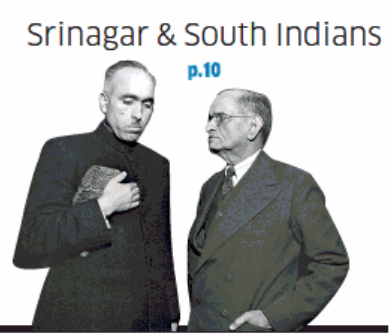




Gautam Singhania Goes for a Different Cut p.06



Srinagar & South Indians p.10

# THE ECONOMIC TIMES magazine

www.economictimes.com | New Delhi | 24 pages | ₹10  
August 18-24, 2019



With erratic weather events becoming more frequent, India needs to urgently reassess its preparedness and protocols for monsoons

# The New Normal?

p.14-16

## ED Attaches ₹190 cr Worth of Usha Martin Assets

Kolkata: The Enforcement Directorate has issued an order attaching ₹190 crore worth of immovable assets of the wire ropes business of Usha Martin Ltd (UML) in Ranchi. The order follows an FIR filed by the CBI after investigation into the sale of ore from an iron ore mine allotted to the company for captive use. UML, which recently completed the ₹4,600 crore sale of its steel business to Tata Sponge Iron, has said the ED order would not have any impact on the deal. "The transfer and sale of the iron ore mine and the steel unit was concluded by June 2019. The order will not have any impact on it," UML MD Rajeev Jhawar, who is currently in Singapore, told ET. The order involves provisional attachment of the property of the wire ropes business for 180 days. Usha Martin said it does not agree with the ED order and was seeking opinion for appropriate legal action to contest the order.

—Our Bureau

## Zomato Ready for Talks with Restaurants

New Delhi: Zomato said Saturday it was "open to any conversations to resolve ongoing issues", reacting to restaurants logging out of food aggregators due to "unsustainable deep discounting". "It was extremely surprising for us to see a campaign of this nature being launched without the restaurant committee even calling for any discussion regarding the same. We have still not received any invitation for a discussion," a Zomato spokesperson said in an email. President of National Restaurant Association of India Rahul Singh said: "All aggregators, barring Zomato, have got in touch with us and we are meeting all of them shortly to find a workable solution.... Zomato has not made any such offer for discussion to NRAI as yet."

—Ratna Bhushan

## Mahindra Opens Unit in Sri Lanka

Colombo: Mahindra & Mahindra Saturday opened its first completely knocked down automotive assembly plant here in a joint venture with Ideal Motors of Sri Lanka. M&M claims it is the first major passenger car assembly unit in Sri Lanka with local sourcing. The Mahindra Ideal Lanka Pvt Ltd plant also rolled out its first product, the compact SUV, KUV100 petrol K6+ variant, which will be followed by other variants soon.

—PTI

# Modi Cements Bhutan Ties With RuPay Launch



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being welcomed by his Bhutanese counterpart Lotay Tshering at the Paro airport on Saturday. —AFP

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bhutanese counterpart Lotay Tshering held wide ranging talks in Thimpu Saturday. They also discussed steps to further expand the bilateral partnership across several sectors and signed 10 MoUs to infuse new energy in India-Bhutan ties.

Modi said: "We had a comprehensive meeting, where we deliberated on the relations between India and Bhutan. There is great scope to further improve economic and cultural ties between our nations."

The PM, who is here on his second visit to Bhutan and the first since his re-election in May, inaugurated Mangdechhu hydroelectric power plant and also launched stamps to commemorate five decades of India-Bhutan hydropower cooperation. The two countries signed 10 memoranda of understanding in space research, aviation, IT, power and education.

Modi also launched RuPay Card in Bhutan by making a purchase at Simtokha Dzong, which functions as a monastic and administrative centre and is

one of the oldest dzongs in Bhutan.

Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said at a press conference preceding the PM's visit: "Bhutan is the second country this (RuPay Card) will be launched in after Singapore. This will be done in two phases — in the first phase Indian banks will issue RuPay

cards which can be used by Indian travellers in Bhutan. The next phase will be where the banks of Bhutan will be empowered to issue RuPay cards to Bhutanese citizens to use in India."

Modi said an additional \$100 million would be available to Bhutan under a standby swap arrangement to meet foreign exchange requirements. The two leaders jointly inaugurated the Ground Earth Station and SATCOM network, developed with assistance from ISRO for utilisation of South Asia Satellite in Bhutan. India would enhance the communication, public broadcasting and disaster management coverage in Bhutan, he said.

—Agencies/Thimphu

**The two countries signed 10 MoUs in space research, aviation, IT, power and education**

## Fire Causes Extensive Damage at AIIMS

New Delhi: A major fire broke out in the PCBlock of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here on Saturday. A total of 34 fire tenders were pressed into service and fire-fighters were able to contain the fire from spreading to nearby blocks. No casualty has been reported. PCBlock is a non-patient block comprising of research labs and doctors' rooms.

The fire, which broke out late afternoon and caused extensive damage to the first, second and third floors of the PCBlock, was doused by approximately 6:25 pm. However, as a precautionary measure, patients and other occupants from AB1 to AB7 wards were evacuated to Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences and other safe areas. The PCBlock is a non-patient block comprising



of research labs, doctors rooms, etc. However, it is interconnected to the Emergency Wing of the hospital. A short circuit is suspected to have caused the blaze.

### Leaders Visit Jaitley

Several leaders visited AIIMS Saturday where former finance minister Arun Jaitley is on life support system. J-K Governor Satya Pal Malik, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, BSP chief Mayawati, BJP's Satish Upadhyay, Congress' Abhishek Singhvi and Jyotiraditya Scindia, Air Force chief Air Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa were among those who visited the hospital.

—Agencies

## Some Curbs Eased in Kashmir

Srinagar/Hyderabad: Authorities eased restrictions on movement and restored landline telephone links in some parts of Kashmir Saturday, the biggest relaxation since the lockdown on August 5. Low-speed (2G) mobile internet services have been restored in five districts of Jammu region, officials said. Restrictions under prohibitory orders were eased in Kishtwar, Doda and Ramban districts in the Chenab valley and border districts of Poonch and Rajouri in the Pir Panjal region early in the morning, they said. DGP Dilbag Singh and other senior police and CRPF officers reviewed the deployment of security forces of the national highway from Srinagar to Anantnag. Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy said in Hyderabad precautionary measures were being taken in view of provocative statements from Pakistan. Political leaders had been detained for their safety, as part of the precautionary measures, he added.

—Agencies

## I-T Dept Lens on Unaccounted Note-Ban Cash

New Delhi: To seize illegal cash, the Income Tax Department has issued a 17-point checklist to tax commissioners across the country to track those who deposited unaccounted cash during demonetisation.

In a directive to the Principal Chief Commissioners of Income Tax and Principal Director Generals of Income Tax, the Central Board of Direct Taxes said the checklist was prepared to assist the assessing officers. The move was aimed at spreading the department's net wide and deep to catch those who deposited unaccounted cash during demonetisation.

—IANS

## Karnataka on Terror Alert

Bengaluru: A thick security blanket has been thrown across major towns and cities of Karnataka following intelligence inputs about a possible terror attack, police sources said Saturday. The alert was sounded Friday night. There was intelligence input that a group of terrorists was planning to create terror and panic in the country, sources said. Security has been strengthened at all important installations and public places such as bus stands, railway stations, temples, markets, malls and government offices. Multi-layer security arrangements were also witnessed at important temples in the state.

—PTI

# SUPER POWER

Chief of Defence Staff will be a stepping stone to remaking how India aggregates its manpower, deploys its firepower, allocates its funds and prioritises its long-term security goals

**:: Sreeram Chaulia**

**P**rime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day announcement to create a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) for improving coordination among the army, navy and air force is a historic boost to India's national security and power projection capabilities. It is a long-due reform of higher military management in the larger national interest, and a forward-looking step for India to keep abreast of international trends in defence modernisation.

The idea of CDS had been mooted decades ago in India, but it was stymied by bureaucracy and narrow, self-interested objections of stakeholders. Anxieties of individual service chiefs about losing turfs to their peers, and cussedness of civilian officials who feared transfer of influence to a single "Super General" had held India back. While the entrenched tradition of bureaucratic stasis and pettiness will not vanish overnight, Modi's momentous decision to form the CDS is a welcome top-down blow to vested interests.

The advantages of a CDS are myriad. For India's military to be more effective in combat and in deterring dynamic enemies, its forces must integrate and enmesh. Inter-service rivalries over weapons acquisitions, budgets, deployment of hardware and tactics, and claims of relative credit for battlefield achievements have cost many countries, including India, dearly in both war and peacetime.

For example, infighting between India's army and the air force during the 1999 Kargil war on attack helicopters and what role each wing should play in repelling Pakistani intruders caused critical delays that prolonged India's eventual victory. Residual tensions between the army's Aviation Corps and the air force, and between the navy and the army over the meagre budgets allocated to the former, have dented India's readiness to be competitive amid the advent of global military doctrines like "AirLand Battle" and "Air-Sea Battle".

As Modi said, in today's changed world and altered landscape of warfare, India cannot afford to think in fragmented ways. His reference was to how established powers around the planet have recognised the inadequacy of separate service commands and operational planning, and undertaken structural efforts towards fusion.

The US reworked its military command structure in 1986 by granting centralised power to its Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and forging interoperability, wherein each geographically organised command catering to a specific region of the world would include a mix of ground, naval, marine, air and special operations



**While the entrenched tradition of bureaucratic stasis and pettiness will not vanish overnight, Modi's momentous decision to form the CDS is a welcome top-down blow to vested interests**

personnel.

China's revolution in military affairs (RMA) concept has benefited from President Xi Jinping's aggressive push to enhance "jointness" among the wings of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). In 2016, Xi appointed China's first ever Chief of the Joint Staff and scrapped the outmoded system of officers of land, air and naval branches reporting to their respective headquarters. Instead, he bundled them together under geographical theatre commands aimed at designated countries and threats. For example, China's western command headquartered in Chengdu has an operational focus on India, Central Asia and Islamist terrorism.

Xi was inspired by the American model and it is evident that Modi has learnt from the Chinese model of reorganisation through top-down political will. The anomaly of India's fragmented eastern commands of the army, navy and air force located far apart from each other in Kolkata, Visakhapatnam and Shillong respectively vis-à-vis a sharp and singular western command of China is glaring.

Now that CDS is a reality, Modi must

plough ahead and pursue joint theatre commands. Individual branches of our military do have their own distinct sub-identities, sources of pride and philosophical characteristics. The task ahead is to retain those specialised attributes and affinities while bringing about a cultural and attitudinal shift in all the wings and civilian paraphernalia to serve the unified goal of securing India and carrying it to great power status.

CDS should be a stepping stone to remaking how India aggregates its manpower, deploys its firepower, allocates its funds, and prioritises its long-term security goals. Thanks to Modi, the door to transformation is open. ■

*The writer is a professor and dean at the Jindal School of International Affairs*



**PC, Laptop  
Tablet, Mobile**

**सुरक्षा**

**Ransomware Protection** 

[www.npav.net](http://www.npav.net)

 **92.72.70.70.50**  
**98.22.88.25.66**

## ELITE GROOMS

**Mumbai based CEO, 32, 5ft 9",** Sindhi. Father is retired. Family is financially well off. Looking for a compatible and well educated match from any community in India. Contact: 7092101233


**Bangalore based CEO, 30, 188 cms,** Mudaliyar. Masters from a reputed Institute. Father is a Businessman. Looking for an affable and well educated match from the same community. Contact: 9341813211

**US based Software Engineer, 31, 5ft 9",** Hindi/Kayastha. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off with a good net worth. Looking for a suitable well educated match from the same community in USA. Contact: 9324433072

**Mumbai based Consultant, 32, 6ft.** Marathi/Brahmin - Deshastha. Father is a senior Superintendent and Mother is a Dentist. Looking for a suitable well educated match from a similar community in India. Contact: 7824805304

**Chennai based Doctor, 28, 6ft,** Sozhiya Vellalar. MS. Father is a Doctor. Family is financially well off. Looking for a likeminded Doctor match from a similar community. Contact: 9380054837

**Singapore based Director, 32, 6ft,** Brahmin. Masters from UK. Parents are Government Officials. Family is financially well off. Looking for a likeminded and well educated match from the same community in Singapore. Contact: 9392149193

  
From BharatMatrimony

**Exclusive matchmaking service for the elite**

- Over 1 lakh Exclusive Elite Profiles
- Experienced Relationship Managers
- Confidential Service
- High Success Rate

**Call us: 1800 200 4433**

**South Delhi based Businessman, 37, 5ft 9",** Punjabi. MBA from an Ivy League Institute. Father is a well known Businessman. Family is financially well off with a net worth of several Crores. Looking for a compatible and well educated match. Contact: 8595197956

## ELITE BRIDES

**Rajkot based Entrepreneur, 26, 5ft 7",** Brahmin. MBA. Father is a well known Businessman. Family is financially well off with a good net worth. Looking for a likeminded and well educated match in Ahmedabad/Rajkot. Contact: 9375968850

**Mumbai based Entrepreneur, 35, 5ft 2",** Agarwal. PG in Mass Media. Family is financially well off. Looking for a compatible and well educated match from Hindu/Jain community in India/Abroad. Contact: 9324433072

**Mumbai based Business Analyst, 25, 5ft 1",** Hindi/Agarwal. Father is retired. Family is financially well off. Looking for a compatible and well educated match from the same community in Mumbai/Pune. Contact: 7824805304

**Noida based CEO, 24, 5ft 6",** Brahmin. Masters in Fashion Management. Father is an Additional Senior Solicitor. Family is financially well off. Looking for a suitable well educated match from the same/similar community in India/Abroad. Contact: 9310065725

**Delhi based Advocate, 29, 5ft 4",** Hindi/Khatri. Father is a Lawyer and Mother is a Doctor. Family is financially well off. Looking for a suitable well educated match from similar community in USA. Contact: 7824805304

**Dubai based Business Analyst, 32, 157 cms,** Shetty. Masters. Father is a Director. Family is financially well off. Looking for a suitable well educated match from the same community. Contact: 9341813211

# Up in Downturn



While the narrative of an economic slowdown is taking root, manufacturing numbers show there is no uniform story across segments



**:: G Seetharaman**

**S**ample gift boxes and wicker baskets are stacked in a corner of the conference room of Candor Foods' offices in an industrial cluster of Navi Mumbai. The weeks leading up to Diwali in October will be the company's busiest, as demand for its products – dried fruits and nuts – soars.

In a 30,000-sq ft facility on the same premises, Candor Foods will process around 8,000 kg of almonds, cashews, pistachios, walnuts, dates, etc, to meet that demand, up from a current average of 4,500 kg now. "We expect business this Diwali to be around the same as last year," says chief executive Yash Gawdi. Bags of raw nuts, fresh off a truck, await their turn to be taken in. A young man puts a lid on a plastic jar of trail mix, seals it with a machine and repeats the process with speed and precision. Candor also makes cereal bars and flavoured peanuts.

Gawdi's forecast for Diwali may come as a surprise to many in the backdrop of the steady drumbeat of reports about a

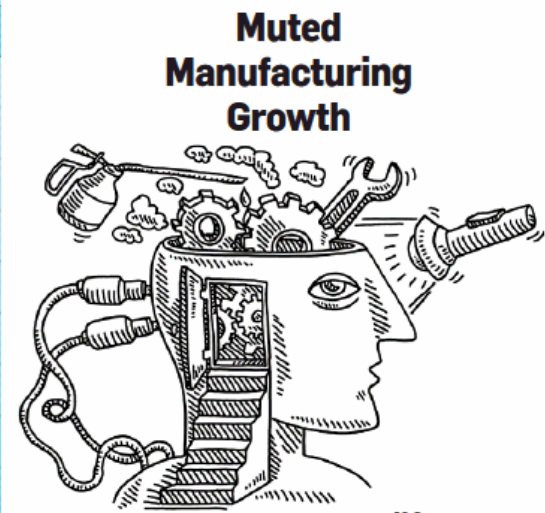
**"The overall sentiment might impact purchase behaviour in consumer durables. But with interest rates going down, EMIs will also fall"**

**Kamal Nandi**, business head, Godrej Appliances

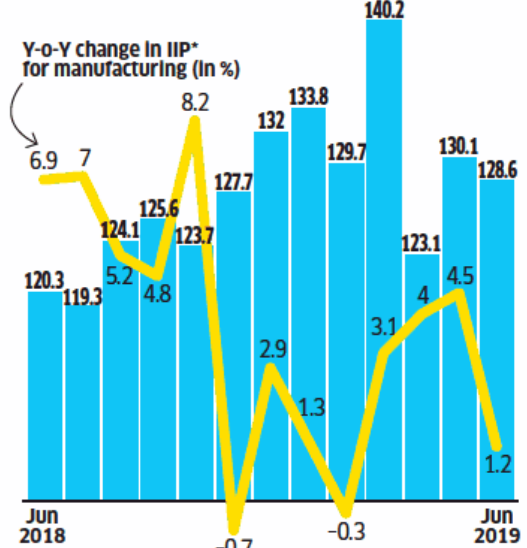
slowing economy and job losses. Plummeting vehicle sales, a rise in unsold apartments and a troubled shadow banking sector have caused the likes of Bajaj's Rahul Bajaj, L&T's AM Naik and HDFC's Deepak Parekh to speak out about the gravity of the economic crisis over the past few weeks. The Indian economy grew at 6.8% in 2018-19 – its lowest in five years.

Their concerns were backed by more troubling data recently when industrial output in 11 of the 23 manufacturing segments contracted in April-June 2019, compared with the same period last year. But there were also sectors that bucked the trend, such as food production, apparel and steel, which grew at a faster clip than in 2018.

This is a clear sign the slowdown narrative is not uniform across the manufacturing spectrum. Manufacturing accounts for over 16% of the Indian economy and employs 13% of the country's workforce. The pockets of growth in manufacturing



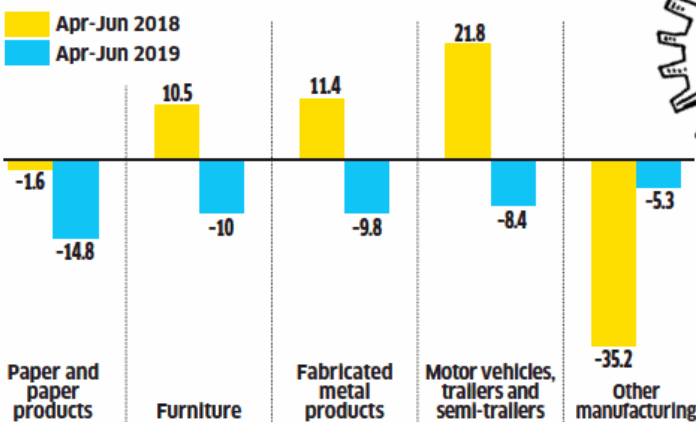
## Muted Manufacturing Growth



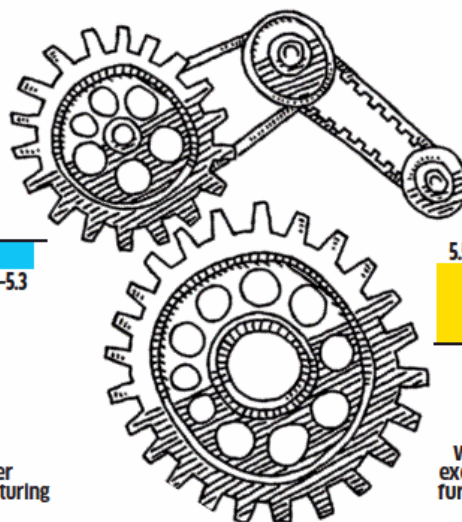
Source: Central Statistics Office (CSO)  
 \*Index of Industrial Production

## Worst-hit Sectors in Manufacturing

Y-o-Y IIP change (%)

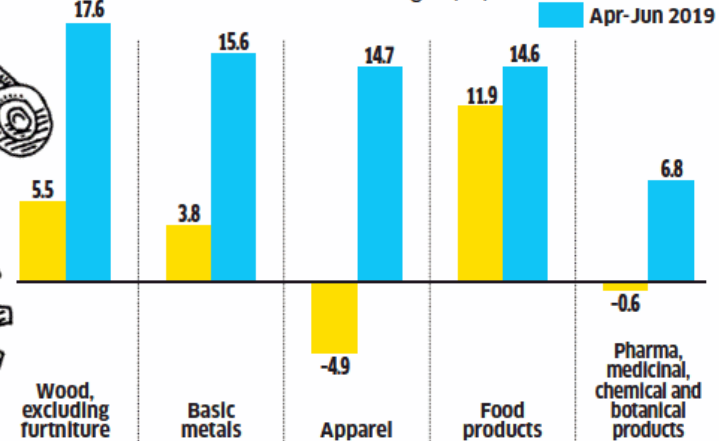


Source: CSO



## The Bright Spots\*

Y-o-Y IIP change (%)



\*Sectors that have grown faster this year compared to last year

Source: CSO

may disappear if some of the struggling sectors, which are also big employers, do not recover in the next few months. Companies like Candor might start feeling the pinch and Gawdi knows it. "The repercussions of the slowdown are definitely going to be there in other sectors, too. Since food is a basic commodity, it will be hit last."

Candor, which supplies to the likes of Amazon, Grofers and Future Retail, reported revenues of over ₹50 crore in 2018-19 and Gawdi's target is ₹100 crore this fiscal. What works in Candor's favour, according to Gawdi, is that dried fruits and nuts are increasingly becoming a part of the monthly shopping list for consumers.

Candor sells under its own label and also produces for retailers' private labels. Manufacturing of food products saw an annual growth of around 15% in April-June 2019 in the index of industrial production (IIP). The growth in the corresponding period last year was 12%. Food processing contributes around 9% to India's manufacturing output, as per government data.

Amit Kumat, CEO of Indore-based Prataap Snacks, which makes the Yellow Diamond brand of chips, says more expensive foods like Candor's will feel the effects of a consumption slump before his company, most of whose products are priced at ₹5.

DK Joshi, chief economist at rating agency Crisil, concurs. "Our sense is that companies which produce small-ticket items have a better chance in this environment."

But biscuit-maker Britannia Industries' managing director Varun Berry was recently quoted as saying that consumers are thinking twice before buying even ₹5 packs. Britannia saw its annual volume growth in the first quarter of 2018-19 halve to 6%, compared with the year-ago period. Hindustan Unilever, too, saw its volume growth slip to 5% from 12%. But Joshi cautions against jumping to conclusions from the performance of a few companies.

Another sector that clocked a similar growth rate was apparel—it had contracted 5% in the first quarter of last fiscal. Apparel exports stood at around \$4.2 billion, or ₹29,000 crore, in April-June 2019 – a 7% rise in rupee terms and a 3% increase in dollar terms, though there was a dip in June, according to commerce ministry data. But India still has a long way to go, with its share of the global apparel market at just 4% in 2017, compared with China's 35%, Bangladesh's 6.5% and Vietnam's 6%, as per the World Trade Organization.

"The government should encourage exports of readymade garments instead of raw cotton and yarn. That's where Bangladesh and Vietnam have an advantage," says Raja M Shanmugam, president of Tirupur Exporters Association. He adds that there is also a growing domestic market, which is five times bigger than the export market. "The fact that many global brands are coming to India is an indication. Also, now people wear different clothes through the day—fitness wear, formal wear, social wear and nightwear."



**"We are cautious about auto but optimistic about infrastructure, solar power and appliances"**

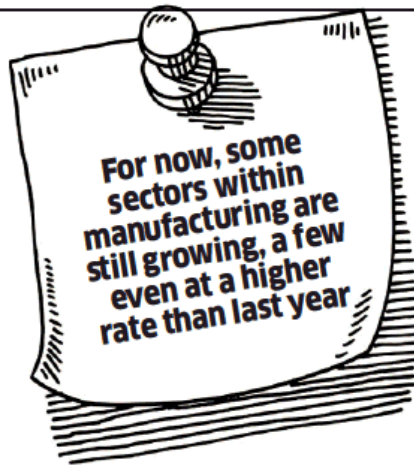
**Jayant Acharya**, director, commercial and marketing, JSW Steel

Moreover, the rising number of people shopping online could also spur demand for apparel since the segment accounts for around 30% of e-commerce transactions, second only to electronics, which comprise half the total, according to the commerce ministry. But the threat India faces from other countries in the export market could hurt it in the domestic market too, according to Vijay Kumar, a garment-maker in Tirupur. "Indian retailers are increasingly sourcing from countries like Bangladesh because it is cheaper." The primary reason for that, he says, is Bangladesh's wages are a third of what it is in India.

When discretionary spends start to go down during a downturn, what could be affected before apparel are mobile phones and consumer durables, as these have much higher price tags and are often linked to financing by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), which have been staring at a severe liquidity crunch.

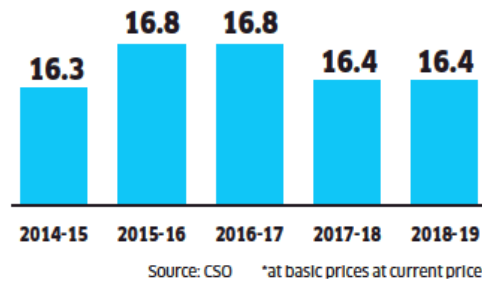
But smartphone sales continue to be strong. Indians bought around 37 million smartphones in April-June, a 10% rise from last year, according to IDC, a research firm. IDC expects growth to continue in the rest of 2019. But it is a mixed bag in consumer durables, which reported a 2% growth in manufacturing output in April-June over last year.

Air-conditioners and refrigerators saw their sales rise 20% and 15%, respectively, in the same period, thanks to an unusually hot summer, according to Kamal Nandi, president of the Consumer



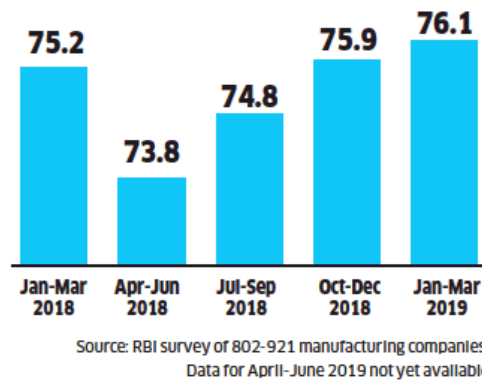
## Manufacturing's Share of Economy Unchanged

% of gross value added



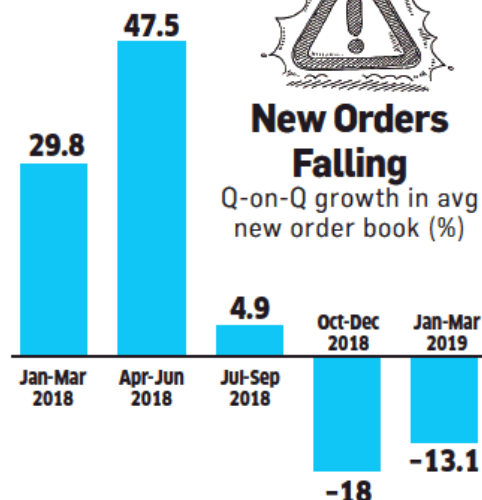
## Capacity Utilisation Inching Up

(in %)



## New Orders Falling

Q-on-Q growth in avg new order book (%)



Electronics and Appliances Manufacturers Association. AC sales had declined 5% and TV sales had risen 3% in the first quarter of 2018-19. India had a heat wave for 32 straight days this year, the longest since 1988, according to Skymet Weather Services.

Television sales, however, did not grow despite the Cricket World Cup. Various reasons are being ascribed to it, including the shift of discretionary spending from TVs to ACs and the attraction of mobile phones over TVs as the primary media consumption device for the young. Nandi, who is also the business head of Godrej Appliances, believes the overall sentiment in the economy might impact consumer purchase behaviour. "But with interest rates going down, EMIs will also reduce." The Reserve Bank of India earlier this month cut the benchmark interest rate for the fourth time this year. The rate is now the lowest since 2010.

While consumer-led sectors like apparel and consumer durables bet big on Diwali, there are some manufacturing segments like steel, which rely on government spending for growth. Steel output grew 14% annually in April-June, compared with a 2% growth in the same period in 2018.

Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at Care Ratings, says the government's infrastructure creation and affordable housing programme could be driving the demand for steel. The government plans to spend ₹100 trillion on infrastructure in the next five years and build nearly 20 million affordable homes in the next three years. "We are cautious about the automotive space... but optimistic about infrastructure, solar power and appliances," Jayant Acharya, director, commercial and marketing, JSW Steel, told ET last month.



**"Companies which produce small-ticket items have a better chance in this environment"**

**DK Joshi**, chief economist, Crisil

Passenger vehicle sales saw their worst annual decline in 19 years in July and India intends to more than triple its installed solar capacity to 100 GW by March 2022. Auto contributes less than a tenth of the steel consumption in India, with more than 60% coming from construction and infrastructure. The affordable housing push and the Smart Cities Mission will also drive demand for commodities such as copper and aluminium, notes Sabnavis. The output of basic metals rose 16% in April-June.

Cement output, on the other hand, grew only 1.2%. Real estate, which consumes two-thirds of India's cement production, is ailing, in part due to lack of funds in light of the NBFC crisis. Around 1.74 lakh apartments across seven cities are stalled due to lack of financing or litigation, as per Anarock Property Consultants. "The muted growth in cement could also be because of the double-digit growth in April-June 2018," says Sabnavis.

Another sector heavily dependent on real estate is furniture, whose output saw a 10% decline in the first three months of this fiscal. But the manufacture of wood, which is also used in packing and construction, saw an 18% jump. It could also have been helped by an 8% rise in exports in that period.

Tobacco products' output also grew by 6% in April-June compared with an 18% decline a year ago. It is hard to look for corroboration in cigarettes, since they account for just a tenth of total tobacco consumption, and two-thirds of tobacco industry is unorganised. "Therefore, IIP numbers in the tobacco segment are not necessarily representative of the cigarette sector trends," says a spokesperson for ITC. Legal cigarette volumes have been declining at an annual rate of 4% since 2010-11, even as illicit cigarettes sales have grown 5%, according to ITC.

Unlike the sectors dependent on consumption demand or government spending, pharma is relatively immune to a slowdown. Having medicines prescribed to you for an illness is not a choice like buying a phone or a pair of jeans.

Siddhant Khandekar, an analyst with ICICI Securities, expects the sector to grow at around 10% in 2019-20 – the same rate as last fiscal. The output of pharma products rose 7% in April-June. In addition to domestic demand for medicines, the easing of the pricing pressure caused by increased competition in the US, which accounts for a third of India's exports, could also help.

There is no looking away from troubling signs about the economy. But for now, some sectors within manufacturing are still growing, a few even at a higher rate than last year. But if consumers decide to hold back their spending further, fearing worse days to come, it could make a bad situation much worse. ■

(Additional inputs by Vatsala Gaur)  
gjnesh.seetharaman@timesgroup.com

# A DIFFERENT CUT

Will Gautam Singhania's strategy to let professionals run Raymond ring-fence the company from business shocks and family scuffles?

**:: Suman Layak**

**T**here is a weekly ritual between Gautam Singhania, chairman and managing director of Raymond Ltd, and Sanjay Behl, the chief executive officer of the company: a chat session over a cup of coffee. Behl describes it as the most productive coffee he has ever had. The informal chat is an opportunity for Behl to bounce off new ideas and get feedback from his boss.

It is an important ritual for Singhania, who is striving to hand over the running of Raymond's businesses to professionals, and Behl, who as CEO (lifestyle business) runs the bulk of the group's businesses. Hiring Behl in 2013 – then only 44 years old and without any textiles background – was Singhania's first move towards making Raymond Ltd, which has a turnover of ₹6,500 crore, a more professionally run organisation. Singhania is still the managing director of the company that has a market capitalisation of about ₹3,800 crore, but Behl essentially runs the operations. Apart from the weekly chat, the CEO also meets Singhania once a month with a larger team for an "update meeting".

Raymond Ltd has a wider range of businesses – right from machine tools, hardware and, more recently, real estate. Over the last two years, Singhania has stepped down as chairman of all key subsidiary companies, letting non-executive chairpersons run the boards. Behl deals with textiles, apparel, garments, retail and FMCG. Former Pepsico India chief Rajeev Bakshi chairs the board of JK Helene Curtis, which makes the Park Avenue brand of products. Nirvik Singh, worldwide chief operating officer of Grey Group, now chairs the Raymond Apparel

board. Ravi Uppal, a veteran of the power and engineering sectors, chairs the boards of Ring Plus Aqua and JK Files (India), both of which have independent CEOs reporting to the board.

At a recent board meeting of Raymond Apparel, Singhania tells *ET Magazine*, the board and management could not get their heads around a particular problem. So the management team flew to Singapore, where chairman Nirvik Singh is based, in early August for a brainstorming session. Singhania, adhering to his vision of letting professionals run the company, stayed away from this session.

Apart from focusing on the core businesses, Raymond Ltd wants to monetise its non-core assets, which include the highly profitable hardware and machine tools businesses and land parcels in Thane near Mumbai. To monetise the land, Singhania started a real estate business and inducted Mukund Raj, former vice-president of L&T Realty, as CEO. The group wants to get into affordable housing. All this, says Singhania, stems from his desire to do the best for his businesses, his family and shareholders. "Doing the best for my business, my family and the shareholders are all interrelated. If I do one, the other two falls into place," says the 53-year-old, also well-known for his passion for race cars and boats.

But are these steps taken by Singhania, who largely controls the ownership and operations and also sits on the subsidiary boards, enough to ring-fence the businesses from future shocks, especially those coming from within the family?

When Singhania talks about family, he means his wife Nawaz and his two daughters, now aged 14 and 10. But the wider Singhania family has been in business for four generations. It can be divided into three branches city-wise – Mumbai, Kolkata and Kanpur. The

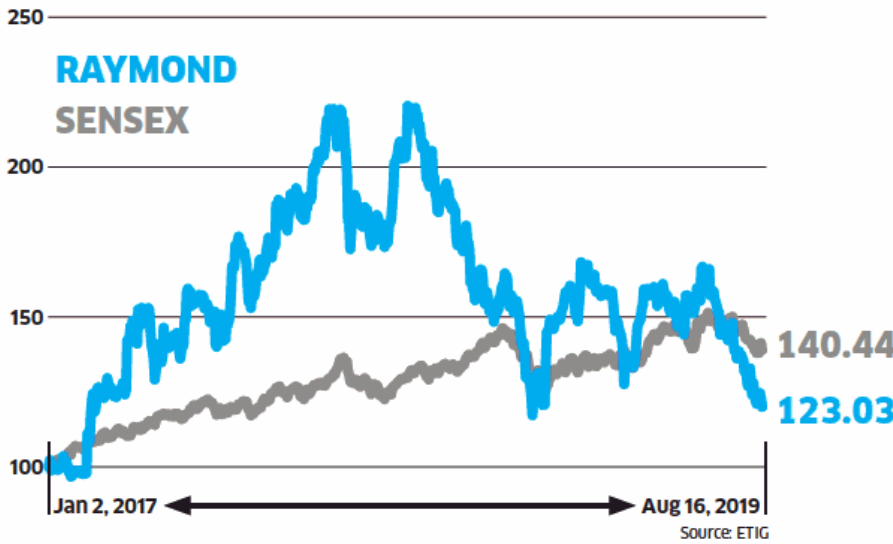
"Doing the best for my business, my family and the shareholders are all interrelated. If I do one, the other two falls into place"

**Gautam Singhania,**  
Chairman and MD, Raymond Ltd



# STOCK & THE SENSEX

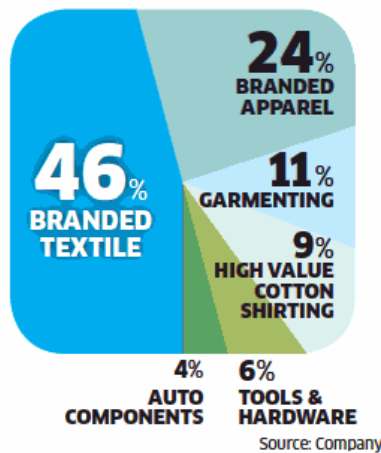
Movement of Raymond and Sensex, normalised to 100



family has a history of litigation over property among themselves.

One old dispute between the three was settled in 2017. But newer disputes have emerged within the Mumbai branch, of which Gautam Singhania is a part. In 1998, Gautam's elder brother Madhupati had moved to Singapore with his family after a settlement deal with father Vijaypat Singhania. Gautam became chairman of the company in 1999. The promoter group controls 44% in Raymond, but Vijaypat had direct control over 37%. In February 2015, Singhania senior gifted this 37% to Gautam. In March, Madhupati's four children filed a suit seeking their share of the property, on the ground that these shares were inherited by Vijaypat and he cannot give it away as he pleased. The Bombay High Court did not provide any interim relief. In 2017, another dispute erupted between Gautam, his father Vijaypat and his cousins Akshaypat and Anant (sons of Vijaypat's brother Ajaypat). This one was about apartments at the re-developed JK House in Mumbai's Malabar Hills. In 2007, Vijaypat and the family of his brother Ajaypat, who were tenants at the JK House, had signed a deal to buy new apartments in the building at a pre-agreed price after redevelopment. The new building took almost a decade to come up. The price of real estate in the area shot up in the meanwhile and Raymond Ltd, now controlled by Gautam, refused to honour the deal. Gautam Singhania says after the audit committee refused to endorse the agreement and the board of directors suggested it be placed before shareholders at an annual general meeting, he felt the right thing to do would be to oppose the 2007 deal. More lawsuits followed, and Vijaypat even said he regretted gifting his shares to his son in 2015 and might explore legal options to take back his shares from

## REVENUE PIE



Gautam.

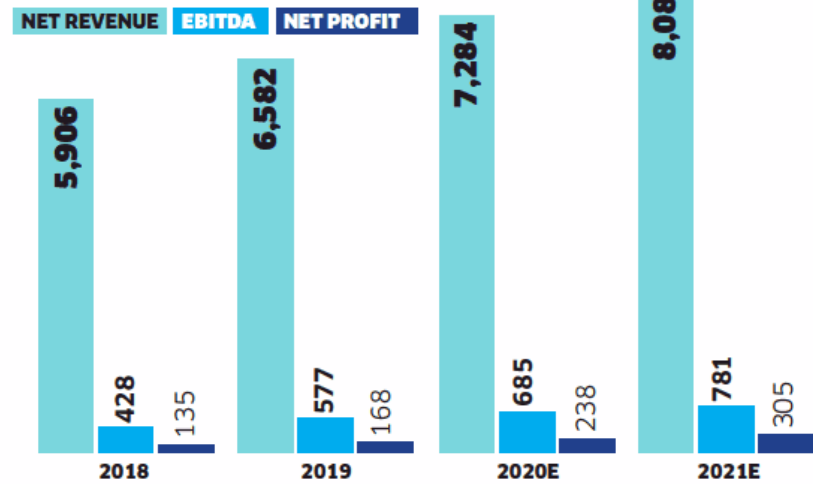
The tussle within the promoter family for Raymond Ltd and its assets might be a bigger problem than what Gautam Singhania would like to admit.

Kavil Ramachandran, professor for family business at Indian School of Business, says one of the key things for successfully professionalising a promoter-led company is the "quality of family governance and the family's commitment to honour the new arrangement in letter and spirit".

Singhania says he tried his best to resolve differences with his father. He insists he did the right thing by corporate governance principles and that helps him sleep well. "I keep my issues with my father and the management of the company separated by a firewall." Father and son are also in a legal tussle over Vijaypat's autobiography, *The Incomplete Man*, that Raymond says is defamatory for the company. In July, Penguin informed a court that it has terminated its book publish-

## GROWTH TRAJECTORY

Year ended March 31 (in ₹ cr)



Note: Net profit refers to profit attributable to owners; E is estimate; numbers rounded off  
Source: Antique Stock Broking

ing deal with Vijaypat.

But these issues have not forced Raymond, or Singhania, to downshift, going by sales and profit. The consolidated gross sales of Raymond Ltd has gone up from ₹4,069.16 crore in 2012-13 to ₹6,582.28 crore in 2018-19. Its reported profit after tax in the period rose from ₹11.73 to ₹174.77 crore, according to Capitaline Database. Behl, who took over as CEO in 2013, points out that he was probably the first professional CEO in the group to run the main businesses of textiles and apparel.

Singhania will have to keep delivering better numbers to keep his grip on the company and carry out his experiments with professionalism.

Antique Stock Broking recently said the group's revenues would cross ₹8,000 crore by 2020-21, with reported profit exceeding ₹300 crore. The earnings before interest, tax, depreciation, and amortisation margin would be 9.7% in 2020-21 against 8.8% today and the profit after tax margin would be 3.7% in 2020-21 against 2.6% in 2018-19. The brokerage also valued the stock at ₹1,240 in its August 7 report. The stock had closed at ₹613.80 on August 13.

Singh, who chairs Raymond Apparel board and also sits on the board of Shoppers Stop, says the management teams at Raymond are benefitting from being board-managed instead of promoter-managed. "While earlier they would present their ideas to Singhania alone, now they present it to a wider audience and can get better feedback."

Such professionalism can be seen at the hardware, gears and tools businesses, headed by Uppal. "The two companies where I head the boards are run by independent CEOs who report to the board. Both have a strong export market and a dominant share

of the Indian market," says Uppal.

Export is one area that Behl, too, is keen to push ahead with the mainline textile, apparel and garments businesses. The company had in the last two years opened new offices in New York and London. It is focusing on three markets – North America, Europe and Japan. Behl says exports – currently 15% of the company's revenue – are likely to grow faster in the near future.

Export might well be the key for Raymond's to post better numbers, especially as the FMCG industry is starting at a slowdown. At a recent call with analysts, the management spoke about a likely dip in EBITDA margins and slow growth in the core business in the near future. The non-core businesses will be keenly watched as they promise stronger growth.

The group chairman, meanwhile, says he has learnt to live with conflict and criticism. Singhania says "healthy conflict is always good" and "when you are in a position like this, you have to live with criticism". "In 1999, the company was bankrupt. I am the one who saved it," he says. Some businesses (steel, cement) was sold then. The last two decades have seen a steady top line growth and a healthy bottom line, save for a couple of years of losses.

Singhania wants smart people around him to ensure the growth trajectory is maintained. "I am smart enough to ensure I hire people who are smarter than me."

With professionals taking charge, Singhania says he has more time for other things. He could spend time incubating the realty business and now wants to hand it over to professionals and move onto the "next thing". He also wants to work in education. The group's second school has just started in Thane.

The motorsports enthusiast was recently elected to the World Motor Sports Council of the FIA. Singhania says: "These are some amazing people I am meeting at the WMSC. They are global leaders. There is much to learn from how they do business, how they deal with issues."

"Life is a non-stop learning process. I have been working 35 years - and I wonder if I have learnt enough business to teach my kids - and I realised, every day I am learning. It is a changing environment. Everyday we are dealing with a new problem," he adds.

For now, Singhania's track involves securing legacy plays, while learning the new games in town. ■

suman.layak@timesgroup.com

## EXECUTIVE POWER

**Sanjay Behl,**  
CEO, Raymond (2013)



**Sanjay Bahl,**  
Group CFO (2015)



**K Mukund Raj,** CEO,  
Raymond Realty (2019)  
Year of joining Raymond in brackets



## NON-EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS

**Nirvik Singh,**  
Non-executive chairman, Raymond Apparel (2018)



**Rajeev Bakshi,**  
Chairman, JK Helene Curtis (2017)



**Ravi Uppal,**  
Chairman, Ring Plus Aqua and JK Files (India) (2019)



# NUCLEAR RETHINK

A change in India's nuclear doctrine has implications on cost, war strategy and signalling. A wider debate on the costs and benefits is needed

**:: Harsh V Pant & Yogesh Joshi**

**D**uring his recent visit to Pokhran, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh argued that India's adherence to the principle of 'no first use' of nuclear weapons is not sacrosanct. As Singh stated to the media, "Pokhran is the area which witnessed Atalji's firm resolve to make India a nuclear power and yet remain firmly committed to 'no first use' doctrine. India has strictly adhered to this doctrine. What happens in future depends on the circumstances." Singh's comments, coming against the backdrop of recent Pakistani threats, have only intensified an already heated debate enveloping the future of India's nuclear doctrine.

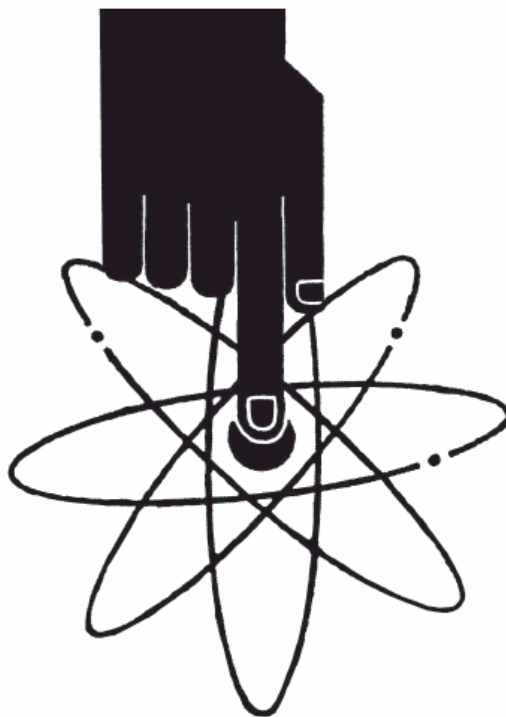
A nuclear doctrine states how a nuclear weapon state would employ its nuclear weapons both during peace and war. By communicating to the enemy its stated intentions and resolve, nuclear doctrines help states to establish deterrence vis-à-vis its adversary during peace and once deterrence fails, guides the state's response during war. After the 1998 nuclear test when India declared itself a nuclear weapon state, it also enunciated a doctrine of 'no first use' of nuclear weapons. Put simply, Indian decision-makers categorically rejected the idea of initiating the use of nuclear weapons in any conflict scenario. India's nuclear doctrine was purely retaliatory in nature. New Delhi would avail the nuclear option only in case it was attacked first. But once attacked, India's response would be massive. Since then, for almost two decades, 'no first use' has remained a core organizing principle of India's nuclear deterrence.

Lately, however, the sanctity of 'no first use' has been called into question not only by strategic analysts but also high-ranking government officials. In 2016, then defence minister Manohar Parrikar raised doubts on India's adherence to the policy of 'no first use' by saying that New Delhi cannot "bind itself" to 'no first use' for eternity. Whereas political leaders have tried to insert an element of ambivalence into India's nuclear doctrine, retired government officials have been far more categorical.

Lt. Gen. BS Nagal, a former strategic forces commander, has been consistently arguing for revocation of the NFU pledge on the grounds that it allows Pakistan to take the initiative while restricting India's options. Militarily, 'no first use' puts India in a disadvantageous position. Amb. Shivshankar Menon, former National Security Advisor, has written that India may have to resort to first use in case it has definitive information on Pakistan's intent to launch first. Pakistan's low nuclear thresholds and its policy of using its nuclear umbrella to foment sub-conventional conflict in India is the principle reason behind the debate around India's 'no first use' policy.

The case to revoke the NFU pledge has also been made keeping in mind India's other nuclear adversary: China. Given the increasing asymmetry of conventional military power between the two countries, some analysts believe that India should revoke its "no first use" policy. Where India fails to deter China conventionally, it should leverage its nuclear capability.

Yet, revoking the NFU would have its own costs. First, India's image as a responsible nuclear power is central to its nuclear diplomacy. Nuclear restraint has allowed New Delhi to get accepted in the global



**Lately, the sanctity of 'no first use' has been called into question by strategic analysts and high-ranking officials**

mainstream. From being a nuclear pariah for most of the Cold War, within a decade of Pokhran 2, it has been accepted in the global nuclear order. It is now a member of most of the technology denial regimes such as the Missile Technology Control regime and the Wassenaar Arrangement. It is also actively pursuing full membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Revoking the 'no first use' pledge would harm India's nuclear image worldwide.

Parting away with NFU would also be costly otherwise. A purely retaliatory nuclear use is easier to operationalize. Nuclear preemption is a costly policy as it requires massive investment not only in weapons and delivery systems but also intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) infrastructure. The latest estimates of India's nuclear weapons by the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists point to a small arsenal of 130-150 nuclear warheads even though it has enough military-grade plutonium to produce 200 warheads. In fact, when compared with the estimates a decade

earlier of 70 nuclear warheads, there has only been a modest increase in India's nuclear inventory. If India does opt for first use of nuclear weapons and given that it has two nuclear adversaries, it would require a far bigger inventory of nuclear weapons particularly as eliminating adversaries' nuclear capabilities would require targeting of its nuclear assets involving multiple warheads. The controversy around the supposed low yield of its Hydrogen weapon test in 1998 further complicates this already precarious calculation.

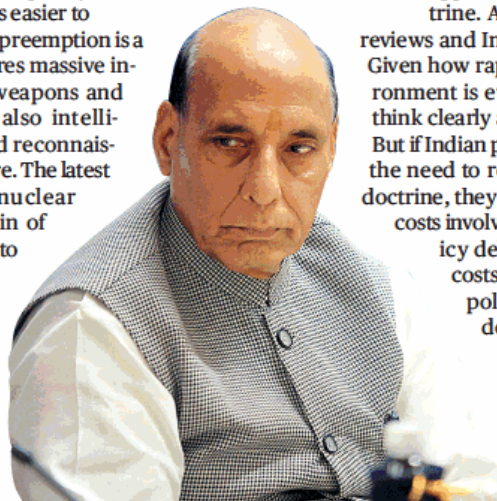
Similarly, first use of nuclear weapons would require a massive increase in India's nuclear delivery capabilities. There is yet no evidence suggesting that India's missile production has increased dramatically in recent times. Moreover, India is yet to induct the Multiple Reentry Vehicle (MRV) technology in its missiles, which is fundamental to eliminating hardened nuclear targets. Finally, India's ISR capabilities would have to be augmented to such a level where India is confident of taking out most of its adversary's arsenal. According to a senior officer who had served in the Strategic Forces command, this is nearly an "impossible task".

Finally, India would have to alter significantly its nuclear alerting routine. India's operational plans for its nuclear forces involve a four-stage process. Nuclear alerting would start at the first hints of a crisis where decision-makers foresee possible military escalation. This would entail assembly of nuclear warheads and trigger mechanisms into nuclear weapons. The second stage involves dispersal of weapons and delivery systems to pre-determined launch positions. The third stage would involve mating of weapons with delivery platforms. The last and final stage devolves the control of nuclear weapons from the scientific enclave to the military for their eventual use. Canisterization of

missiles has combined the dispersal and mating of weapons into a single step, cutting down the effort required for achieving operational readiness. Even then, this model does not support first use of nuclear weapons as it gives ample warning to the adversary of India's intentions.

There is certainly a need for a reappraisal of India's nuclear doctrine. All doctrines need periodic reviews and India's case is no exception. Given how rapidly India's strategic environment is evolving, it is imperative to think clearly about all matters strategic. But if Indian policymakers do indeed feel the need to review the nation's nuclear doctrine, they should be cognizant of the costs involved in so doing. A sound policy debate can only ensue if the costs and benefits of a purported policy shift are discussed and debated widely. ■

**Rajnath Singh's comments have only intensified a heated debate enveloping the future of India's nuclear doctrine**



Harsh V Pant and Yogesh Joshi  
are authors of 'Indian  
Nuclear Policy:  
A Short Introduction' (Oxford University Press, 2018)



# Corridor of Uncertainty

The Kartarpur Corridor project may survive even the deteriorating Indo-Pak ties, but technical negotiations will now be shrouded in suspicion



By Shantanu Nandan Sharma

**E**very morning, from November, 5,000 Indian pilgrims are supposed to cross the border with Pakistan to reach Kartarpur and return by the evening. In Punjab's Dera Baba Nanak, the tehsil from where pilgrims will walk across the international border, the construction work of a ₹177 crore passenger terminal building is going on, say officials in the know.

The builder, Shapoorji Pallonji, is given a strict deadline – by October 31, it has to complete its 21,650 sq m building, with additional bus and car parking facilities plus food courts, to facilitate the pilgrimage to the Kartarpur Gurdwara ahead of Guru Nanak's 550th birth anniversary which falls on November 12. The founder of Sikhism spent 18 years of his life at the shrine, which is now located in Narowal district of Pakistan's Punjab province, making it a highly revered destination. The gurdwara, situated on the bank of the Ravi, can be seen from the international border.

At the time of writing this article, the Kartarpur corridor has survived the tensions between India and Pakistan, which had deteriorated after New Delhi abrogated Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, stripping away the special provisions given to Jammu and Kashmir seven decades ago. Islamabad reacted angrily, downgrading its diplomatic mission in Delhi and unilaterally suspending bus and train services as well as bilateral trade. India has expressed regret over the development.

Pakistan has, however, kept the Kartarpur project alive, making it the *raison d'être* for New Delhi and Islamabad to keep the diplomatic channels open. Its foreign minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, said last week that the project would continue.

There is, however, a big question mark over the project. Will it get the necessary fillip and be completed by the first week of November. Or, will it be kept in cold storage till normality returns? After all, Islamabad has been sitting on India's proposal to have a joint technical meeting in mid-August. No new date has been proposed as yet.

Further, there are reports that the subcontinent's Punjabi diaspora has put on hold its proposed investments on Pakistan side.

In a written reply to *ET Magazine's* queries, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh said he is hopeful of Islamabad taking cognisance of the religious sentiments of the Sikh community, ensuring the completion of the project by the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. "It is a historic occasion and I am sure Pakistan too realises the importance. The downgrading of diplomatic relations does not mean that we cannot talk on this vital subject of religious interest," he said, adding that India must, however, take enough precautions on security issues. "Security concerns around the project do remain. India will have to take significant measures to ensure that the corridor is not used by elements antagonistic to its security interests," the CM added.

From November last year, when the Indian cabinet gave its go-ahead, the project has been shrouded in suspicion. The fear on the Indian side is Pakistan might use the corridor to export terror and reignite the secessionist movement in Punjab. After the first



## LINGERING CONCERNS

**Pakistan has not given a date for the next joint technical panel meeting**

**The Punjabi diaspora has put on hold work on the Pakistan side**

**India's demand to bring back sick pilgrims, instead of their being treated in Pakistan's hospitals, has not been met with**

**India demands a special purpose consulate in Kartarpur to cater to the needs of pilgrims in distress**

technical meeting held at the site on March 19, India objected to Pakistan's inclusion of separatist elements, particularly pro-Khalistan leader Gopal Singh Chawla, in a committee that would be involved in implementing the project. India even cancelled a bilateral meeting scheduled to be held at Wagah on April 2 for the same reason. Later, Chawla's name was dropped from the panel.

In all likelihood, the level of suspicion will only increase hereon, as Pakistan has now taken a hardline position on Jammu and Kashmir. Also, in the protest march held outside the Indian High Commission in London on Thursday afternoon, pro-Khalistan flags were seen alongside Kashmiri ones. Further, Pakistan's minister Fawad Ahmed Chaudhry's appeal to Punjabis in the Indian Army to deny duty in Kashmir, something widely condemned in Punjab, can be construed as a preview to Pakistan's agenda.

*ET Magazine* talked to three Indian officials connected to the Kartarpur project, including one who had attended joint technical committee meetings. It's learnt that India has three major concerns.

First, there's a fear that pilgrims could be brainwashed. India had insisted from day one that visitors must return on the same day, scuttling Pakistan's plan to develop night-stay facilities in Kartarpur. Pakistan had conceded to India's demand. India also held its ground that there would be no reverse flow of visitors, meaning, only those who enter from the Indian side would be allowed to return via the same route. Attari (India)-Wagah (Pakistan) will continue to be the only official border point through which people with valid documents will be able to enter India.

Second, India has expressed concerns about the possibility of pilgrims falling ill on the other side of the border. Here, too, there is a fear of possible indoctrination. New Delhi insists that patients must be brought back to India and not be treated in Pakistan's hospitals.

Third, India has insisted that a special purpose consulate be set up in Kartarpur to address certain issues like a pilgrim being booked for petty offences like pickpocketing. Pakistan has not yet conceded to this demand.

Despite mounting tensions, there is a flicker of hope. After all, India had continued with the project even after the ghastly terrorist attack in Pulwama that killed 40 security personnel, followed by India's bombing in Balakot, deep inside Pakistan's territory, and subsequent air skirmishes – all in February.

Yet, land acquisition and the survey of the 4.2-km-long corridor on the Indian side up to the zero point of the border, designated as NH 354B, took place in February itself. Also, it was in February itself that India formally informed Pakistan about a 22.4 m difference in the alignment of the roads joining the zero point, according to documents available with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) as previewed by *ET Magazine*.

On March 13, just 14 days after the warplanes of the two nations engaged in a dogfight, an Indo-Pak delegation held deliberations at Attari, followed by a joint technical team's visit to the site five days later.

Kartarpur survived post-Pulwama tensions. The question now is: can the corridor link the two countries even after the abrogation of Article 370? ■

shantanu.sharma@timesgroup.com



Indian pilgrims at the zero point use binoculars to look at the gurdwara in Kartarpur, Pakistan

**"I am hopeful that Islamabad will take cognisance of the religious sentiments of the Sikh community to expedite the project. India will have to take significant measures to ensure that the corridor is not used by elements antagonistic to its security interests"**

Captain Amarinder Singh, Chief Minister, Punjab

:: Sugata Srinivasaraju

A popular Bollywood song from the 2013 film *Chennai Express*, shot in the swirling terraces of a tea estate with Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone, has the following lines that run as a refrain: “Kashmir main tu Kanyakumari/ North-South ki kat gayi dekho doori hi saari.” A film song may be a wrong entry point to speak about the grim subject of Kashmir, but it has a utilitarian role in introducing an idea that has escaped attention.

There may be a distance of 3,000 km between Kashmir and Kanyakumari, the alliterative mental edges of our national boundaries, but Kanyakumari, a notional locale to mean Tamil Nadu in particular and South India in general, has a few vital links to Kashmir’s modern history, and by extension, to its destiny. These links ensure that the

two are not always distant, gaping, opposite blocks, accidentally caught together in a map. Neither Mani Ratnam, who made *Roja*, mixing shallow intrigue and snow, during peak militancy in 1992, nor Rajinikanth, who has recently attached a convenient mythological dimension to the Kashmir subject, has touched upon these links. Anyway, they cannot be blamed, because they are in the business of dreams, not reality.

Two generations of a brilliant Ayyangar/Iyengar family from Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu and a genius Malayali from Ottappalam in Palakkad district of Kerala form the key support cast of the Kashmir story. They stand sufficiently tall alongside the massive cut-

outs of lead players like Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Lord Mountbatten, Maharaja Hari Singh, Sheikh Abdullah and Indira Gandhi, yet their historical interventions have become incidental mentions.

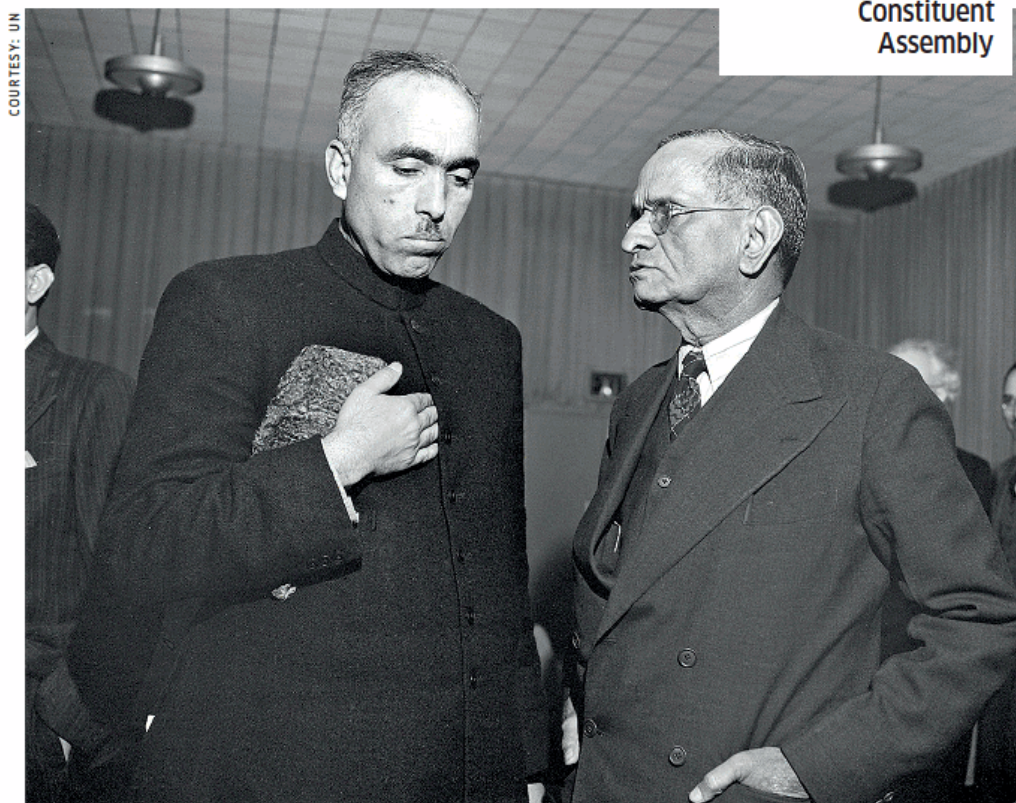
These men did not repurpose their lives in autobiographies or memoirs, and there are no biographies that accurately flesh out their roles. They make patchy appearances in nearly all literature that discusses the Kashmir conflict. The Ayyangar family would mean the father and son, N Gopalaswami Ayyangar and Gopalaswami Parthasarathi or GP, respectively. The Keralite is a refer-

Two generations of a brilliant Ayyangar/Iyengar family from Thanjavur and a genius Malayali form the key support cast of the Kashmir story. The former is Gopalaswami Ayyangar and son Gopalaswami Parthasarathi. The Keralite is VP Menon

# Kanyakumari to Kashmir

How a few South Indians had vital links to Kashmir’s modern history and, by extension, to its destiny

Post-Independence, Ayyangar was brought in by Nehru as a minister without portfolio to function under the PM as in-charge of Kashmir affairs. He also drafted Article 370 that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, and ensured its passage in the Constituent Assembly



N Gopalaswami Ayyangar (right) with Sheikh Abdullah, after hearing the news of Mahatma Gandhi’s assassination at the UNSC where the council interrupted its consideration of the situation in J&K to pay homage to the Mahatma

Speaking at the UN on September 4, 1965, Parthasarathi said: “Incidentally, it may interest the members of the Council to know that it was my father who brought the issue here. Now it has fallen to me to bring to your attention the second massive aggression against Kashmir”

ence to the most trusted aide of Sardar Patel – Vappala Pangunni Menon or VP Menon.

The father and son not only led India at the UN in two different decades on the Kashmir matter, and chaperoned Sheikh Abdullah on the international dais, besides diligently negotiating with him locally, they remained at all times a vital policy link to the subject. Speaking at the UN on September 4, 1965, GP said: “Incidentally, it may interest the members of the Council to know that it was my father who brought the issue here. Now it has fallen to me to bring to your attention the second massive aggression against Kashmir.”

The father Ayyangar who began as a Madras civil servant, became the dewan of Jammu and Kashmir between 1937 and 1943. PN Dhar, a Kashmiri, who headed Indira Gandhi’s secretariat in the ‘70s, met him in Srinagar in 1941 to seek a job. He

describes him as a “little more grim” than he appeared in his photographs, and recalls him speaking of “haphazard times”. Post-Independence, Ayyangar was brought in by Nehru as a minister without portfolio to function under the PM as in-charge of Kashmir affairs. He also drafted Article 370 that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, and ensured its passage in the Constituent Assembly.

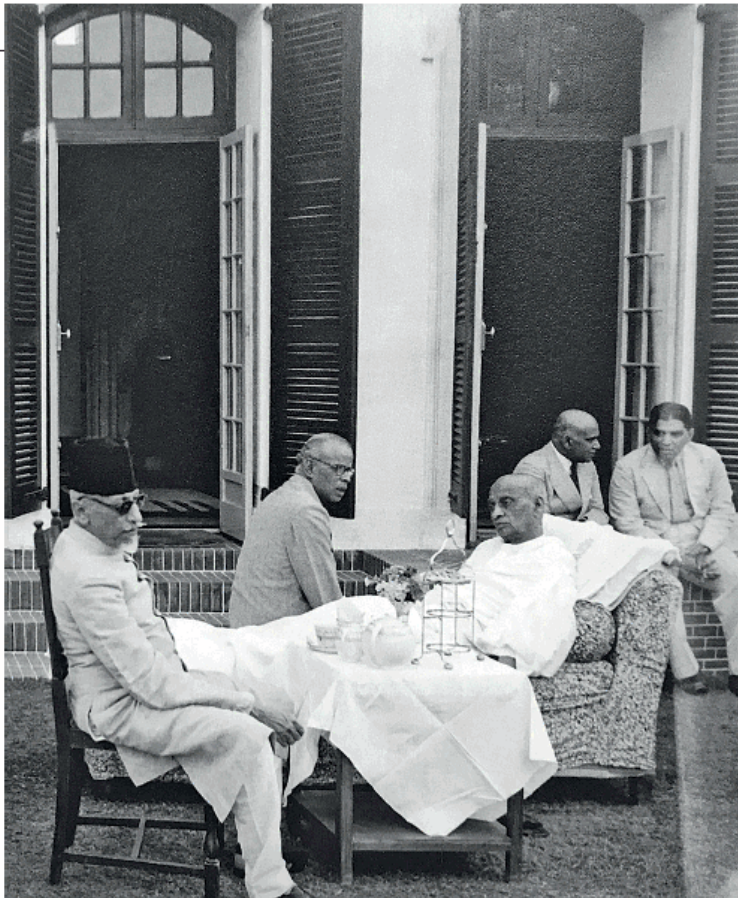
## “I Would Gladly Resign”

In fact, his appointment to the cabinet caused so much friction that Patel, who thought his wings had been clipped after Kashmir was taken out of the States Ministry, even offered to quit. Rajmohan Gandhi deals with this sensitively in his biography of Patel: “When he [Patel] saw a telegram from Gopalaswami instructing the premier of East Punjab to release 150 motor vehicles for Kashmir. Vallabhbhai was not pleased.” He argued it

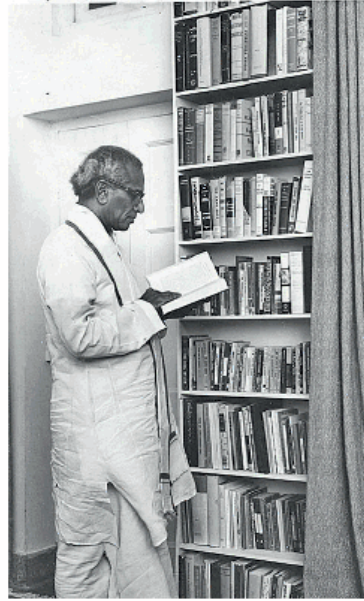
Ayyangar’s appointment to the cabinet caused so much friction that Patel, who thought his wings had been clipped after Kashmir was taken out of the States Ministry, even offered to quit



G Parthasarathi (right), permanent representative of India to UN, presents his credentials to Secretary-General U Thant on August 19, 1965



VP Menon (second from left) with Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel, 1948  
 Courtesy: *History In the Making: The Visual Archives of Kulwant Roy*, HarperCollins



**There was another expatriate Menon from Thalassery who had a singular dalliance with Kashmir: VK Krishna Menon who, as India's defence minister, spoke the longest in the UN Security Council on Kashmir**

**VP Menon writes in his seminal book *Integration of the Indian States* that from end-June 1947, he met Patel at least twice a day and "whenever we entered discussion we did so as personal friends rather than as Minister and Secretary"**

should have happened through him. Ayyangar who refused to "act merely as a post office" escalated the matter to his boss. Nehru wrote: "May I say that the manner of approach to Gopalaswami was hardly in keeping with the courtesy due to a colleague."

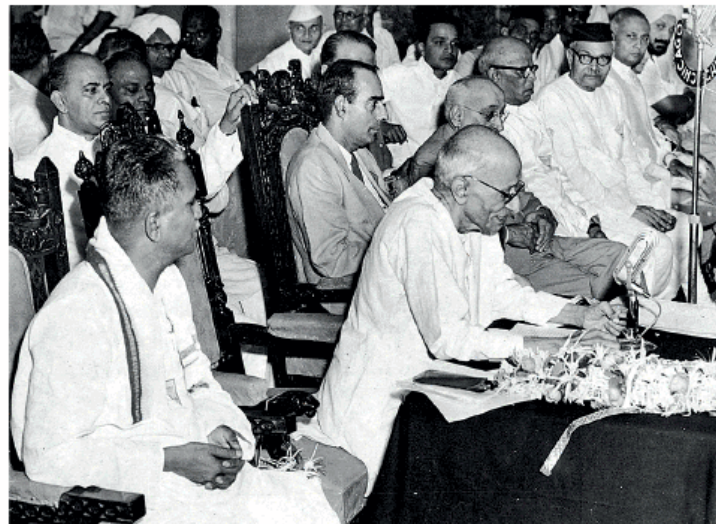
Patel responded on December 23, 1947: "[Your letter] has caused me considerable pain... makes it clear to me that I must not or at least cannot continue as Member of Government and hence I am hereby tendering my resignation." Nehru responded the same day and offered to quit too: "If unfortunately either you or I have to leave the Government of India, let this be done with dignity and goodwill. On my part I would gladly resign and hand over the reins to you." Mahatma Gandhi stepped in at this point, arbitrated, and amicably resolved the issue between his disciples.

What Gopalaswami was to Nehru, his son GP was to Indira Gandhi. The eclectic GP was a journalist cum Ranji-level cricketer who had turned diplomat at Nehru's insistence. He had handled China for him besides other sensitive assignments. He became the first vice-chancellor of JNU and led a political mission that saw the return of Sheikh Abdullah to power in 1975. "GP's adulation of his father was similar to Indira's adulation of her father... GP's views carried greater weight with her than those of regular members of the Foreign Service," wrote HY Sharda Prasad, Indira Gandhi's information advisor in a volume celebrating GP's memory in 1998.

In the same volume, Karan Singh, the Kashmir royal, remembers meeting GP as India's representative at the UN: "... he took me and my wife to a Chinese dinner at the famous Flower Drum Restaurant in New York, and the menu was so carefully selected that it came to be known in the restaurant as the Indian Ambassador's menu."

**Menon & Menon**

However, VP Menon was Patel's Kashmir man. Besides getting Hari Singh to sign the accession treaty in the turbulent month of October 1947 when the Pakistani raiders were closing in on Srinagar, he developed and executed the Partition plan in the run up to Independence in 1947. He is also credited with sug-



Inauguration of the Swatantra Party in Bombay on August 1, 1959  
 (From left) NG Ranga, C Rajagopalachari, MR Masani, HP Mody and VP Menon

**VP Menon was Patel's Kashmir man. Besides getting Hari Singh to sign the accession treaty in the turbulent month of October 1947 when the Pakistani raiders were closing in on Srinagar, he developed and executed the Partition plan in the run up to Independence in 1947**

gesting that India should first seek dominion status for smoother transition of power. But Menon is more remembered for his monumental work of integrating the Indian states. It may not be appropriate to describe Menon as Patel's Sancho Panza, but his native wisdom admittedly complemented Patel's actions and utterances.

When Menon arrived in Srinagar on October 25, 1947, Rajmohan Gandhi writes, "The Maharaja was completely 'unnerved' by the turn of events and by his sense of lone helplessness." Menon advised him to proceed to Jammu, which was nearer India and farther away from the [Pakistani] raiders." The next afternoon he secured Hari Singh's signatures on the accession papers.

Menon did not have an Oxbridge education or the cultural capital of the Ayyangars. He was a schoolteacher's son in Kerala. Poverty pushed him to do odd jobs as a coolie-grade railway stoker, as a field supervisor in a coalmine and a Bangalore tobacco company clerk before he became a typist in the Home Department in 1914, at a young age of 20. His typing skills, ability to keep confidences on classified matters, and an encyclopaedic knowledge of Indian complexities endeared him to British officials. He soon ended up working for various viceroys and at the time he joined Patel, he was Reforms Commissioner and Constitutional Advisor to the British government.

Menon writes in his seminal book *Integration of the Indian States* that from end-June 1947, he met Patel at least twice a day and "whenever we entered discussion we did so as personal friends rather than as Minister and Secretary". Towards the end of his life, Patel became so protective of Menon, he wondered what would happen to him after he was gone. He knew Nehru would not warm up to Menon. Expectedly, Menon vanished from Delhi's power circles after Patel's death, and much later joined the Swatantra Party, founded in 1959. He passed away in 1965.

There was another expatriate Menon from Thalassery, Kerala's pepper country, who had a singular dalliance with Kashmir. That was VK Krishna Menon who, as India's defence minister, spoke the longest in the UN Security Council on Kashmir. Unlike the Ayyangars and VP Menon, he was not the nuts-and-bolts man, but with enormous clarity articulated India's position on the "paradise" all through 1957. Writing a foreword to a book of Krishna Menon's Kashmir speeches at the UN, former President KR Narayanan, himself a stalwart diplomat, said: "In the overheated atmosphere of the cold war Menon's speeches in the Security Council in 1957 virtually fell on deaf ears. Though often repetitive they were marked by intellectual brilliance, legal acumen, political vigour and debating skill - a tour de force in the true sense."

**The Sheikh in the South**

The "Lion of Kashmir" Sheikh Abdullah himself had a southern experience, when he was arrested in May 1965. He was kept under house arrest first in Ooty, and then shifted to the 'Kohinoor Palace' in Kodaikanal. MJ Akbar in his book *India: The Siege Within* quotes from an article Suraiya Ali, the Sheikh's daughter, wrote for a Kashmir University commemoration volume: "Papa is shifted to Kodaikanal as he is a tourist attraction [in Ooty]... Not many may be aware about the culinary skills of papa. His morning hours are spent in cooking and he specialises in cooking korma, roghan josh, and a dish called shub-daig - a curry of meat and turnips cooked on simmering heat for many hours. The aroma of his cooking tickles even the nostrils of the security staff.... He engages a tutor, no doubt at government expense, to teach him Tamil... evenings are spent in long walks which enable us to visit the whole of Kodai."

Journalist Narayani Ganesh writing in *The Times of India*, in May 2016, recalls: "From our dormitory building just across the road from Kohinoor Bungalow, we would sometimes see Mr Abdullah writing at his desk by the window, a bowl of red apples resting near his elbow. 'You know, those apples are specially sent to him from Kashmir,' my dorm-mates would whisper in awe." This way, and in many other ways that may be a subject of an entire book, Kashmir and Kanyakumari and Kodikanal, and the entire South, get into unexpected loops of history to shape each other.

There was also a time in the 1960s when the "secessionist" ideas in Tamil Nadu, and the thoughts of independence in Kashmir were spoken about in the same breath. Sheikh Abdullah's land reforms in the late 1940s had an impact on Devaraj Urs' thinking in the Karnataka of the 1970s. In 1996, prime minister HD Deve Gowda quietly convinced political parties of Kashmir to end their electoral boycott and take part in the assembly polls. He had promised greater autonomy. In this intertwined and infinitely shared sense, Kashmir will always be a part of India. ■

*The writer is a senior journalist*



### Harivallabh Sangeet Sammelan, 1875

This is the world's oldest festival of Indian classical music where top maestros perform every year. Mahatma Gandhi was once said to be among the attendees in 1919.

#### NEXT SHOW

Dec 28-20, 2019, Jalandhar

### EDP Vilar de Mouros, 1965

Portugal's oldest music festival, often compared to Woodstock, features indie and alternative acts. This year's line-up includes Manic Street Preachers, The Offspring and Prophets of Rage.

#### NEXT SHOW

Aug 22-24, 2019, Vilar de Mouros, Caminha, Portugal



Maggie Rogers

### Newport Folk Festival, 1959

Started by jazz impresario George Wein, the event is considered one of the first folk music festivals in the US and was voted Music Festival of Year by Pollstar for several years.

#### NEXT SHOW

July 2020, Fort Adams State Park, Newport, USA



Janelle Monáe

### Roskilde Festival, 1971

Touted as the largest music and arts festival in northern Europe, the week-long non-profit event sees the participation of nearly 30,000 volunteers. All profits are donated to charity.

#### NEXT SHOW

June 27-July 4, 2020, Roskilde, Denmark

## NEW-AGE & EQUALLY POPULAR



### Rock in Rio, 1985

Said to be one of the biggest music festivals in the world, this year's line-up for the seven-day event includes Bon Jovi, Drake and Imagine Dragons. Among the headliners in the first edition was Queen.

**NEXT SHOW:** Sept 27-Oct 6, 2019, Barra Olympic Park, Rio de Janeiro

### Poľand'Rock Festival, 1995

This was once referred to as Woodstock Festival Poland and is today said to be Europe's biggest free rock music festival. The fest is famous for its mud baths.

**NEXT SHOW:** August 2020, Kostrzyn nad Odr, Poland



### Fuji Rock Festival, 1997

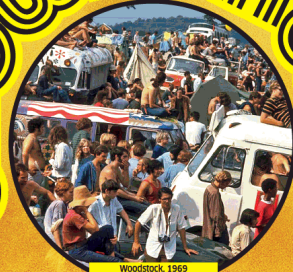
Held at the foot of Mount Fuji, it is one of the largest outdoor music festivals in Japan. This year's performers' list includes The Cure and The Lumineers.

**NEXT SHOW:** Aug 21-23, 2020, Naeba Ski Resort, Niigata Prefecture, Japan

Source: Festival websites, Festival Facebook pages, I-TAR-TASS

It has been 50 years since Woodstock, the New York, brought to fore youth counterculture. Here is a list of other such iconic musical fests that continue to bring together thousands of people to eat, drink & sleep music

# CROWD MUSIC



Woodstock, 1969

### Grushinsky Festival, 1968

The open-air festival held on the banks of Mastyukovo lakes is a platform for bard and author songs. The fest is named after Valeri Grushin, a singer who drowned while trying to save others in a river in Siberia in 1967.

#### NEXT SHOW

July 2020, Samara, Russia



### Glastonbury Festival, 1970

The world-famous five-day event of contemporary music saw performances by Janet Jackson, Miley Cyrus, George Ezra and Stormzy this year.

#### NEXT SHOW

June 2020, Pilton, Somerset, UK



Miley Cyrus & Billy Ray Cyrus

A flood-hit Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh



# The New Normal?

With erratic weather events becoming more frequent, India needs to urgently reassess its preparedness and protocols for monsoons

## :: Indulekha Aravind

A young mother held fast to her infant son's hand as a mudslide buried them alive; the body of a biker who couldn't even get off the motorcycle as mud and rocks poured down. These were some of the many heartbreaking and terrifying images that emerged from rain-battered Malappuram in Kerala this month. Neighbouring Karnataka and Maharashtra and Gujarat further north too had their own stories of flood fury: landslides, swollen rivers flooding embankments, rivers changing course, washed away bridges and marooned trains.

More than 200 people have lost their lives and lakhs have been evacuated amid unusually heavy rains this month, according to latest estimates. The damage to property due to this monsoon mayhem is still being estimated.

Yet, if one looks at this year's south-west monsoon data

as a whole, it is hard to spot any anomaly in the rainfall pattern. In fact, up to August 13, the cumulative rainfall in the country is normal, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

But zoom in, and a different picture emerges.

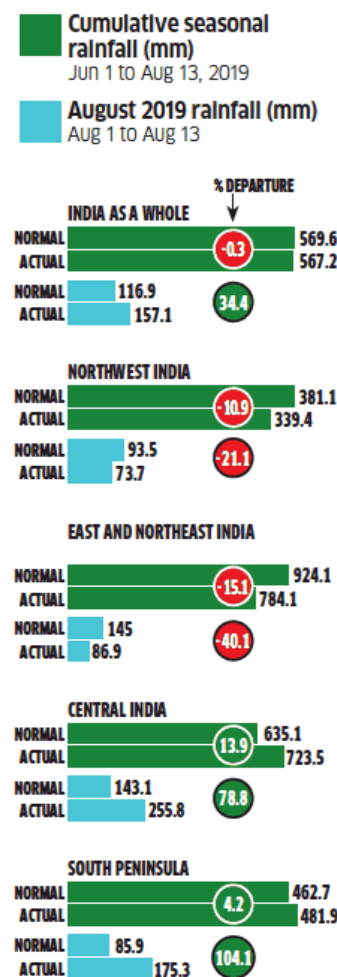
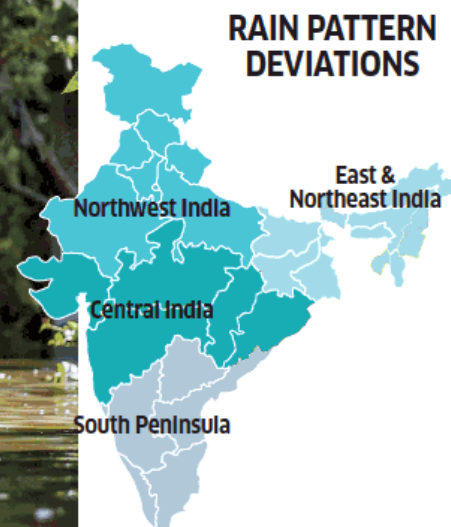
In August, the southern peninsula received 104% more rainfall than normal while in central India, the rainfall was 78% more than normal.

Zoom in further, and it gets worse.

### Abnormal Normal

After a rainfall deficit in June, the August 3 to 7 period was among the wettest in a century in Karnataka. The state received an average rainfall of 224 mm against the normal downpour of 59 mm.

In Kerala's Wayanad district, the departure from normal



## Climate Sting in South

Global warming will lead to more weather extreme events in south India, warn scientists

## :: Hari Pulakkat

Southern India is more prone to weather extremes as the earth warms up, according to a study by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Gandhinagar. The earth is expected to warm up somewhere between 2.6 degree and 8.5 degree Celsius over the century.

The study, published recently, also states that compared to the worst-case scenario, the best-case scenario will cut down the severity and frequency of floods by 50%. "South India is more sensitive to changes in temperature," says Vimal Mishra, associate professor at the IIT and the author of the research paper published in the journal, *Weather and Climate Extremes*.

All models show that extreme weather events – very heavy rains, long dry spells, heat waves – will increase as

the average global temperature rises. However, it is not easy to predict what will increase, and in which location. Indian climate scientists are now studying extreme events more deeply to understand the response of the monsoon system to a warming earth.

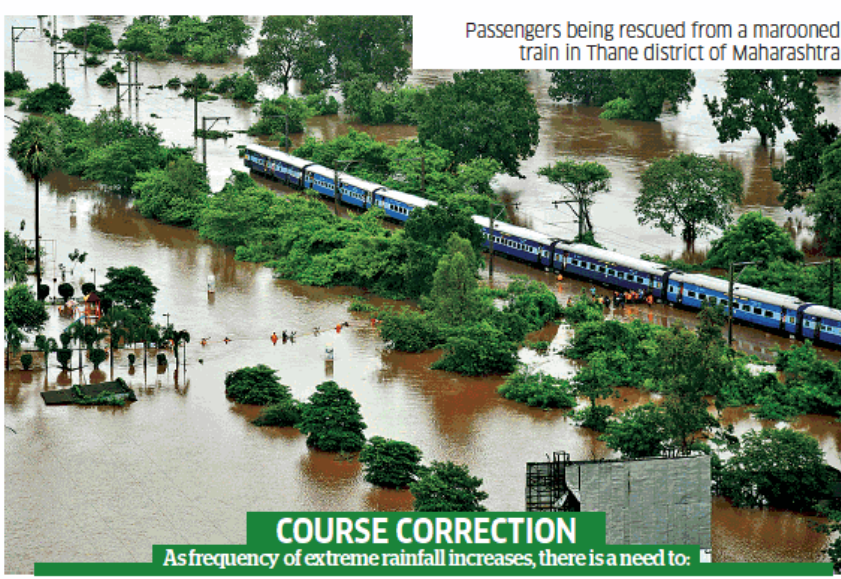
While scientists have been intrigued by recent extreme weather events, they also point to ominous signs in the last few years. Kerala was pounded by extremely heavy rainfall for two years in succession, while monsoon in the state has been slowly decreasing over the last half century. Meteorologists say although the monsoon is regularly producing extreme rainfall in parts of the country, the mean rainfall has not been increasing over the last few decades.

A combination of extreme rainfall and weakening monsoon is expected to increase droughts, but climate scien-

tists and meteorologists are not confident about the ability of models to predict accurately what will happen to the monsoon over the next few decades. They are, however, sure that heavy spells of rain will continue to increase irrespective of whether the monsoon increases or decreases in strength. "We can say with confidence that the magnitude and frequency of floods will increase," says Roxy Mathew, climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology in Pune. "But we don't know whether droughts will increase."

Around the world, roughly \$30 billion is lost every year due to extreme events. Mathew had calculated – using the database EM-DAT – that India had lost \$60 billion cumulatively from 1950 due to extreme events, and that it has been losing \$3 billion every year for the last 10 years.

Passengers being rescued from a marooned train in Thane district of Maharashtra



**COURSE CORRECTION**

As frequency of extreme rainfall increases, there is a need to:



Change how we manage reservoirs, be more flexible in releasing water



Avoid building over and urbanising floodplains



Decentralise land planning and zoning



Protect and restore wetlands that can absorb excess rainwater



Have early-warning systems to measure water level in headwater streams

rainfall was 400% between August 8 and 14 while Malappuram received 500% more rain than usual in the same period.

In Maharashtra, Mumbai saw its wettest July in 100 years while other districts such as Dhule in the north received 500% more rain in the week ending August 14.

With the south-west monsoon providing India nearly 75% of its annual rainfall, it also brings in its wake deaths and damage every season.

But with last year's once-in-a-century rainfall in Kerala followed by intense rainfall around the same period this year in Kerala and Karnataka and floods in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, the question arises: Is this the new normal? And if so, how should we deal with it?

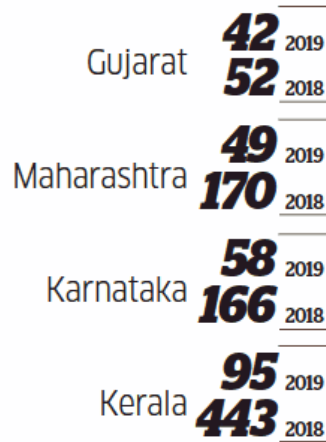
Broadly, meteorologists attribute the heavy rains in August this year and last year to the formation of a low pressure system, or depression, over the Bay of Bengal.

During the south-west monsoon, winds blow across the equator towards the Arabian Sea and crosses peninsular India before going to the Bay of Bengal. When there is a low pressure area, these winds strengthen and become westerly.

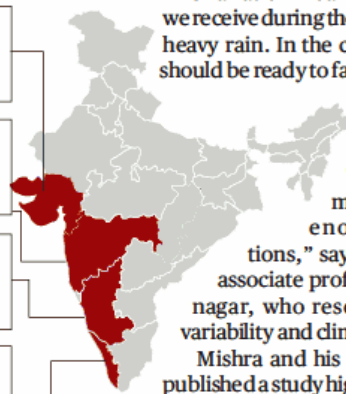
Upon colliding with the Western Ghats, the winds go up further to form convective clouds and cause heavy rainfall – from north-western Bay of Bengal all the way to Gujarat and Rajasthan as well as Karnataka and Kerala. "This is what happened last week," says

**Monsoon Mayhem**

Deaths due to heavy rainfall-related incidents



SOURCE: NDMA, NEWS REPORTS



IMD director general Mrutyunjay Mohapatra.

**Climate Conundrum**

While the formation of low pressure areas and the resultant heavy rain are themselves not unusual, what is different is the frequency of very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall, which is increasing.

Scientists are generally wary of attributing a single event, like floods or unusually heavy rainfall in a single week, to climate change.

Nevertheless, analysis of long-term weather data has established that over the years, frequency of days with light to moderate rainfall have been decreasing while days with heavy to very heavy rainfall has been increasing in the country, even as mean rainfall is decreasing.

And several studies have shown that climate change has a role to play in these variations. When land temperature rises, as it has been due to global warming, the atmosphere heats up too. This in turn increases the atmosphere's capacity to hold moisture and also its rate of absorption of moisture. When this happens in a conducive environment, like one where a low pressure area has been formed, it creates a situation favourable for a high rate of rainfall in certain pockets, says Mohapatra. Thus, when it rains, it pours.

"This variation means that whatever rain we receive during the monsoon occurs as heavy rain. In the coming decades, we should be ready to face more such events as well as more water scarcity once the rains are over. This is the new normal, and it will have enormous implications," says Vimal Mishra, an associate professor at IIT Gandhinagar, who researches on climate variability and climate change.

Mishra and his colleagues recently published a study highlighting that multi-day floods are projected to increase at a faster rate than daily flood events. The study also says the risk of flooding is likely to increase as greenhouse gas emissions go up.

The variability in the monsoon, Mishra says, is increasing due to climate change. "That is why a year could be normal in terms of monsoon rainfall but abnormal in terms of distribution of rainfall."

While it might be hard to pick out an all-India trend when it comes to the impact of climate change on the monsoon, state- and district-wise analysis presents a different picture.

"You need to go to the sub-divisional level to capture trends," says Pulak Guhathakurta, who heads the climate application and user interface at IMD, Pune, and has done district-wise studies of rainfall variability in Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Guhathakurta and his colleagues used a measure called a seasonality index, which shows whether all the rainfall of a season happens in one or two months or if it is spread over three or four months. "The same rain that is good if it is spread over three to four months will lead to run-offs or floods if it occurs in a short span of time. It will not even recharge groundwater," he says.

Worryingly, their findings revealed that there is an increase in the seasonality index for Maharashtra, with most of the rain happening in one or two months.

"Gujarat is also facing an alarming situation, with the index increasing in many of the districts. We also found one-day and two-day extreme events increasing in some regions in the state," he says.

In the case of Kerala, the devastating floods of 2018 were supposed to be an anomaly, happening at that scale for the first time since 1924. Now, the state is again reeling under severe floods. "Our research shows that under global warming, even though the monsoon depressions might weaken, extreme rainfall near the Western Ghats associated with the monsoon depressions will intensify due to more moisture in the warmer atmosphere," says Arathy Menon, a scientist at University of Reading, who is studying the Kerala floods.

While Menon says it is difficult to scientifically attribute the whole responsibility of these two floods to global warming, it has the potential to increase extreme precipitation events in the future.

**A Damaged Land**

While climate change could be leading to more episodes of heavy rain over shorter spans, rainfall is just one of the causes of the loss of lives and property.

"Rainfall is just the first trigger. Flooding happens due to many factors: when water is being released from dams, the quantity of water released and so on," says Mohapatra.

Change in land use patterns also play a significant role in this. This includes encroachment of floodplains and shrinking of forest cover and wetlands.

This August, many lives in Karnataka and Kerala were lost due to landslides that came in the wake of heavy rain.

In Thora village of Karnataka's Kodagu district, half of an entire hill collapsed on to a



Higher temperatures will cause more evaporation, and intensify the earth's water cycle

When the earth's average temperature increases by 1 degree Celsius, its capacity to hold moisture increases by 7%

This increased moisture in the atmosphere itself accelerates global warming

The increased moisture content also produces more storms, but areas well away from the storm path can experience long dry spells

This loss is now expected to increase as flood intensity increases. Last year's floods in Kerala are expected to have cost the state roughly \$6 billion.

Climate scientists have been increasingly interested in understanding the mechanism behind extreme events of rainfall. Their ability to predict severe rainfall has improved recently, but meteorologists have not been able to predict with accuracy the location of very heavy spells of rain. Last year, they expected Mumbai to experience heavy rain in mid-August, but rains lashed the southern part of the west coast instead of Mumbai.

In the paper in the journal *Weather and*

*Climate Extremes*, Mishra and his colleagues at IIT-Gandhinagar show that multi-day intense rainfall will also increase more than single-day intense rainfall. In another paper in the same journal, they say the frequency and severity of floods can be reduced if we cut carbon dioxide emissions. In fact, the severity of floods can be cut by half in the best-case scenario for the century compared with the worst-case scenario, they add. The Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change calls these scenarios Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) 2.6 and RCP 8.5.

These scenarios do not directly correspond to average temperatures on earth, but is a

combination of temperatures, economic growth and population. Under RCP 2.6, the best-case scenario, global emissions peak next year and decline to zero by 2080. Under RCP 8.5, the worst-case scenario, global emissions continue to rise throughout the century, along with a high population growth.

Under RCP 2.6, the global mean surface temperature is expected to rise by 0.3-1.7 degree Celsius by the middle or late 21st century. But under RCP 8.5 – if greenhouse gas emissions continue on a high trajectory – the temperature is expected to increase by 2.6-4.8 degree Celsius, leading to a higher degree of global warming and more extreme weather events.

# “IMD Looking to Create Common Alert Protocol”

**Mrutyunjay Mohapatra**, director general of Indian Meteorological Department, speaks to **Indulekha Aravind** about the country's changing rainfall patterns, the effect of global warming and how his department is preparing for better forecasting. Edited excerpts:

## Why was there such heavy rainfall in certain regions? Is it unusual?

The excess rainfall was due to a depression over the Bay of Bengal near the Odisha coast. The depression moved across Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh and along the path triggered extreme rainfall – all the way to Gujarat.

If there is a low pressure area over the Bay of Bengal, the winds blowing towards the peninsula will strengthen, especially over the Arabian Sea.

Rainfall also increases over Kerala and Karnataka. Now the question of whether this is unusual. It is not. But what is unusual is that in central India



and in Kerala, studies show the frequency of light to moderate rainfall is decreasing while the frequency of very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall is increasing.

## Why is this happening?

Another study indicates that if there is a rise in land temperature – and we know temperatures are rising in the Indian subcontinent because of global warming – temperatures rise in the atmosphere as well. Due to this, the capacity of the troposphere (atmosphere's lowest region) to hold moisture also goes up. Thus, the rate of absorption is increasing because of rising temperatures. As a result, moisture in the atmosphere increases. And in certain pockets, in the zone of low pressure, you can expect heavy to extremely heavy rainfall.

## How is the weather department dealing with these changes?

Since there is an increase of heavy to extremely heavy rainfall in certain pockets, what you need is to detect these pockets

and improve the forecasting of the rainfall occurrence.

To improve our observational systems, we will increase the number of Doppler radars, automatic rain gauge systems and stations over the next year. We are planning for a common alert protocol so that our warnings reach these locations on time.

Our website already provides district-level warning for the entire country. We are giving colour-coded forecasts and providing now-casts – three-hour forecasts – for 605 cities.

## Was the flooding due to excess rain alone?

Rainfall is the first trigger. Flooding happens due to many factors, such as dam and water bodies' management and past rainfall. For example, if you compare rainfall in Kerala this year to last year, in 2018 Kerala continued to receive excess rainfall June onwards. This year, there was a rainfall deficit in June. That is why this year's flooding is not as extreme as last year's.

coffee estate, burying alive many people.

In Kerala, experts blamed widespread quarrying, which makes land unstable, for the landslide in Kavalappara in Malappuram that killed more than 30 people. The Kerala Forest Research Institute found 21 quarries within a 10-km radius of where the accident took place. On August 10, the Kerala government banned mining activities in nearly 900 quarries. But environmentalists said the action came too late. In Puthumala in Wayanad, a government team has concluded that large-scale felling of trees to facilitate the cultivation of cardamom in the 1980s was the likely cause of the mudslide that killed more than 10 people.

The 2011 report by the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, known as the Gadgil Commission report after its chairman, ecologist Madhav Gadgil, had warned of natural disasters being imminent in Karnataka and Kerala unless steps were taken to conserve the ecologically-fragile region.

The committee had recommended that 140,000 sq km of the 160,000 sq km of the Western Ghats be categorised into three zones, depending on their ecological fragility, and a series of restrictions imposed on these zones. At that time, the report was roundly rejected by state governments. They said the curbs would put livelihoods of thousands of people living in the area at risk. But in the wake of consecutive years of natural disasters, that decision is now being questioned.

“We can use the thinking behind the Western Ghats report to identify the vulnerable areas, map them and see what kind of protection can be given,” says Jagdish Krishnaswamy, senior fellow at the Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation at Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment in Bengaluru. Two immediate priorities should be to rethink our

land use and spatial planning and how we are managing our reservoirs, Krishnaswamy suggests. “You will have to think about how reservoirs can be managed under uncertain and very intense rainfall that is likely to happen. You will need to be more flexible in releasing quite a bit of water before the monsoon starts so that there is enough space to accommodate incoming inflows. It would be better than releasing water at the last minute, which will lead to flooding downstream.”

This will, of course, entail sacrificing some benefits in terms of hydropower generation – but these are the choices that need to be made, he says.

For instance, a report by the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People says floods in Maharashtra's Satar, Sangli and Kolhapur districts could have been mitigated if the Koyana, Radhanagari and Warna dams had started releasing water in late July instead of waiting till the first week of August. Such decisions, though, get trickier when you consider that before the monsoon, parts of the state had been facing a

harsh drought.

With spatial planning, people living in flood plains and vulnerable areas will need to be provided with new means of livelihood so that they can be persuaded to move. A top-down approach on land usage will not work, says Krishnaswamy.

Conservation of forest cover and wetlands, which are natural mitigators of flood waters, are equally important.

Muralee Thummarukudy, operations manager at the crisis management branch of the United Nations Environment Programme in Geneva, agrees that beyond better early warning systems, evacuation plans and emergency response and relief systems, India needs more risk-informed land-use planning to deal with floods of increased magnitude and frequency. “India needs to have good predictions on what heavy rain can do to the land, which areas will be flooded and which areas are unfit for human habitation or infrastructure investment. Only when this aspect is sorted out will we truly be on the path to sustainable recovery,” says Thummarukudy, who has worked on tackling environmental crises around the world.

Mishra of IIT Gandhinagar says any infrastructure development needs to factor in the risk of the effects of climate change, whether it is building houses or laying railway tracks. “For instance, if you are planning a bullet train and the tracks get submerged or the train gets washed away, that will cost a lot of money to restore, right?”

Already, states have been forced to raise huge amounts of money for relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in the aftermath of floods. Last year, this amount was pegged at over ₹30,000 crore for Kerala. Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa has put the damage bill of the August floods at ₹40,000 crore.

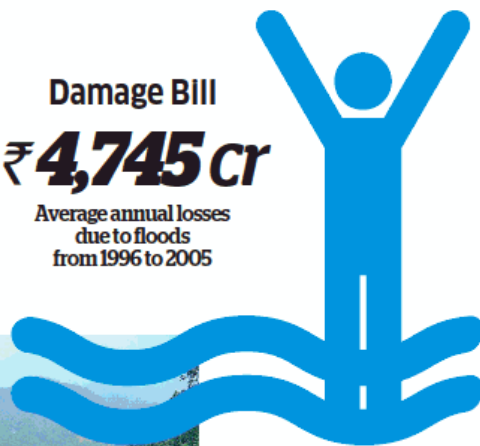
Natural disasters have cost India losses close to \$80 billion in the past 20 years, according to a UN estimate. “Globally, there is a direct relationship between development and loss and damage from natural disasters. Usually, there is a turning point when per capita income is \$4,500 to \$5,500. Once income increases, people start looking at climate change-resilient infrastructure. But that's not happening in India,” says Chandra Sekhar Bahinipati, an assistant professor at IIT Tirupati, who studies the economics of climate change.

Except for Odisha, no other state is talking about natural disasters while preparing human development reports. As long as development is not linked to climate change, you cannot have a comprehensive policy, Bahinipati says.

And with consecutive years of floods and studies showing that the frequency of intense rain is on the rise, there is no time to lose.

“We need to undertake these measures as soon as possible,” says Krishnaswamy. “By not doing anything, we are asking for trouble.” ■

Damage Bill  
**₹ 4,745 cr**  
 Average annual losses  
 due to floods  
 from 1996 to 2005



**₹ 1,805 cr**  
 Average annual  
 losses due to  
 floods before 1996

SOURCE: NDMA

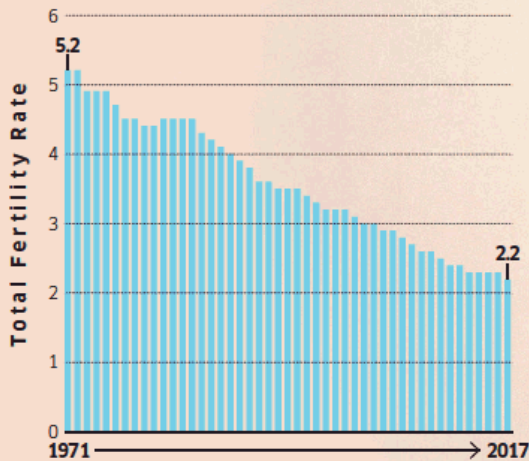
Landslide-hit Meppadi town in Kerala's Wayanad district





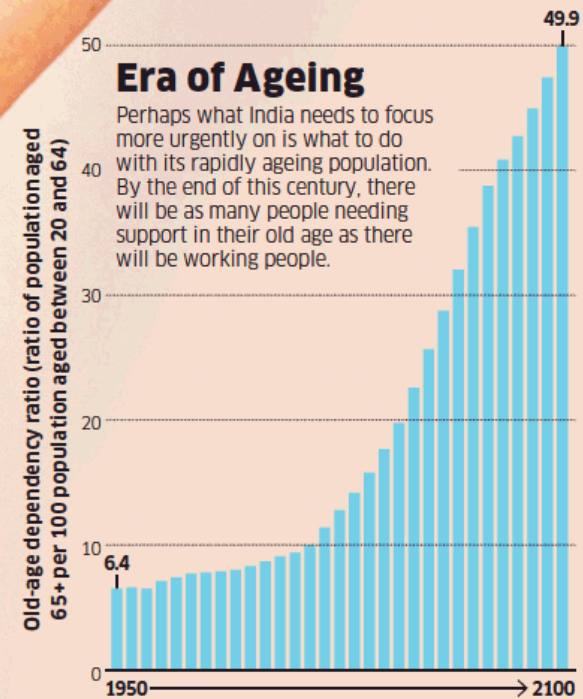
### Replacement Crisis

India's Total Fertility Rate\* (TFR) has been declining. The country is expected to achieve replacement fertility (2.1) within the next five years, which means Indians will only have enough children to replace the previous generation.



Source: Sample Registration System (SRS) 2017

\*TFR refers to the number of children likely to be born to a woman in her lifetime if she were subject to prevailing rate of age-specific fertility in the population



Source: UN World Population Prospects (2019)

### Era of Ageing

Perhaps what India needs to focus more urgently on is what to do with its rapidly ageing population. By the end of this century, there will be as many people needing support in their old age as there will be working people.

### Divided at Birth

There is a stark divide between the fertility rates in the Hindi heartland states and the rest of India.



Total Fertility Rate

Bihar	3.2
Uttar Pradesh	3.0
Madhya Pradesh	2.7
Rajasthan	2.6
Jharkhand	2.5
Chhattisgarh	2.4
Assam	2.3
Gujarat	2.2
Haryana	2.2
Odisha	1.9
Uttarakhand	1.9
Karnataka	1.7
Kerala	1.7
Maharashtra	1.7
Telangana	1.7
Andhra Pradesh	1.6
Himachal Pradesh	1.6
Jammu & Kashmir	1.6
Punjab	1.6
Tamil Nadu	1.6
West Bengal	1.6
Delhi	1.5

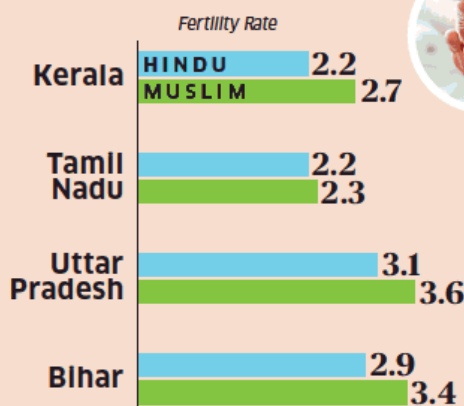
# FERTILITY SLOWDOWN

PM Narendra Modi, on August 15, spoke of a "population explosion" in the country. However, slowing of population growth has been one of India's big successes in the last decade, so much so that cities are in imminent danger of an ageing crisis

:: Rukmini S

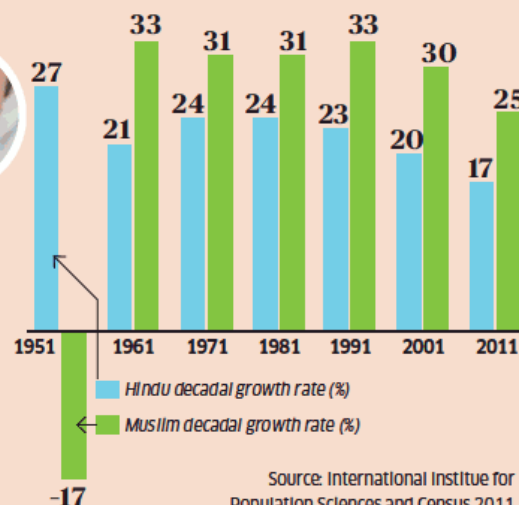
### On Religious Lines

Much of the Hindu right believes Muslims are to blame for the "population explosion". The reality is that Muslims in the southern states have lower fertility rates than even Hindus in the northern states. Development appears to have lowered fertility for everyone.



Source: Census 2011

Moreover, Muslim fertility is falling faster than it is among Hindus; Muslim population growth was at its lowest as of 2011 since Partition.



Source: International Institute for Population Sciences and Census 2011

The writer is a freelance journalist

### Education & Fertility

Growth and development are already doing the job: richer and better educated women, irrespective of religion or location, have fewer children



Mother's level of education

Illiterate  
2.9  
Total Fertility Rate

Below primary

3.1

Primary education only

2.7

Middle

2.3

Class X

2

Class XII

1.8

Graduate and above

1.4

Source: SRS 2017



# BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS



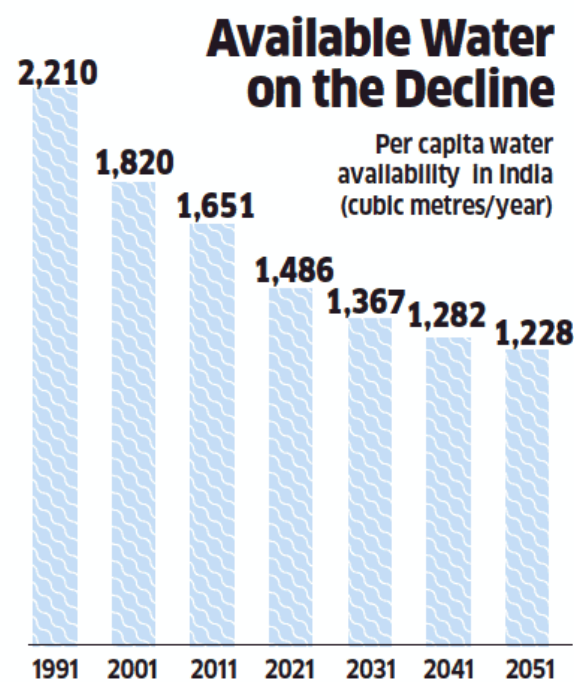
With growing water scarcity, fights over rivers will only get uglier between states. The Centre believes a single tribunal can resolve these disputes faster. Is it being too optimistic?

By G Seetharaman

**W**ater, or the politics of it, can send temperatures soaring. Ask Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The two southern states were at each other's throat for decades over who should use how much water from the Cauvery, a river essential to both. The conflict would often flare up, with buses being burnt, shops being pelted with stones and Tamils being thrashed in Karnataka and vice-versa.

The Centre set up a tribunal in 1990, under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act (IRWDA), 1956, to find a solution to this vexing issue. The tribunal in 2007 decided the quantum of water Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and also Puducherry and Kerala, through which the river passes, were entitled to. But that was hardly the end of the issue as all states but Puducherry went to the Supreme Court against the tribunal's award and the apex court finally gave its verdict in February 2018, nearly three decades after the tribunal was established. The court set Tamil Nadu's share of the waters at 404.25 thousand million cubic feet (TMC), lower than the 419 TMC awarded by the tribunal.

Cauvery may be an extreme example, but no tribunal under IRWDA – there have been nine so far, of which five are active – has taken less than seven years to submit its final re-

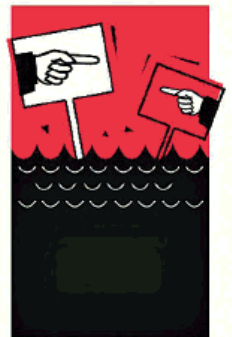


port. This is what the government hopes to fix with a proposed amendment to IRWDA, which was passed in the Lok Sabha on July 31 but is yet to be introduced in the Rajya Sabha.

Once the bill becomes a law, a permanent tribunal will be set up, with temporary benches – instead of one tribunal for every dispute – and all the five existing tribunals will be dissolved into the new one. More importantly, the bill gives the tribunal less time than now to adjudicate a conflict, but the entire process – from the time states approach the Centre for resolution – could still take long and may not be immune to delays.

Members of a bench will vacate their offices once the bench is left with no dispute to look into, unless they are also part of another bench. Andhra Pradesh has raised objections to this, saying that even after a bench is dissolved, its members should be retained on the tribunal for their expertise till they reach retirement age.

Shifting monsoon patterns and drying



## How 2019 Bill Differs from 1956 Law

### Interstate River Water Disputes Act, 1956



One tribunal for each dispute

No formal resolution mechanism before setting up tribunal

Tribunal to decide within 3 years, with extension of another 3 years

### Proposed Amendment In 2019



One tribunal for all disputes, with different benches

Resolution within 18 months, falling which matter will go to tribunal

Tribunal to decide within 2 years, with extension of another 1.5 years

Source: PRS Legislative Research

catchment areas in India's river basins, of which there are 20, combined with a growing population mean India's water resources are on the decline.

India's average annual per capita water availability has been falling – from 2,210 cubic metres in 1991 to 1,820 cubic metres in 2001 to 1,651 cubic metres in 2011, according to the Central Water Commission. Government estimates it will further fall to 1,486 cubic metres in 2021. Availability below 1,700 cubic metres is a water-stressed condition and below 1,000 cubic metres is a water-scarce condition.

This raises the dangerous prospect of more states upstream damming rivers to keep as much water as possible for themselves, much to the chagrin of neighbours downstream. This invariably leads to conflicts in which the Centre has to intervene. And the government thinks the changes to IRWDA will help it resolve disputes faster.

Under the current IRWDA, once two or more warring states go to the Centre, it tries to mediate between them. If that does not work, it has to set up a tribunal within a year of the states approaching the government.

The proposed amendment lays more stress on mediation, with a total of a year-and-a-half given to the dispute resolution committee (DRC), before the matter is sent to the tribunal.

The proposed amendment also gives the tribunal a maxi-

mum of three and a half years, including an extension, compared with six years earlier. All told, the whole process, as per the proposed amendment, should now take five years, compared with seven years till now. But there is no telling if the tribunal will stick to the timeline, given the delays of its predecessors. Moreover, despite the decision of a bench of the tribunal having the "same force as an order or decree of the Supreme Court", it could still be appealed in the apex court, as has happened before, despite decisions of earlier tribunals also having the same status.

### Going to Court

"You can put time restrictions on the tribunal, but what happens if the parties go to the Supreme Court? You don't need to have a substantive reason to go to the Supreme Court. It's all about optics and grandstanding and getting electoral dividends," says Srinivas Chokkakula, a fellow with the Centre for Policy Research, a New Delhi-based think tank. Given that water-sharing is becoming more politically contentious, states cannot seem to settle for less water from a river than it claims as its rightful share. That leaves a state government with no option but to approach the Supreme Court if the tribunal does not accept its demands.

"If the Supreme Court accepts petitions against the orders of the tribunal, then what is the sanctity of the tribunal? When a state does not comply with the decision of the tribunal, it should be construed as a breakdown of law and order," says Bhartruhari Mahtab, a member of Parliament of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) from Odisha. But he is in favour of the time restrictions in the amendment.

(Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union water resources minister, was not available for comment.)

There are now two tribunals involving Odisha, one regarding the river Mahanadi, which it shares with Chhattisgarh, and another over the Vansadhara, which it shares with Andhra. Odisha is also opposed to the Polavaram irrigation project on Godavari in Andhra, which it claims will submerge lands in



**"When a state does not comply with the decision of the tribunal, it should be construed as a breakdown of law and order"**

Bhartruhari Mahtab, BJD MP

## Past Tribunals

### Godavari

States: MP, Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra

Set up in: 1969

Report submitted in: 1980

### Krishna

States: Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra

Set up in: 1969

Report submitted in: 1976

### Narmada

States: MP, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra

Set up in: 1969

Report submitted in: 1979

### Cauvery

States: Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala

Set up in: 1990

Report submitted in: 2007, implemented after SC verdict in 2018

Source: Ministry of Water Resources



**"You can put time restrictions on the tribunal, but what happens if the parties go to**

**the Supreme Court?"**

Srinivas Chokkakula, fellow, Centre for Policy Research

Odisha's Malkangiri's district. Odisha and Telangana, another state that stands to be affected, have both gone to the Supreme Court against the project.

Andhra and Telangana are also awaiting the decision of the second tribunal set up on the allocation of the Krishna water. The first tribunal was set up in 1969 and gave its verdict in 1976, and the second one in 2004 and submitted its report in 2010, deciding the allocation to Maharashtra, Karnataka and erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. Then Andhra was bifurcated to create Telangana in 2014 and the latter demanded that its share be determined afresh, which the tribunal is working on now.

It is quite possible that either Telangana or Andhra or both would end up unhappy with the tribunal's decision and further delay the process with appeals, even after the single-tribunal system is in place.

"Once an award is given, what is the guarantee that states will implement it? There should be a penalty if they do not," says Bharat Sharma, scientist emeritus, International Water Management Institute.

Equally important for the new amendment to work is the credibility of dispute resolution before a bench is set up, according to Chokkakula: "States should believe in DRC's neutrality. That's most crucial. The Centre is seen as politically subjective."

A case in point is the dispute between Punjab and Haryana over the 201 km Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) canal, which is supposed to bring Haryana's share of the surplus waters of the Ravi and the Beas. Once completed, it will irrigate nearly half a million hectares in Haryana. In 1985, a Shiromani Akali Dal leader was killed for signing the Punjab Accord with the Centre, which included the construction of SYL. Three years later, 30 labourers working on the project were murdered, and, in 1990, two engineers were killed, and Punjab put the project on hold.

In 2004, the Congress government in Punjab terminated the 1981 agreement between Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan, which also included the canal. Sentiments have run high in both Punjab and Haryana, with farmers taking to the streets. The Supreme Court last month told the two states to resolve the issue with the Centre's help. Punjab is Congress-ruled and both the Centre and Haryana are governed by the Bharatiya Janata Party. For this to work, Punjab has to believe the Centre will be impartial. What makes matters more complicated is that the man who revoked the agreement in 2004 as Punjab chief minister, Amarinder Singh, is CM now, too.

Fifty years after the first tribunals were established, resolution of river-sharing conflicts has not become any easier. Besides the disputes being looked into by tribunals, there are conflicts like the one between Tamil Nadu and Kerala over the Mullaperiyar dam and the Polavaram issue.

The Centre will have to win the trust of states as a non-partisan mediator to avoid future disputes reaching the tribunal or, worse, clogging an already overworked judicial system. But despite its best efforts, it may not have much success. ■

(Additional reporting by CR Sukumar in Hyderabad) ganesh.seetharaman@timesgroup.com

## Current Tribunals

### Ravi and Beas

States: Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan

Set up in: 1986

status: Report In 1987, but SC last month directed Punjab and Haryana to resolve issues

### Krishna (2nd tribunal)

States: Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra, Telangana

Set up in: 2004

status: Report In 2010, but tribunal to now decide on share of Andhra and Telangana after latter's creation in 2014

### Vansadhara

States: Odisha, Andhra

Set up in: 2010

status: Under adjudication

### Mahadayi

States: Karnataka, Maharashtra, Goa

Set up in: 2010

status: Report In 2018, but matter in SC now

### Mahanadi

States: Odisha, Chhattisgarh

Set up in: 2018

status: Under adjudication

Source: Ministry of water resources

# Insta Sell

The quiet rise of Instagram shopping is transforming small and medium businesses in India

By Shephali Bhatt

At 12 noon every day, Deepika Nandal competes with 20,000 other followers to buy her favourite handloom apparel from an Instagram account called @SanskritikVastrashala. The Mumbai-based food blogger frantically types the account name on the search bar of her app before it's too late. There are only 30 unique pieces to choose from every day. "The catalogue is booked within minutes, and sold out in an hour," says the 32-year-old.

Nandal doesn't mind the frenzy. Kriti Chaudhary – who runs Sanskritik Vastrashala from a tiny studio in Delhi's Janakpuri – is her virtual shopkeeper. With work and a nine-month-old baby, Nandal, a self-proclaimed shopaholic, has no time to visit exhibitions to look for the handcrafted stuff she likes. "Instagram saves a lot of time for me. In fact, I only shop on Insta now," she says. From apparel to accessories, cosmetics to cutlery, "I find everything on Instagram by typing the right hashtags," she says.



Even Bengaluru-based Sanhita Sobha follows a select few business accounts on Instagram for her daily shopping fix. The 24-year-old automobile software engineer fancies organic skin care and hair care products and sometimes an odd dream catcher, too. "If you do a basic Google search for organic items, these brands won't pop up. Most are small businesses, often run by one person. Some don't even have a website." But their products are better than those available on ecommerce portals, Sobha claims. "I hardly buy anything from anywhere else now," she says.

Nandal and Sobha have been utilising Instagram for search-based shopping for over a year now. Meanwhile, in Delhi, Himanshu Khanna indulges in discovery-led shopping on the platform courtesy of Instagram's algorithm-generated ads popping up on his feed. "If I chance upon something interesting and affordable, I share the post via Instagram messaging with my wife. She may take time to respond on WhatsApp, but on Insta, she's prompt. She responds in emojis," says the 32-year-old design and tech professional. Over the last six months, he bought several "offbeat" items he claims are hard to find elsewhere. These include artistic dinner plates, odd key chains, jewellery, salt & pepper cases (in the shape of birds and dolls, we are told), and several other collectables. On any other social media platform, Khanna would find ads intrusive, but not on Instagram. Here, "the objective is fun-browsing, not info-browsing," he explains.

## Shopping Tags

Over the last three years, Instagram has introduced several add-on features for businesses to facilitate commerce on the platform, estimated to be a global market worth \$10 billion by 2021, according to a Deutsche Bank analysis. Besides the Shop Now button seen at the end of a few sponsored posts, the platform allows businesses to use Shoppable Tags for regular posts and Insta Stories. Users can tap on a tag in a picture or a video to buy products directly from a brand's site. Additionally, the Explore section has a separate vertical titled Shop that showcases brands across categories based on user's interest.

A recent report by performance marketing firm Merkle says there's been a 114% increase in web referrals through Instagram between Q1 2018 and Q1 2019.



**"With Instagram ads, businesses of all sizes can drive awareness, increase customers and share their story among a highly engaged audience"**

Archana Vohra, director, small and medium businesses, Facebook India



**80%**  
Instagram users follow a business account

**over 90 mn**  
users globally use shopping tags every month

**200 mn**  
users visit a business profile at least once a day

**Up to 30**  
hashtags can be added to a post to boost engagement

**1/3rd**  
of the most viewed Instagram Stories are from businesses

**114%**  
increase in web referrals through Instagram between Q1 2018 and Q1 2019

Source: Instagram, Merkle



**Kriti Chaudhary, Delhi**

Account: @SanskritikVastrashala

Followers: **20,000**

Category: **Handwoven apparel and accessories**

Annual turnover: **₹1 crore**

**"I share a new collection on Instagram at 12 noon every day. Teachers tell me they rush to the washroom to book orders as phones aren't allowed in classrooms"**



In March, Instagram launched a Checkout feature in the beta-testing phase for 20 brands in the US, including Adidas, Zara, Nike and Dior. It facilitates buying without having to leave the app. In May, UK-based trade portal Digiday reported that Adidas saw a 40% year-on-year growth in online sales in Q1 2019, which CEO Kasper Rorsted "largely attributed to Instagram".

The Checkout feature has yet to launch in India, but the quiet rise of Instagram shopping in the country

has not gone unnoticed by brands. "Earlier brands would adapt digital content for Instagram. Now I see them making a genuine effort to create content for Instagram. They understand it is visually a far superior platform than any other, so the content better be good," says Vineet Gupta, cofounder of Spring Marketing Capital, a Mumbai-based marketing firm that also invests capital in the brands it takes on board.

Archana Vohra, director of small and medium businesses at Facebook India, gives a few Instagram-centric case studies to illustrate Gupta's point: "Recently, Swiggy used ads in Instagram Stories to find new users and drive app installs, achieving a 30% lower cost per install and a 17% increase in installs. Dineout ran an app-install campaign in Instagram feed and Instagram Stories that featured an animated video, which facilitated a 17% lower cost per install."

Apparel major House of Anita Dongre has seen a 10% month-on-month growth in traffic on its site from Instagram referrals over the last one year, says Kavindra Mishra, the company's CEO. From hyperlocal service companies like UrbanClap to marketplaces like Myntra, Nykaa and Snapdeal, these are all on Insta. "The visual appeal of Instagram works well for the impulsive, discovery-led proposition of Snapdeal," a spokesperson for the company tells ET Magazine.

However, for Rahul Deorah of UrbanClap, being on Insta's Shop is mere hygiene at this point, fetching the app orders in high double-digits a month at best. "It may not be the best fit for channel conversion for us yet, but if we have a product on the lines of ecommerce in future, we will be able to squeeze more out of the platform," says the Gurgaon-based company's VP

## Purchase History

November 2016

Instagram tests Shoppable Tags to allow users to tap on a tag in a picture to buy products from the brand's site

March 2017

Launches In-app booking & reservation facility for service brands

May 2018

Adds native payments feature on the app for some users

September 2018

Introduces Shoppable Tags for Instagram Stories

March 2019

Launches Checkout feature for select brands in the US to allow shopping without leaving the app. Checkout feature yet to launch in India

**Sunayana Walia,**  
Jalandhar

Account: @RawBeauty2018

Followers: **8,447**

Category: **Organic skin & body care products**

Annual turnover: ₹96 lakh

**"Marketplaces are too commercial for my taste. I'm promoting a minimalistic lifestyle through my products. That story can never be told on Amazon"**



of marketing.

The real winners in Instagram's ecommerce avatar are the small and medium businesses (SMBs). Businesses like Chaudhary's Sanskritik Vastrashala that started with an investment of ₹5,000 in 2016 and make ₹1 crore in annual revenue now. Chaudhary operates exclusively on Instagram and gets business through word-of-mouth recommendations – hers is one of those rare private accounts to have over 20,000 followers.

Apparel are a rage on the platform. Supreet Bhatia from Chandigarh earns ₹3 crore annually by selling chikankari dress material through her account @LucknowiAndaaz. The 32-year-old even got queries from the US and Canada for Eid, she says. Mumbai is the biggest market for the Kanpur-born communication professional-turned-entrepreneur.

Beauty is another category that does well. Accounts like @RawBeauty2018 and @Soapworks\_India that operate in the organic skin care space, have an annual revenue of about ₹1 crore. "Until a couple of years ago, the products we sell were only available abroad. Now, people can buy them from us via Instagram. The platform's efforts in giving us a blue tick to signify a verified profile have added a layer of security and trust to the transactions," says Harini Sivakumar, Gurgaon-based founder of Soapworks India.

It is easier to trust these businesses, says Mumbai's Nandal. "You can just go through the comments on their posts and read public reviews." And trust works both ways, adds Sunayana Walia, founder, @RawBeauty2018. "I never

take advance from buyers. They pay only after they've received the parcel and ever since I started the account in 2017, only three people have defaulted on payments," says the 43-year-old from Jalandhar.

Commerce on Instagram also has room for quaint categories – like miniature-food magnets and slime. Shilpa Mitha, 32, is famous for her Indianised miniature food magnets – of vada pav and

## Insta Commerce vs Ecommerce

### #WhereInstaWins

Insta has a visually superior discovery platform

Better microtargeting through hashtags

Better scope for niche sellers/offbeat categories

Direct contact between buyer and seller

### #WhereInstaLoses

Insta has a limited category exposure

No scope of bulk buying yet

Less seller control over buyer data

Source: Analysts and sellers on the platform

**Avi Natesan, Chennai**

Account: @the.slime.space

Followers: **8,971**

Category: **Handmade slime**

Annual turnover: ₹12 lakh

**"Nobody sold slime in India when I began doing Insta Stories on making slime. People would tag me on slime-related queries. Soon, I was getting orders from Punjab and Kashmir"**



**"Celebrities like Dia Mirza and Diana Penty promote our products as a goodwill gesture. Next day, their followers start following us. Without investing too much money, Instagram spreads the word about you and connects you with future customers"**



**Yogesh Shinde, Pune**

Account: @BambooIndia

Followers: **13,700**

Category: **Bamboo products**

Annual turnover: ₹2-3 crore

dosa – on @SuenoSouvenir. Then there's Avi Natesan, 19, an engineering student from Chennai, who makes ₹11-12 lakh a year by selling slime. Natesan started doing Instagram Stories on making slime when nobody was selling the sludgy stress-reliever in India. Incidentally, she discovered the craze for slime on Insta. "I saw that a girl in the US had made \$1,000 in a week by selling slime and started experimenting with it," she recalls. "Soon, people started tagging me on slime-related queries on the platform." Initially, she would sell slime boxes to friends in Chennai. Now, she gets orders from Punjab and even Kashmir. "It's all because of Instagram," says Natesan, adding she wants to branch out into aromatherapy soon.

"Traffic for microtransactions from Instagram Stories has seen more than 5x growth in the last 12 months compared with the same period the previous year," says Sampad Swain, cofounder of digital payments gateway Instamojo. "The same traffic has grown by 2.25x for regular Instagram posts," he adds.

A lot of these sellers prefer Instagram to traditional ecommerce. Delhi's Chaudhary finds it hard to stick to Amazon's picture-uploading guidelines for 30 photos every day. For Walia from Jalandhar, it's a matter of principle: "Marketplaces are too commercial for my taste. I'm promoting a minimalistic lifestyle through my products. That story can never be told through Amazon." Could Insta then pose a threat to the likes of Amazon in future? Unlikely, says an ecommerce professional who wishes not to be named. "Every large tech platform wants to get into ecomm today. But they forget that ecommerce itself is struggling to make money." Additionally, bulk-buying may not be an option on the platform even after Checkout comes into play.

But for SMBs, the opportunities are endless. Yogesh Shinde of Pune, who runs a social enterprise called Bamboo India that sells bamboo-based products, gets 40% of web referrals from Instagram. "Celebrities like Dia Mirza and Diana Penty promote our products as a goodwill gesture. Next day, their followers start following us. Without investing too much money, Instagram spreads the word about you and connects you with future customers," says the 40-year-old.

In Nandal's household, Chaudhary's Sanskritik Vastrashala is a familiar name. "If a parcel from her doesn't come in over two weeks, my husband starts asking what's wrong. And I wait for the clock to strike 12 the next day, to order something yet again." ■

shephali.bhatt@timesgroup.com

**:: Vikram Doctor**

**T**here can come a time when the most dedicated lovers of edible leafy greens wonder whether they are starting to resemble cows. As they pick and pluck through big bunches of leaves, often encountering caterpillars and other bugs, it is hard to suppress the thought that it would be simpler just to use spinach.

This would be a pity because India's leafy greens have a lot to offer. There is, for one, their incredible diversity. Sudhir Kumar's *Leafy and Edible Plants of North-East India* includes 278 varieties, starting from *Abelmoschus esculentus* to *Zizyphus funiculosa*, and that is just one part of the country. Other biodiversity hot-spots like the Western Ghats or the Sunderbans could probably match that.

Knowledge of these greens, and their healthful benefits, has long resided in tribal or rural communities. In the 1920s, a young British medical researcher named Lucy Wills identified a nutritional deficiency among the wives of mill-workers who had come to Bombay, due to lack of access to the leafy greens they would eat in their villages. This was initially called the Wills Factor, or folate (from foliage), but is now known as vitamin B9.

Some greens do come to the city, usually during the monsoon when they are



The Bombay Canteen has a workshop for diners on cooking wild greens

abundant (and one of the few fresh foods available). Some of the demand is driven by festivals like Rishi Panchami, just before Ganesh Chaturthi, which venerates the sages who in Hindu mythology lived in the jungles. Because many greens are foraged from the wild, they carry an aura of ancient sanctity. In Maharashtra, they are cooked in a special dish for the festival. Another example is the Choddo Shaak, the 14 leafy greens traditionally eaten in Bengal on Bhoot Chaturdashi, the night before Kali Puja. Like many major festivals, this takes place when food crops are freshly available. Many of the 14 greens are the leaves of these crops – like pumpkins, turnips, chickpeas, radishes, mustard – and cooking them simply made thrifty and healthy sense.

A new demand has now arisen from chefs and restaurants. This is partly in-

# Leafy Heaven

The wide choice of leafy greens that India has to offer could well satiate the rising interest for sustainable foods and lower food wastage



Despite all the benefits of leafy greens, the sheer range of such vegetables and the cleaning process can put a dampener on its usage

adris, and Sanjay Patil, an expert in sustainable food with the BAIF Foundation, a non-profit set up by Manibhai Desai, a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. Diners could order from a menu featuring wild foods cooked in soups, in salads and served in a thali. They could also attend a workshop on how to use them, and buy bunches of wild greens to cook at home.

Despite such initiatives, and all the benefits of these greens, actual usage is likely to remain low. The diversity is confusing – how do you know which to cook which way? Many health benefits are unproven or over-claimed, and there can be problems – like kidney stones, since the oxalates in some greens can contribute to them. Some leaves, like colocasia, have high levels of oxalic acid that can cause a toxic reaction that manifests as a prickly feeling in the throat. This can be removed by proper preparation, usually by boiling them enough.

But perhaps the biggest drawback is all the tedious plucking and destemming. Simply slicing up spinach seems so much simpler. One solution is to buy more bunches. Greens are usually very cheap in season, and multiple bunches allow a few big handfuls to be easily plucked from each. The balance can be composted (or fed to a friendly cow). Any bugs should be seen as a sign of pesticide-free growth, and can easily be cleaned away by swishing the bunches in soapy and then clean water. Any stems that remain after cooking should be treated like fish-bones, to be either swallowed or spat out.

In the market, leafy greens are usually sold by older people sitting on the margins with a few bunches on a sheet before them. These sellers usually give good tips on how to cook the greens, especially which ones cause the oxalic acid reaction. But apart from this, cooking leafy greens generally comes down to a few basic techniques like stir-frying, adding them to dal, cooking them in a closed pot with a little water to steam them, or boiling and making them into a puree that could become a chutney or a base for other dishes. Most edible greens are, by definition, tender enough to eat without problems, but older and tougher leaves are best used in a puree.

Greens also tend to fall into a few taste categories, which simplifies their cooking. A few varieties have unusual tastes, like moras-bhaji, a succulent green that grows in mangrove swamps and has a distinctly salty taste, which lends itself to be snacked on raw, like potato chips. But most greens are either sour, like ambadi (a hibiscus variety), or slightly bitter or just have a spinach-like savouriness, and within these categories can be used quite interchangeably. Following a few basic rules like this can be the best way to appreciate the abundance of India's edible leafy greens. ■

spired by the use of foraged foods in Scandinavian restaurants like Noma and Faviken, and partly by the general interest in sustainable foods, as foraged greens are if harvested responsibly. Using the leaves of food crops also reduces wastes, as do perennial sources like trees, such as Moringa (drumstick) tree leaves, which are also particularly high in protein.

Recently, the Bombay Canteen presented a menu based on wild greens from the Western Ghats, sourced with the help of OOO Farms, which works with tribal farmers in the eastern Sahy-

# Food for Climate

In a bid to become carbon neutral in the next six years, Goldsmiths, University of London, has stopped serving beef products on its campus. Scientists have long argued that the global livestock industry produces more greenhouse gas emissions than cars, planes, trains and ships. Here is how our daily diet is speeding up climate change:

## Carbon Diet

Impact of consuming these items – one serving a day for a year



### Beef



### Dark chocolate



### Chicken



### Beer



### Dairy Milk

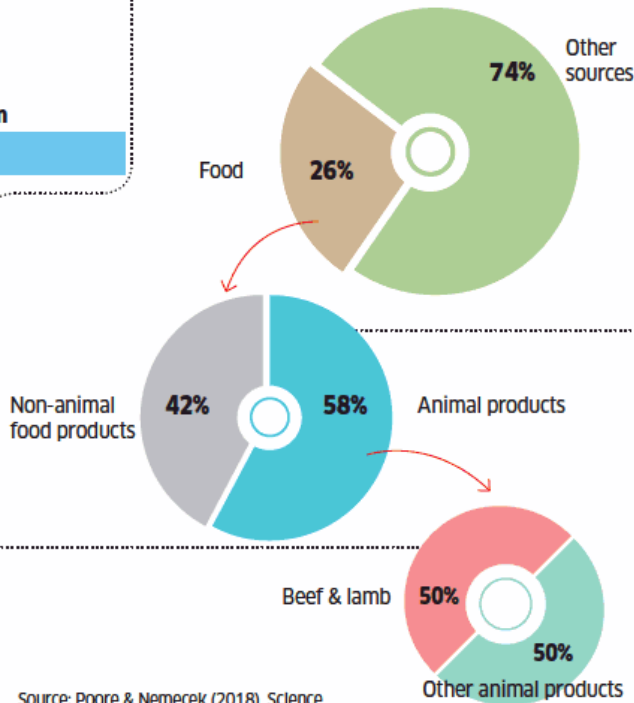


### Uncooked Rice

Source: Poore & Nemecek (2018), Science

## Diet Heat

Proportion of global greenhouse gas emissions from food



Source: Poore & Nemecek (2018), Science

## How to Go Green

- Buy less meat, milk, cheese and butter
- Eat more locally sourced seasonal food
- Avoid throwing away food
- Take trains and buses instead of planes
- Use video conferencing instead of business travel

SOURCE: IPCC, BBC

## THIS WEEK, THAT YEAR

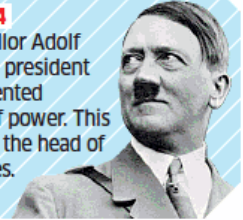
### August 18-24



**August 18, 1958**  
Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* is published in the US. The controversial novel is about a man's obsession with his 12-year-old stepdaughter.

### August 19, 1934

German chancellor Adolf Hitler is elected president in an unprecedented consolidation of power. This also makes him the head of the armed forces.



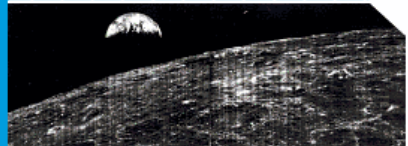
### August 20, 1911

The *New York Times* office sends the first telegram around the world via commercial service. It reads "This message sent around the world".



### August 21, 1991

A coup by hardline Communist leaders to unseat Soviet Union president Mikhail Gorbachev fails. The event paves the way for Boris Yeltsin to later become the first president of the Russian Federation.



### August 23, 1966

Nasa's Lunar Orbiter 1 takes the first photo of earth from the moon's orbit. Earlier pictures were close-ups rather than wide shots.

### August 24, 2011

Steve Jobs, who had led a historic turnaround of the once-ailing Apple, resigns as CEO due to illness and Tim Cook is named his successor.

SOURCE: ONTHISDAY.COM, HISTORY.COM, TIMEANDDATE.COM

## WEEKLY VECTOR

## Eat Out Nations

Top five global markets in terms of consumer spending on eating out (based on purchasing power parity in US dollars at current prices in 2016)



UNITED STATES  
**1**



CHINA  
**2**



INDIA  
**3**



SPAIN  
**4**



JAPAN  
**5**

Source: Cushman & Wakefield's Global Food & Beverage Market report 2017

# Let's Talk About...



## Mrs Hinch

PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS BEYOND HEADLINES

### Is that a screen name?

She is a book author.

### A bestselling author?

Two bestsellers, actually. And both in 2019 itself.

### Wow! What does she write about?

That needs a nuanced answer. She is also a social media phenomenon. An influencer.

### Okay I got the nuance. Now the answer please.

Before saying that, understand this: Her second book, announced two days back, has hit the Amazon bestsellers' list two months before it would actually be published.

### Tell me more please.

But I need to explain ideas like Hinchling, and The Hinch Army first.

### I see. Teasing are we?

Ok here we go. The first book published in April 2019, was called *Hinch Yourself Happy*. It was about easy tricks and tips for cleaning a home. The second book is called *The Activity Journal*. Coming out in October, it is a more fun book,



PHOTO: TWITTER

with puzzles, colouring pages and more tips.

### Aaah. I get it. That would be useful. Is she a cleaning expert?

She is a former hairdresser, only 29, and comes from Essex in England. Sophie Hinchliffe, if you want her full name.

### So Hinchling is essentially cleaning?

Yup. See you learnt a new word. Now what is a Hinch Haul?

### What?

A big purchase of cleaning products. And guess what? Most of her followers are women.

### Are you gaslighting?

No, no.

### Then I expect you to start Hinchling right away.

Text: Suman Layak

## Proverbidioms

Get it For: Free, for IOS & Android



## PLAY

The English language has some interesting proverbs and idioms.

Cat got your tongue and You are what you eat are some of the more familiar ones. In this fun, hidden object-style game, you have to find each saying by tapping on it. You can zoom in and scroll around for a better look. The game will also give you the definition and example use-case after you find a phrase.

The game is inspired by Proverbidioms – a painting by American artist Thomas E Breitenbach – that features comical depictions of over 300 common proverbs and clichés. The game has nice animations to hold your gaze. There are five games and you can play the first one for free. Each additional game is ₹399. You can save your progress across different devices by logging in using Google/Facebook, but this is not essential. Try it out if you want to learn a few new proverbs.

—Hitesh Raj Bhagat

## SocioRAC

Get it For: Free & premium plans, for Android & IOS



## DOWNLOAD

Our digital life requires us to sift through a flood of messages, emails, articles, URLs and social media posts. It is difficult to manage time between all of these and even harder when you want to share

something or save some for quick access later. SocioRAC estimates that we may only need 3-5% from that deluge of digital data. Essentially, the service is looking to solve two problems: how to quickly save info from multiple sources and how to index it so that you can quickly pull up exactly what you need. Compared with taking screenshots, copy-pasting, adding a star or bookmarking, their method can save you a lot of time. Your data stays safe with 256-bit end-to-end encryption. There is a free plan for personal use with up to 10MB note size and up to 100MB note storage. The premium plan is ₹3,000 a year with more features and cloud storage. There are also enterprise plans that can be tailored for your specific use.

—Hitesh Raj Bhagat

Write to us with feedback  
 etmagazine@timesgroup.com

## GET | LISTEN | DO | BROWSE | WATCH

## ASICS Gel Kayano 26

Running Shoes  
 Get it For: ₹13,999

ASICS is a well-known Japanese brand offering footwear for runners and activity enthusiasts. The latest offering from the brand is the Gel Kayano 26 – a shoe that is suitable for everyday training as well as marathoners.

It is called Gel Kayano because it uses Asics Gel technology to reduce shock and offer impact protection. You immediately notice the extra energy return and added bounce thanks to the gel system. This works in tandem with their proprietary Flyte-Foam midsole. As you run, you will notice that the combined technologies enable a better balance with natural movement. Asics has also added a new foam sock liner which aids in comfort and fitting. It is particularly good for long-distance runners because it allows for a smooth rollover



movement of the foot.

One of the unique things about the shoe is its multi-directional mesh upper. The design of the mesh offers extra support in some areas of the foot such as the toe joints and the big toe. The other areas continue to be flexible allowing for ease of movement and breathability. One of the big upgrades on the Kayano 26 is a new rearfoot heel counter which locks the heel in place. In our usage, we noticed this aids in running by providing added support and also makes it comfortable to run long distances.

The outsole of the Kayano 26 uses what they call Guidance Line technology that allows for a natural stride from the point when your heel touches the ground till your toe lifts off. High-quality rubber keeps wear and tear to a minimum.

Overall, we liked the Kayano 26 for the tailored fit, superior comfort and stability. It is available in a variety of colour options for both men and women and is ideal for outdoor running.

—Karan Bajaj