who has been gaining some popularity in the stand-up circuit lately.

The duo comes together in a special edition of Laughter Nation's show, The Comedy Showcase. They are scheduled to perform a 90-minute gig at Akshara Theatre.

Gupta, a Tedx speaker with over 500 shows under his belt, believes if "science is mad about reason", then "humour is reason gone mad".

Live performance by the band Black Slade

DATE NOV 11 2018 VENUE SAINTS N SINNERS, GURUGRAM

Come November and Gurgaon band Black Slade is geared up to set the Capital on fire with some heady retro riffs. The band comprising five members is now based out of Delhi, and have over the years branched out to musical genres beyond rock. Their repertoire now includes pop and interesting fusion music, too.

Black Slade has been the first band in India that has sold out shows. The band comes with a selling card that flaunts over 2,000 live performances all over the world, over the past decade. The band is equally in form belting out original numbers, as much as reliving the golden era.



Events Calender

PLAY

Classic

BANKI THAS PLAY AT AKSHARA THEATRE, DELHI
TIME: 7:30PM - 9:30 PM
NOVEMBER 16, ₹250

MUSIC

Live

SIWAM OPEN LIVE AT RUIN PUB BY IMPERFECTO,
NEW DELHI
TIME: 10PM onwards
NOVEMBER 17, ₹200

COMEDY

Open mic

INDIAN OPEN MIC LEAGUE 3.0 AT 9
SPRINGBOARD, NEHRU PLACE
NEW DELHI TIME: 5PM-7PM
NOVEMBER 18, ₹200

BOOK REVIEW

Exploring the depths of depression

MUKHERJEE'S novel narrates how two brothers confront their past, wrapped around the sad memory of their father's death



Udayan Mukherjee's debut novel Dark Circles, the metaphor notwithstanding, is a rewarding journey across the ruins of one family that finds each of its corners stretched in the face of a personal revelation. With its lead character, will he confrontation stand?

Mukherjee offers a fairly familiar premise: a dead mother, Mala, leaves a letter that exposes her two surviving sons to a truth they can't even decide whether or not to be confronted in the first place.

Mala has two sons, Ronjoy and Sujoy, the polar opposite of each other. The former quiet, more restrained than the younger, more impulsive Sujoy.

The older brother receives the letter while on vacation with the two, via the elastic of history, into a bowl full of needing memories.

Both confront their past, delicately wrapped around the shattering memory of their father, Saha's death.

In the aftermath of the letter, both brothers must face up to dilemmas, and answer questions that not only affect them but others as well. Though they make choices, neither offers closure.

That said, Dark Circles largely soars in its exploration of mental health and depression. Both Ronjoy and Sujoy have a history of brooding.

AUTHOR: UDAYAN MUKHERJEE
PUBLISHER: BLOOMSBURY PUBLISHING
PRICE: ₹449.30

Be the Change



"It's hard work being alone. Paintings are an outlet."

CHRISIEIS HYNDE
American rock musician

The concept of AI, or artificial intelligence, has so far been associated with science. In recent times, however, the concept has also been linked to art, raising a basic question: can machines develop ample aesthetic sense to create a painting, which has traditionally been considered the last bastion that sets apart humans from machine?

AI has so far been successfully utilised to create pristine prose and also original tunes. But what is惊人的的是, a painting created by a machine, fed with a staggering \$60,000 at a Christie's auction in New York recently, exceeded what was expected.

The hazy computer-generated painting of a man in a dark coat cost \$110,000. A portrait of Edmond de Belamy generated a price that was 38 times of what the auction house was expecting.



POWERED BY TECH2

Disruption

LIFE & TECHNOLOGY



• SHAKTAKSHI

Fancy a roach milk shake?

NEXT SUPERFOOD? Cockroach milk could bring a nutritional revolution; it has about four times more protein than cow, buffalo or goat milk

could strengthen the fight against nutritional deficiencies and disorders. In addition to its high calorific value, roach milk's property to crystallize on its own gives it along shelf life, which is extremely useful to derive more energy over a longer period of time due to the crystalline nature of these proteins. The protein can have equally useful benefits as part of a fortified food or even as food for astronauts.

THE EVOLUTION OF NUTRITION
Cockroaches have survived—and evolved—for the past 320 million years, making them one of the most successful stories in evolution. They present a wonderful example of the interplay of evolution, adaptation, survival strategies and successful reproduction.

One of the methods by which cockroaches achieve this is by adopting different reproductive strategies.

Some cockroach species lay eggs while pregnant females in other species provide physical support until they hatch. In both cases, the egg yolk is the sole form of nourishment for the embryos.

In a third type, the eggs are deposited in birth sacs of pregnant females, sometimes as many as in humans. In this species, the cockroach mother provides both physical support and nourishment to embryo.

This unique mechanism like the cockroach milk protein are, however, favoured by evolution for crystallizing inside an organism. This occurs since the protein carry out biological functions in an organism only in their crystallized form.

The cockroach protein could well be the stuff of nutritional revolution. Making it widely available

as also known as viviparity, this is a highly evolved condition in cockroaches.

Only one species of cockroach, the Pacific beetle cockroach, is known to reproduce via viviparity, a feature that increases the chances of survival of the offspring due to increased availability of nutrition and reduced chances of predation.

The Pacific beetle cockroach is found in Fiji and Hawaii. Pregnant mothers provide nutrition to their babies by feeding them with milk protein. This milk serves as complete food.

After fertilisation, embryos depend on the egg yolk for their initial nutrition. This enables them to form muscles around their mouth and allow them to eat solid food. The embryo then uses these muscles to drink the milk secreted by pregnant females into the birth sac.

This process starts during pregnancy and goes on until the birth of the young ones. As the amount of milk increases inside the gut of the embryo, the excess amount starts crystallizing naturally for storage as protein. As the milk is used up, the protein crystals slowly dissolve to be available as liquid for nutrition.

SUPERFOOD OF THE FUTURE?

Researchers have isolated naturally

F. INSIGHT

RESEARCH HAS indicated that cockroach milk, which is obtained from female Pacific Beetle cockroaches, is beneficial for humans

occurring milk protein crystals from the gut of the developing cockroach embryo and analysed them. These microscopical crystals are detected by mass spectrometry and X-ray crystallography.

The unique physiological property of the milk protein is their high calorific value. A single milk protein crystal has an energy value of 3.7×10^{-5} Joules, which is three to four times that of cow, buffalo or goat milk.

Given this high-energy food provided by the mother, the babies take about one-third of the time that other cockroach species take to reach sexual maturity.

Further, secretion of the milk protein during pregnancy results in a higher concentration of protein content in the virginous species compared to the other species.

These results indicate that the quality and quantity of food greatly affect the viability of the embryos and the birth of the baby.

In order to make the food into a next generation food, the future could see two-minute noodles being replaced by two-minute energy-packed superfood. Think roachshakes!

Sanchari Banerjee is postdoctoral researcher with interest in protein crystallography.

SANCHARI
BANERJEE

Think milk, and you could soon be thinking of a brand-new 'superfood'—cockroach milk. What is cockroach milk?

It is highly nutritious protein-rich milk because it contains other components.

This protein serves as complete food for little cockroach embryos growing inside their mother.

A key feature of this milk protein is its ability to crystallize inside the embryos.

While a third of proteins in an organism exist in liquid state, which helps in cell activity. Crystallization of proteins inside any organism is usually associated with disease conditions; evolution exerts negative natural selection pressure on proteins in that organism.

As per the studies, proteins like the cockroach milk protein are, however, favoured by evolution for crystallizing inside an organism. This occurs since the protein carry out biological functions in an organism only in their crystallized form.

The cockroach protein could well be the stuff of nutritional revolution. Making it widely available



1 DOCUMENT DISCREETLY

It's tricky to blend into the background when you use a D-SLR. With your smartphone you won't look out of place. If you're into street or documentary photography you can capture great shots by using your phone

2 RIGHT ACCESSORIES

There are a range of accessories for your smartphones? If you're into macro photography invest in a mobile macro lens, or for landscape lovers for a wide angle lens. LED light panels can come in handy for portrait shots.

3 RIGHT LIGHT

Light is the key to bringing your image to life. Consider its direction and strength, and what it brings to the story. Glow of golden light, a cold blue morning, or harsh midday shadows, each affects the mood of the story.

4 EDIT SNAPS

Use Snaps app (iOS and Android) for quick edits, and Affinity Photo on the iPad Pro for more detailed work. Both have a facility to develop raw files, where you can adjust exposure and white balance among other things.

tech updates

SNEAK PEEK

Samsung gives first glimpse of foldable smartphone



The foldable display future is finally here and we are not talking about literally bending a screen like the FlexPai. Samsung, who has been teasing about its foldable smartphone for over a year, has finally unveiled the device at its developer conference on November 8. The South Korean giant did not outright show the device to the audience but, as per The Verge report, kept the lighting dim so as to "protect elements of the design".

NEGATIVE GROWTH

'Changing consumer behaviour to blame for dwindling smartphone sales'

After years of growth, the global smartphone market has stagnated and would experience an annual decline of a little over one per cent for the first time in 2018. Counterpoint Research said according to its latest report, smartphone growth will drop to a negative 1.3 per cent in 2018. This is a first in the history of smartphones that the market has contracted Year-over-Year. The smartphone market has been experiencing negative growth since the fourth quarter of 2017 and the negative trend is expected to continue in the September quarter and upcoming December quarter as well.

MARKET BOOM

'Average app usage time in India to grow by 90% in 2019'



Mobile applications in the category of shopping, video and games are expected to see 60 per cent more users by 2019, according to a report published by Counterpoint Research and Market Research Future. Shopping, Video, Games and Categories of apps in India are going through an explosive growth as data prices have crashed and data speeds have increased considerably in the last few quarters. We will continue to see this growth in 2019 with a jump of 60 per cent users in this segment according to our study," Monastic Technologies Founder and CEO Arun Gupta told PTI.

STICKING TO NORMS

'Flipkart, Amazon not misusing their dominant market position in India, says CCI'



Amazon and its rival in India, the Walmart-owned Flipkart, did not break regulations through their selection of merchants and brands, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has ruled. The CCI's decision is a defeat for a lobby group representing thousands of online sellers in India. A case brought by the All India Online Vendors Association (AIOVA), which represents over 3,500 online sellers, complained that Flipkart was using its dominant position to select sellers – an argument the court rejected. AIOVA's case alleged Flipkart was not adhering to a section of India's anti-trust laws.

5 SHARE INSTANTLY

Share your images to reach a large audience through photo sharing apps and sites. Instagram is one of the biggest and most popular platforms. Also check out Flickr, DeviantArt, and 500px to get started.

Sports AND FITNESS



Dirty race
BEN JOHNSON ON FIXED
SEOUL OLYMPICS
100M RACE

"Whatever
happened in Seoul
was premeditated.
It was a set-up, I
know that..."

action pack

PARI MASTERS

FEDERER BEATS FOGNINI IN PRE-QUARTERS



PARIS: Roger Federer defeated Italy's Fabio Fognini 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 in Paris Masters quarter-finals on Thursday as the Swiss great moved three wins away from his 100th career wins.

Federer, 37, who captured his 99th trophy on home ground in Basel last week, will face Japan's Kei Nishikori on Friday for a place in the semi-finals

in the French capital.

Third seed Federer is playing the Paris Masters for the first time since 2015 and is bidding to clinch the tournament for just the second time after winning it in 2011. "I didn't come here to win Paris, actually. My objective is London," said Federer as he looked beyond the French capital to the season-ending ATP World Tour Finals which start on 11 November.

WORLD GYMNASTICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

SIMONE BILES WINS 4TH ALL-AROUND TITLE DESPITE KIDNEY STONE PROBLEM



DOHA: Simone Biles attempted to smile but her eyes betrayed her. She was angry, paying little attention to the gold medal around her neck, the one that made history.

But did she sound like someone who had just become the first woman to win four world all-around championships? She pulled off the feat despite a handful of uncharacteristic errors to beat Japan's Mai Murakami and American teammate Morgan Hurd by more than 1.6 points.

LEAGUE CUP

BRUYNE SUFFERS INJURY SCARE IN MAN CITY'S LAST-16 WIN OVER FULHAM



MANCHESTER: Kevin De Bruyne suffered an injury scare as League Cup holders Manchester City moved into the quarter-finals with a 2-0 win against Fulham on Thursday.

There was concern for De Bruyne after he limped off the pitch and seemed to have a long injury in the closing minutes. De Bruyne, 27, only recently turned from another knee problem that forced him to miss two months this season, limiting him to five appearances to date. City manager Pep Guardiola will hope his influential Belgian star is able to make a quick recovery.

WHITEWASH

MAN UNITED REVIEW SECURITY AFTER TOY GUNS FOUND IN BACKPACK



MANCHESTER: United will review security measures at Old Trafford after a pitch invader during last month's Champions League match with Juventus was found to have carried two toy guns into the stadium in his backpack.

"It's a bit of a children's miniature plastic toy gun into a stadium is clearly an irresponsible act. Fortunately, the actions of the pitch invader at the Juventus game did not harm anyone," the BBC quoted a United spokesperson as saying.

Batting For the Right Ball



SEAM, SWING, OR SPIN

The leather cricket ball has a core of cork that is tightly wound up with layers and layers of string. Four pieces of leather strips cover the strung up core. The cork core is what gives the ball its sprightly bounce. Weighing about 160 gm, usually the seam of the ball comprises about six parallel stitches. Usually three different kinds of balls are used—Dukes, Kookaburra, and SG—made respectively in England, Australia and India.

1

Kookaburra

While Kookaburra balls are used in one-day and T20 international matches, while red Kookaburra balls are used in test matches, Kookaburra balls are machine-made and have low seam which offers swing for 20-25 overs after that batting becomes easy and there is no help for spinners.

2

Dukes

Originating in England's Tonbridge and about 258 years old, the Dukes is completely handmade. More durable than the Kookaburra, the Dukes seem a lot and more so in English conditions.



Fast forward to 2018, another 18-year-old wunderkind stepped on the Australian soil and conjured magic. Sachin Tendulkar was a child prodigy destined for greatness and it was the 1991-92 Australia tour that quashed any lingering doubts about that prophecy and preternatural abilities.



AMONG THE
game's many
accessories that
together produce
a rich tapestry of
skillful encounters is
its main component,
the round leather ball

PRADEEP MAGAZINE • DELHI

What makes Indian skipper Virat Kohli publicly bat for the England-made Dukes ball thumbing down the 'Made in India' SG ball? Or does he prefer the SG ball? Steve Waugh, pitching for Dukes and rejecting the Australians-made Kookaburra.

The answer may well lie in the lack of standardization of the balls globally and difficulty in adjusting to them in different conditions. The Indian experience with the SG balls at the international level is not bad or even terrible, but it is not great. However, there are complaints that its seam dies down after the first few overs, the shine vanishes and the ball becomes soft, leaving the bowlers frustrated, though again it

is not borne out by results and the success of the spinners.

No other sport, perhaps, is so susceptible to manipulations from outside elements than cricket. This is a statement of fact and not to be misread as a qualitative attribute or otherwise.

In most other sports, the weather, atmospheric conditions, the surface you play on and the equipment you play with play a role but not as significant and a decisive one as in cricket.

If it is the object, the ball, which is central to its activity along with the wooden bat. Then the ball is the ball, the ball is the ball man out, whereas the batsman attempts to score runs off it. Of late, the cricket ball has been at the centre of many controversies, none more impactful than the ball tampering,

incident that led to the Australian Board banning its skipper Steve Smith and David Warner for a year from playing international cricket while Cameron Bancroft was handed a one-month long suspension.

BALL TAMPERING

Since the amount of swing and turn a bowler can extract from the ball depends on the quality, shape and condition of the ball, cricketers have from time immemorial discovered ways and means to tamper with it in order to gain maximum advantage. From ball tampering—once believed very common and almost acceptable to the much more draconian laws to prevent this practice—the game has come a long way. Yet the controversies surrounded it never die and the ball remains at the centre of any discussion.

'Matured' Shaw ready for Australian challenge, says Sachin

JIGAR MEHTA • MUMBAI

Twenty seven years ago, an 18-year-old wunderkind stepped on the Australian soil and conjured magic. Sachin Tendulkar was a child prodigy destined for greatness and it was the 1991-92 Australia tour that quashed any lingering doubts about that prophecy and preternatural abilities.

offing, Australia is a tough place to visit. There will be hostility, aggression, constant in-your-face anger. And for a teenager, on his first full overseas tour, it can get intimidating.

However, Tendulkar is confident that the hostility and intimidation won't faze the young star. The Master is of the opinion that the teenager is ready for the Australia tour, bigger challenges are in the



rapid progress. "Whatever I have known of prithvi, I think he is ready for all that hostility and sledging," Tendulkar told Firstpost. "Sometimes it's not the age, it's what you do there that matters. So I would say that he is ready. He is a fast learner, he understands how things take place out there in the middle and he's got the peripheral awareness to adapt to situations. Because every day he is going to meet with different challenges and he has to answer those questions asked by the bowlers. And he is ready for that I feel."

"The key to success over there (Australia) will also depend a lot on how we play the first 25 overs or so. But it also depends on the kind of surfaces they will provide us," Tendulkar explains.

India's Subhankar Dey shocks Lin Dan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA • GERMANY

Unheralded Indian Subhankar Dey shocked multiple time World and Olympic champion Lin Dan 22-20, 21-19 to enter the quarter-finals of the Saar-Lor-Lux Open Badminton Championship in Saarbrucken on Thursday.

World No.64 Subhankar took 45 minutes to upstage the current world No.12, who has five World Championships titles and two Olympic gold medals in his kitty.

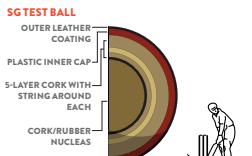
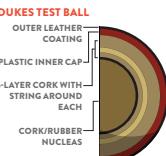
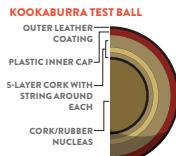
The Indian won crucial points in both games which were closely fought. Lin Dan, at 35, is at the business end

of his career but was awarded top billing at the event. Barely two weeks ago, it was Kidambi Srikanth, who beat Lin Dan at the Denmark Open.

The other notable performance of Thursday came from CWG gold medallist Parupalli Kashyap, who beat local player Alexander Roovers 21-14 21-12.

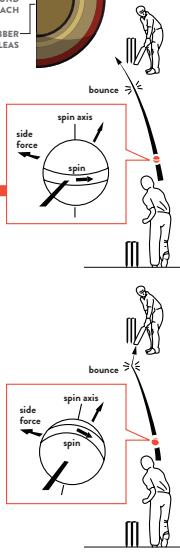


WHAT ARE CRICKET BALLS MADE OF?



spin decoded

SPIN
BOWLERS USE
THE MAGNUS
EFFECT TO
MAKE THE
BALL DRIFT



6 rows of hand stitches hold the SG and Duke balls together

are handmade and stitched in England and India and have pronounced seams, which the machine made Kookaburra balls lack. To make this technical jargon simpler, the hand-made and stitched balls, especially the Kookaburra balls, have longer and even the spinners relish bowling with them. The Kookaburra balls do not have a very pronounced seam and hence after the first ten-fifteen overs they afford little purchase to the bowlers.

MADE IN INDIA?

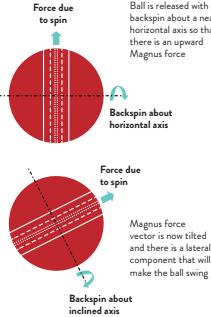
It is very possible that the Indians had a very different experience with the Dukes balls in England, where the bowlers performed exceptionally well and feel that if they play with the same ball at home as well, they would be better prepared, especially the batsmen, to play with English balls. There is, no doubt, a bias for an international ball to be established than done in a game so dependent on external conditions like cricket is. The Dukes balls may perform very differently in Indian conditions, where the wickets are more abrasive and alter the condition of the ball quicker than in England. And also how the ball reacts to the spin will be different.

Another query is whether a foreign-made ball be preferred over an Indian company with decades of manufacturing experience? Also to be taken into account is the price, as the SG ball costs almost one-fourth of what a Dukes ball costs. The shift will affect India's domestic cricket as not all cricket players in India are sponsored by the cash-rich Indian Board.

The advent of one-day cricket deepened the competition as a white coloured ball had to be used in the light-sided conditions more visible to players as well as television audiences. These white balls, unlike the SG and Dukes, are machine-made. That is not the only difference. The red leather balls

SCHEMATIC FOR SPIN-INDUCED 'MALINGA' SWING.

VIEWED FROM BEHIND THE BOWLER'S ARM



The latest is which manufacturer's ball should be used in international cricket to help improve the quality of the contest. At present, three types of cricket balls are used in international and domestic contests. India plays with SG balls in longer formats like Test and ODI cricket. Most Kookaburra balls in limited overs cricket. Most other countries play with Kookaburra balls, barring England and the West Indies, who play with Dukes balls manufactured in England.

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These are questions to ponder in cricket's near-impossible search for uniformity in a diverse and complex sport as cricket.

indefinite period since arriving in August, hoping to fulfil a childhood dream to become a football player.

The 22-year-old superstar's quest garnered worldwide attention, which intensified when he scored goals in a one-season friendlies.

But his abilities were questioned and the club reportedly offered him only a fraction of the Aus\$3

million (US\$2.1 million) his management were said to be seeking, with outside sponsors needed to make the deal viable.

"As previously stated, the club (and Bolt's representative) Ricky Simms have been in conversations with external partners to find a commercial solution that suits all parties," the Mariners said in a statement.

Norway, however, beat the Mariners for the opportunity.

"I would like to thank the Central Coast Mariners owners, management, staff, players and fans for making me feel so welcome during my time there," said the Marcaan, who is reported to be in Melbourne and will head to Europe soon for a previously agreed commercial engagement.

Despite several potential partners, both Bolt and the Central Coast Mariners have amicably concluded that they will not be able to settle on a suitable deal in a timely manner."

"The 100m world record holder, who retired from athletics last year and has previously tried out with clubs in Germany, South Africa and

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AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

Sprint King Usain Bolt's attempt to become a professional footballer with Australia's Central Coast Mariners collapsed on Friday as his trial period was terminated after contract talks failed.

The eight-time Olympic champion had been trying for an

opportunity to play football in the United States. He has served in various senior positions in India's top national and regional newspapers. His books include *Rahul Dravid - A Biography*, which went into many reprints and translations, and *Casting A Spell - The Story of Karnataka Cricket*.

OPINION

Vedam Jaishankar

SPORTS JOURNALIST



Cherry picking: What lies beneath

The red cherry is kicking up quite a storm in India. Some cricketers have argued that deterioration of the SG ball, used exclusively in India since 1991, from new to old is too rapid for comfort.

"The SG ball (the red cherries of the Greenslades) used to be top notch when I started playing. This was world-beating even after 70 overs. It's not the same any more," said India's ace off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, the first to criticise the brand as early as last year.

Indian captain Virat Kohli earlier this month echoed the view. "I totally agree with Ashwin. To have a ball scuffed up in the first over is unacceptable and it's not normal. The quality of the ball needs to be quite high and I don't understand why it's gone down," he said. Kohli also called for a worldwide switch to the England-made Dukes ball.

Umesh Yadav was the third player to complain, which came as a surprise. On course to being only the third Indian paceman to grab 10 wickets in a Test (with the SG ball, of course), Yadav got it down, saying it offered no pace or bounce that he expected.

It must be pointed out that England and West Indies are the only countries to deploy Dukes. All others use Kookaburra while India opt for the Meert-made SG.

All three manufacturers have been around for a while. The producers of the Kookaburra were the most successful and saddle makers since 1890 till the arrival of motor cars made that line of work redundant.

Dukes go back a longer while – all the way to 1761.

The present owner, Dilip Jiodia, took over only in 1987. Sanparels was established in Sialkot (present day Pakistan) in 1931 by brothers Kedarmati and Dwarkanath Anand. After the Partition they settled down in Meerut. While Dukes is the oldest, Sanparels is the newest ball, it is the red ball that has become contentious of late. Of course, balls of both colours are supposedly swinging a lot less the past three years, if experts are to be believed.

But, it is in the manufacturing of the red cherries that three giants differ. SG uses buffalo hide while the others go for steerhide, while Dukes sourcing its leather from Scotland. Dukes is the only one that uses oil to make the ball water proof for damp English conditions. Neither Australia nor India has this issue and hence use a lot less grease.

Indian grounds, however, are hard and rough on soft leather. Dukes, all material is sourced from England but the hand-stitching is done in Sialkot, where there is expertise and labour. Sanparels, on the other hand, has to import the skins to the plant to have the hemispheres together (half-golf balls have four quarters of leather). The threading of the two is also different – the stitches run underneath the seam and bind the hemispheres a lot tighter. Kookaburra's outer seams are machine-stitched and supposedly ornamental.

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The quality of cork and the tight threading that makes the core of the ball are as important as the leather and seam thread. The quality of the leather is far better for both Dukes and SG is prouder and more prominent than that of Kookaburra.

The excessive grease and proud seamstitching are conducive to slow bowling. The SG ball, thanks to the rough outfields in India, gets scuffed quicker but supports reverse swing.

A couple of years ago, the Karnataka State Cricket Association tried Dukes's pink for Karnataka Premier League T20. The ball swerved prodigiously and bated batters. Soon enough, the batsman-friendly Kookaburra was back.

Earlier, the National Cricket Academy had tried various Indian red balls but only SG stayed the course. While it is true that Dukes has played remarkably well in England, in English conditions, it has not been put to sustained test in India, especially on non-Test and non-international grounds.

The complaints against the SG ball are real and by a host of cricketers. The manufacturers have got to work on the feedback and tweak its manufacturing process to iron out the flaws. The last thing cricket needs is standardisation of pitch and ball. It needs to remain interesting. Different challenges in different conditions would ensure that other things are not equal!

Vedam Jaishankar is an experienced journalist who has covered cricket in all the continents. He has served in various senior positions in India's top national and regional newspapers. His books include *Rahul Dravid - A Biography*, which went into many reprints and translations, and *Casting A Spell - The Story of Karnataka Cricket*.

Bolt's football dream hits roadblock

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

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