





## The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY  
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

# ERASING THE SLATE

J&K needs full democracy, noisy and chaotic as it may be. Not a bonsai pruned and stunted in North Block and/or Raj Bhavan

THE COMEBACK OF mobile phones in the Valley, with the restoration of post-paid connections, more than two months after a communication blockade was imposed, is welcome. But listen closely to the murmurs of officialdom in J&K and there is reason to worry. As this paper has reported, plans are being drawn up of a political engagement even as the top brass of all major and minor parties remains in detention — Home Minister Amit Shah has now said that the Public Safety Act has been invoked against even Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, not just Farooq Abdullah, setting any possibilities of their early release to rest. So, the question is: Who will be part of this political initiative, choreographed by Delhi? Will it skip the top rung of parties altogether and go straight to mid-level leaders, some of whom have been released over the past few weeks? Who will be in, who out? Much more troubling, however, than even the glib talk of bridging the trust deficit amid continuing lockdown and detentions, is the suggestion of the emergence of a new political class in the Valley, which will presumably fill the political void that has been created by Delhi, and be part of its new solution for Kashmir.

The Centre's belief that to script a "naya Kashmir", it needs to erase the slate and start with a blank page goes against the story of India's politics so far — of a country that has subsumed so many of its rebellions, by turning rebels into stakeholders, and where areas of insurgency have seen the politics of anger and grievance give way to one of aspiration and hope. Of course, this is not a rosy or neat trajectory, there have been spectacular missteps and incomplete transitions. In some trouble spots, the insurgencies have simply been tired out, or have been bent to excessive force applied by the Centre. Yet, it has mostly been a narrative, tortuous and turbulent, of negotiation and bargaining, between the Centre and the protagonists on ground zero, such as they are. In the current moment, however, the Centre's will to clear the political board in Kashmir, to wipe it clean, all the better, presumably, to repopulate it in its own image, stands out for its staggering ambition — and hubris.

The only way out is for politics, democratic politics, and not just mobile services, to resume in the Valley. This can only happen if the leaders of Kashmir, with all their strengths but also their flaws and inadequacies, are given the space and freedom that is their right. To mobilise for and against, to make criticisms and offer alternatives, on the teeming issues — abrogation of Article 370, the sense of humiliation of a people who have not been involved in a critical decision that affects them, demilitarisation, development. Kashmir, even with its troubled past and present, and especially because of it, deserves full democracy, noisy and chaotic as it may be. Not a bonsai democracy, choreographed in North Block and/or Raj Bhavan — constrained, stunted and pruned.

## RUNNING THE GAME

Sourav Ganguly takes charge of BCCI when its functioning needs to be streamlined. He will have his hands full

SOURAV GANGULY BECOMING the BCCI president presents an arresting image for Indian cricket. It's in sync with the Lodha committee reforms that called for cricketers in cricket administration. With Ganguly set to assume top office, Indian cricket will have one of its finest captains to helm the affairs of the game. He became captain in a time of upheaval, when match-fixing rattled Indian cricket at the turn of the century. Ganguly's first priority was to end regionalism, which he did successfully. He also introduced professionalism by bringing in a foreign coach, John Wright, and initiated a fitness culture. Ganguly is taking charge of the BCCI at a time when the cricket board's functioning needs to be similarly streamlined.

Over the past few years, India has significantly lost clout at the ICC. A cricket board that contributes over 70 per cent of the global body's revenue, its money has been taken away on the pretext of creating a more equitable revenue distribution system. The ICC also browbeat India to change the scheduled 2021 Champions Trophy to a World T20. Indian cricket, at this moment, needs someone of stature as its representative to the ICC. As a captain, Ganguly always put emphasis on winning overseas. His team came close to winning a Test series against Steve Waugh's all-conquering Australia in their lair. Fans would expect that the Indian team will shed the "poor travellers" tag under his presidentship.

According to the BCCI constitution, Ganguly has just 10 months to implement his vision before he goes to a three-year cooling-off period. There will be challenges. There is speculation that the BCCI under its new dispensation will carry more of a political undertone. But as a player, Ganguly knew how to get his way. As a captain, he dealt with formidable personalities like Sachin Tendulkar, Anil Kumble and Rahul Dravid. He persuaded Dravid to keep wickets in the ODIs despite the latter's reluctance. Man-management has always been Ganguly's forte. He managed to get his way even with a heavyweight administrator like Jagmohan Dalmiya. Also, he is a survivor, who played 113 Tests. As the BCCI president, however, he will have to learn to be more guarded. As a Cricket Association of Bengal office-bearer, he faced conflict-of-interest issues. But the BCCI office won't allow him to wear many hats.

## BENGAL'S PRIDE

The state has scored two smash hits in one day. But there's a lot more going on in that corner of our meaningless universe

ONCE MORE, A son of Bengal has won a Nobel prize in economics, while another has cleared the field of competition for the post of chairman of the Board of Control for Cricket in India. This is broad-spectrum world dominance — brain, brawn, prefrontal cortex, motor cortex, limbic system, gluteus maximus, everything that makes us human. Bengal is celebrating, and the City of Joy is having a ball. After a span of years, there is a good reason for Bengali exceptionalism to come out and take the air of the "dying city" that just goes on living, regardless of Sharada, Narada and Dilip Ghosh-da. It is an uplifting moment.

The Didis and Dadas of West Bengal are frequently accused of being cultural supremacists. This is excessive, because they are only exceptionalists. And who can deny that the state that gave India Marx, Mao and machher jhol is exceptional? Whether it is the prevalence of hyperreality or hypochondria, no other state comes even close to the one that invented mutton rolls and permanent revolution. West Bengal leaves the competition far behind in indices as diverse as the population density of amiable lunatics and the number of streets named after poets and scientists who lived or worked in the neighbourhood. Plotting the consumption of kosha mangsho against anticid sales could reveal something of the soul of the state. Who knows, a Kuznets curve might emerge, signifying a reckless lust for life, even after Gelusil falters under the gastric onslaught.

While we admire West Bengal for mass-producing Nobel laureates (the Bengalis lay claim to Sir Roland Ross, CV Raman and Mother Teresa, too), we are only looking at a sliver of life. There's a lot more going on over there. Look beyond the cultural supremacists, and exceptional things shall be in your midst.



MADAN B LOKUR

FOUR YEARS AGO, on October 16, 2015, the Supreme Court (SC) struck down as unconstitutional an amendment to the Constitution establishing the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC). The amendment and the corresponding law were challenged by the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association (SCAORA) believing, rightly, that the amendment would violate the basic structure of the Constitution by depriving the judiciary of its independence. SCAORA engaged Fali S Nariman, a doyen of the Bar, to argue the case on its behalf. The SC agreed with his submissions and struck down the amendment. At law, the independence of the judiciary was preserved. But is it, in fact? Judge for yourself.

Try and remember, for instance, that barely a few months after the NJAC decision, a sobbing Chief Justice of India (CJI) sought outside help to resolve the institutional problem of getting the government to move on increasing the judge strength. Nothing happened. A few months later, the same CJI complained, in open court, that the government was not implementing the recommendations of the collegium for the transfer of some judges. Nothing happened, except a response given in November the same year by the Attorney General reminding the SC of its Lakshman Rekha and by the law minister of its historic failure during the Emergency. The seeds of the NJAC striking back were sown around that time and the judiciary is today reaping the harvest.

What was the proposed composition of the NJAC? The CJI was the chair, ex officio, and along with him were the next two senior judges. The Union Minister of Law and Justice was an ex officio member along with two eminent persons. They were to recommend persons for appointment as judges of the SC and high courts and the transfer of judges of the high courts (including chief justices). Notwithstanding the declaration of unconstitutionality of the NJAC, I believe its core functions are now being performed by a body minus the two eminent persons. So, the recommendation and appointment of judges has been taken over by a "new NJAC" and without any apparent protest. Why do I say this?

The collegium cut off its hands when it reversed a signed and sealed (but not delivered) resolution on January 11. To an outsider, it appeared that a resolution of the collegium lacked sanctity — and this seems to have been exploited by the "new NJAC". Let me cite a few glaring instances. As recently as in late August,

# Govt calling the SC shots?

Collegium's actions show that the NJAC which was struck down four years ago is back, with a vengeance

Justice Akil Kureshi, the senior-most judge of the Gujarat High Court, was recommended on May 10 to be the Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court after considering all relevant factors and being found suitable in all respects. Guess what? The government sent two communications to the CJI on August 23 and 27 along with some material. On reconsideration of the communications and the material, the collegium modified its recommendation on September 5 and recommended his appointment as the Chief Justice of the Tripura High Court. Again, the contents of the communications and the accompanying material are not known. Is there something so terribly secret about them that it would not be in the interest of the institution to make a disclosure?

the *Economic Times* reported that the CJI had written to the law minister that the CJI had written to the law minister that 43 recommendations made by the collegium were pending with the government and the vacancies in the high courts were to the extent of about 37 per cent. Also, the collegium could not consider the appointment of 10 persons since some information was awaited from the government for varying periods. Who is calling the shots — the government?

Some more questions. On April 8, the collegium recommended the appointment of Justice Vikram Nath, the senior-most judge of the Allahabad High Court as the chief justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court. Sometime later, the government referred back the recommendation for reconsideration. On August 22, the collegium reconsidered the recommendation "for the reasons indicated in the file" and recommended his appointment as the chief justice of the Gujarat High Court. The reasons indicated in the file are not known and it would certainly be in the interest of the institution if they are disclosed. If the judge was unfit or unsuitable for appointment as the chief justice of Andhra Pradesh, how did he become suitable for Gujarat?

On September 5, the collegium recommended that Justice Irshad Ali be made a permanent judge of the Allahabad High Court. The recommendation was made after considering (i) the opinion of judges of the SC conversant with the affairs of the Allahabad High Court, (ii) report of the committee of judges to evaluate his judgments, (iii) possible complaints against one of the judges under consideration (could also be Justice Ali), (iv) additional information received from the chief justice of the Allahabad High Court and (v) observations of the Department of Justice and (vi) an overall assessment. What did the government do? It rejected the recommendation (without furnishing any reason or justification) and on September 20 extended his term as an additional judge by six months. Did anybody protest?

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ommended his appointment as the Chief Justice of the Tripura High Court. Again, the contents of the communications and the accompanying material are not known. Is there something so terribly secret about them that it would not be in the interest of the institution to make a disclosure? As in the case of Justice Vikram Nath, it would be worth asking how Justice Kureshi is fit or suitable for appointment as the Chief Justice of the Tripura High Court and not of the Andhra Pradesh High Court. Have we not often heard the SC say that sunlight is the best disinfectant? And then, electric light the most efficient policeman? More than a month has gone by and even this recommendation has not been acted upon by the government. Any protest?

Finally, the transfer of the Chief Justice from Madras High Court to the Meghalaya High Court — whether it should have taken place or not is not the question. It could have been achieved more gracefully, like the manner in which a former CJI dealt with a delinquent judge of the Delhi High Court. After a brief discussion with the CJI, the judge quietly resigned. But some other more important questions arise in the context of the independence of the judiciary. Was she spied upon by the Intelligence Bureau (IB)? *The Times of India* reported on September 30 that the CJI had asked the Central Bureau of Investigation to "take further action in accordance with law" on a five-page report of the IB on financial and other irregularities alleged against her. Should the IB be blindly believed — there is a well-known incident of a teetotaler being called a "boozer" by the IB? Was the CJI kept in the dark about her being kept under surveillance? How many other judges are being spied on? Isn't it somewhat unusual and frightening that judges, expected to render judgment without fear or favour, are subject to surveillance by the IB? Can their independence be guaranteed under these circumstances?

It seems to me that the unconstitutional NJAC is rearing its head and is now Frankenstein's monster. The advice of the two eminent persons postulated by the NJAC is no longer required. Actually, there is now no need to amend the Constitution to bring back the NJAC — it is already in existence with a vengeance. At the present moment, silence on crunch issues is not golden.

The writer is a retired justice of the Supreme Court of India



SHOBHINI MUKERJI

AS A YOUNG research associate, I stopped at a dhaba with my boss, me armed with hand-sanitiser and a spoon, while my boss dug in to a plate of fish with her hands. My boss was Esther Duflo, director and co-founder of J-PAL, and we were on a field visit in a village in Odisha in 2008. J-PAL was in its early years then, set up globally at MIT in 2003 and in India by 2007. Despite the expansion and recognition of its work worldwide, Esther remains the same person, down to earth, no frills or fuss, who says exactly what she means in a precise five words or less. And much can be written about Abhijit's Banerjee's fantastic cooking skills.

Working with Esther and Abhijit for more than a decade has given me immense appreciation for these brilliant yet unpretentious people. They have always been open to hearing the ideas of research associates and field staff. They devise elegant solutions to complex development challenges, turn unwieldy ideas into actionable plans, engage with colleagues and bureaucrats, and return home to review a 250-page journal submission — all as part of a day's work.

For them to join the ranks of Jan

## THE PEOPLE'S ECONOMISTS

This year's Nobel laureates shone the light on ways to address poverty

Tinbergen, Milton Friedman and Amartya Sen is one thing, but to attract global attention to the powerful methodology in which they, along with their co-laureate Michael Kremer, have been pioneers is another thing entirely. They have led the charge to mainstream the application of a rigorous and scientific lab methodology — the randomised evaluation — outside the laboratory, amidst the complexities of the real world, in order to derive precise measures of the impact of poverty alleviation programmes. In their own words, back in the late '90s and early 2000s, Abhijit and Esther, together with their early partners, took a leap of faith and used randomised evaluations in the field — at the time not a widely-used practice in development economics. Their intention was to do research which was hands-on, solve real problems, and also learn, with greater precision, how the world works.

Under their leadership, and with the efforts of J-PAL's network of 181 affiliated researchers, we have moved the frontiers in the fight against poverty and inequality in cost-effective and measurable ways. Whether we are thinking about innovative

ways to bring women out of extreme poverty, improve educational attainment or increase immunisation rates for children under the age of five, our work fills critical evidence gaps. This research is then brought to policymakers in a manner that is globally informed, by pooling the best insights from randomised evaluations in 83 countries, as well as grounded by local conditions and implementation feasibility, to enable context-specific policy decisions. J-PAL's scientific evaluations have debunked commonly held beliefs, and have resulted in evidence-based policy decisions.

As the news broke, my 79-year-old grandmother called to congratulate me, and to ask me specifically what it is that we at J-PAL do. Therein lies the significance of this moment. Not only have these Nobel laureates spent their careers bringing rigorous research to play in important policy decisions, but their work, and this recognition, have brought a powerful approach for fighting global poverty into our everyday conversations.

Mukerji is the executive director of J-PAL South Asia



## OCTOBER 16, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

FUEL FOR TARAPUR THE JIMMY CARTER administration does not seem to have taken any firm stand yet on the pending Indian applications for fuel for Tarapur. The scenario sketched by observers is as follows: Very soon the state department will reply to the nuclear regulatory commission. In the context of the general friendliness of the US administration to India and the desire of the Carter administration to utilise the two-year grace period for diplomacy, it is almost certain that the state department will recommend further supply. What the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will do is anybody's guess. The chances are probably slightly against continued supplies.

CONG-CPM TALKS THE CONGRESS AGREED to join hands with the Marxists during the Lok Sabha poll as the latter only too readily resiled from the firm postures they had adopted earlier. This was the net outcome of the 90-minute long meeting of the leaders of the Congress, the CPM and the CPI held in New Delhi. The Congress general secretary, Yunus Saleem, emphasised that his party will continue to support the Koya Ministry in Kerala and vote for the controversial land gift bill even when they reach an understanding with the CPM for the Lok Sabha election. The question of dissolution of the Assembly was not discussed, he added.

PAK NOBEL WIN THE 1979 NOBEL prize in physics was awarded to two Americans and a Pakistani and the chemistry prize to an American and a West German. A total of four of seven laureates selected for the three 1979 science prizes are Americans, the same number as last year. The physics prize was awarded to professors Sheldon L Glashow and Steven Weinberg, both 46, of Harvard, and Abdus Salam, 53, a Pakistani physicist working in London and Trieste, Italy — for studies aimed at unlocking the mystery of forces that hold matter together. They believe their work may eventually find a single force underlying the universe.







FIRST MAN TO WALK IN SPACE RUSSIA BIDS FAREWELL TO LEONOV

Hundreds of people including Russian and US astronauts and top officials bid farewell Tuesday to Alexei Leonov, a legendary Soviet cosmonaut who was the first man to perform a spacewalk.

TOP OF THE WORLD



Imran Khan with Prince William and his wife Kate Middleton in Islamabad. AP

PAKISTAN

William, Kate meet Imran

Islamabad: Prince William and his wife Kate Middleton on Tuesday met Pakistan PM Imran Khan and President Arif Alvi as they began their visit to the country, described as the "most complex" royal trip to date.

UAE

Putin in UAE, first visit since 2007

Dubai: Russian President Vladimir Putin has arrived in the United Arab Emirates on his first visit to the oil-rich nation in over a decade.

NIGERIA

Buhari orders crackdown

Kano: Nigeria's president on Tuesday ordered a crackdown on abuse at Islamic schools, after a second police raid in less than a month revealed men and boys subjected to beatings, abuse and squalid conditions.

USA

Columbus statues defaced

Providence: Several Christopher Columbus statues were vandalised with red paint and messages against the 15th century Italian navigator Monday when the US holiday named for one of the first Europeans to reach the Americas was being celebrated.

John Bolton called Giuliani a hand grenade, says ex-White House aide

AGENCIES WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 15

NATIONAL SECURITY adviser John Bolton was so alarmed by Rudy Giuliani's back-channel activities in Ukraine that he described President Donald Trump's personal lawyer as a "hand grenade who is going to blow everybody up," according to a former White House aide.

The aide, Fiona Hill, testified for more than 10 hours on Monday as part of the Democrats' impeachment probe into Trump's dealings with Ukraine.



Fiona Hill testified for more than 10 hours as part of the impeachment probe. Reuters

amiliar with the testimony who requested anonymity to discuss the confidential interview.

Those meetings took place in early July, weeks before a July 25 phone call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in which Trump urged

that Zelenskyy investigate political rival Joe Biden's family and Ukraine's own involvement in the 2016 presidential election.

Giuliani is Trump's personal lawyer and was heavily involved in the effort to pressure Ukraine on the investigations.

Hill said she had strongly and repeatedly objected to the ouster earlier this year of the former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, according to the person familiar with the testimony.

Hill's interview, like the others conducted by House impeachment investigators, took place behind closed doors. On Tuesday, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent was testifying.

GIULIANI ADMITS \$500,000 FROM PARNAS' FIRM

Washington: President Donald Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani has acknowledged he earned \$500,000 for work for a company run by a business associate who has been charged with federal campaign finance violations.



A rally in Barcelona after 12 separatist leaders were convicted of illegally promoting Catalonia region's independence. Reuters

Catalans keep up pressure for split from Spain after leaders get jail terms

JOAN FAUS BARCELONA, OCTOBER 15

DEMONSTRATORS BLOCKED a train station and several motorways in Spain's Catalonia region on Tuesday, a second day of protests over Monday's jailing of nine separatists by the supreme court over their role in a failed secession bid.

Police intervened to remove the protesters, who had turned out in smaller numbers than on Monday, while a rally in central Barcelona closed a main thoroughfare to traffic and pro-independence leaders vowed to keep pushing for a new referendum.

Various other rallies were planned for later in the day and pro-independence labour union confederation IAC announced a

general strike in Catalonia on Friday against labour laws which unions say infringe workers' rights.

Oriol Junqueras was given the longest sentence, of 13 years, for his role in organising the 2017 referendum, which was ruled illegal. He told Reuters in his first interview after the sentence that it would only galvanize the independence movement.

"We're not going to stop thinking what we think, ideals can't be derailed by (jail) sentences," he said, asserting that a new plebiscite was "inevitable".

The head of the regional government, Quim Torra, defended the mass protests over sentencing he described as unacceptable. "A new stage begins where we take the initiative and put the implementation of the right to self-determination back in the

centre" of our proposals, Torra said, urging Madrid to pay heed and start talks to that effect.

On Monday, demonstrators blocked railways and thousands descended on Barcelona's international airport, where some clashed with police, after Junqueras and eight others were convicted of sedition and jailed for nine to 13 years. A spokesman for the airport said it had cancelled 110 flights on Monday and a further 45 on Tuesday due to Monday's disruption.

Acting foreign minister Josep Borrell acknowledged the issue will not end with the sentencing: "Yesterday, today and tomorrow, it remains a political problem that has to be solved," he said, calling for dialogue within the framework of the constitution.

REUTERS

EXPLAINED

Defining factor for Nov 10 polls

THE VERDICT is likely to be a central issue before the vote on November 10 and politics for years to come, with very different views emerging in Madrid and Catalonia. It will be difficult for Spain's caretaker PM Pedro Sanchez to balance political equations considering attacks from his rivals on the left and right over the verdict.

Unfounded to suggest Hong Kong becoming police state: Carrie Lam

JOHN LEICESTER HONG KONG, OCTOBER 15

HONG KONG'S leader said Tuesday that "it's totally irresponsible and unfounded" to suggest the semi-autonomous Chinese territory is becoming a police state as her government grapples with protests now in their fifth month.

In a spirited defense of Hong Kong's 30,000-strong police force and her handling of the protests in response to criticism from visiting U.S. senators, Carrie Lam challenged the notion that



During a protest in Hong Kong on Tuesday. Reuters

the territory is losing its freedoms, unique in China, as police battle demonstrators in the streets.

"I would challenge every politician to ask themselves if

the large extent of violent acts, and all those petrol bombs and arson and deadly attacks on policemen, happened in their own country, what would they do? What would their policemen do?" Lam said. "So my simple response is: To describe Hong Kong as a police state is totally unfounded."

Her comments came as a Hong Kong court addressed one of the most startling cases of violence so far, involving an 18-year-old charged with intentional wounding for a slashing attack on a police officer Sunday.

AP

EU: Brexit deal still possible this week, UK must act now to seal agreement

RAF CASERT & JILL LAWLESS LUXEMBOURG, OCTOBER 15

EUROPEAN UNION officials were hoping Tuesday that — after more than three years of false starts and sudden reversals — a Brexit deal with Britain might be in sight within hours.

The bloc said that it might be possible to strike a divorce deal by Thursday's EU leaders' summit, which comes just two weeks before the UK's scheduled departure date of October 31.



Anti-Brexit protesters outside parliament in London. Reuters

One major proviso: The British government must make more compromises to seal an agree-

ment in the coming hours.

Britain and the EU have been here before — within sight of a deal only to see it dashed — but a surge in the British pound Tuesday indicated hope that this time could be different.

The currency rose against the dollar to its highest level in months.

Even though many questions remain, diplomats made it clear that both sides were within touching distance of a deal for the first time since a UK withdrawal plan fell apart in the British House of Commons in March.

Martin Schirdewan, a German member of the European Parliament's Brexit Steering Group, said an agreement is "now within our grasp" following a breakthrough in negotiations.

Sick of Brexit: Sturgeon Meanwhile, Scottish National Party (SNP) leader Nicola Sturgeon said Scotland must hold another independence referendum in 2020 and will soon request the powers needed to hold it legally.

Sturgeon, who is also Scotland's First Minister, said she was "sick of Brexit".

BRITISH WRITER BECOMES FIRST BLACK WOMAN TO WIN THE AWARD

Jury breaks rules, Booker Prize awarded jointly to Atwood, Evaristo

ADITI KHANNA LONDON, OCTOBER 15

CANADIAN AUTHOR Margaret Atwood and British writer Bernardine Evaristo jointly won the prestigious 2019 Booker Prize on Monday after judges broke the rules by declaring a tie, the first since 1992.

British Indian novelist Salman Rushdie's tragicomic Quichotte was among the six

books shortlisted for the prize. Atwood, 79, is the oldest ever Booker winner, while Evaristo, 60, is the first black woman to win the award since its creation in 1969.

The Booker rules say the prize must not be divided, but the judges insisted they "couldn't separate" Atwood's The Testament and Girl, Woman, Other by Evaristo.

The rules were changed after the last tie in 1992, and organisers told this year's judges that



Judges declared a tie between Canadian author Margaret Atwood and British writer Bernardine Evaristo. Reuters

they were not allowed to pick two winners.

But after five hours of deliberations, Peter Florence, the chair of the five-member judging panel, said: "It was our decision to flout the rules."

The judges said they strongly wanted both the authors to split the GBP 50,000 award at a gala ceremony at Guildhall here.

"The more we talked about them, the more we found we loved them both so much we wanted them both to win,"

Florence said. Atwood expressed her joy at sharing the award with a younger writer.

Atwood joked to her co-winner: "I would have thought I would have been too elderly, and I kind of don't need the attention, so I'm very glad that you're getting some."

"It would have been quite embarrassing for me... if I had been alone here, so I'm very pleased that you're here too," she said. Evaristo said, "We black

British women know that if we don't write ourselves into literature no one else will."

"It's so incredible to share this with Margaret Atwood, who's such a legend and so generous," she said, after the shock joint win was announced.

The others shortlisted included Lucy Ellmann for Ducks, Newburyport; Chigozie Obioma for An Orchestra of Minorities, and Elif Shafak for 10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World.

PTI









## POLISH DEFENCE

## A firmer fort

America pours a thousand more troops into Poland



US soldiers arrive to the welcoming ceremony near Orzysz in Poland in 2017. Five years ago the American troops in Poland could all fit on a bus. Now thousands will be spread across six sites. Reuters

LAST YEAR Poland made an audacious bid to coax Donald Trump into permanently placing an American armoured division on its soil, offering \$2bn and naming rights. "Fort Trump", as it became known—jocularly at first, then more formally—is now firming up. In June America said it would send 1,000 troops to join the 4,500 already in Poland. On September 23rd Mr Trump agreed with Andrzej Duda, Poland's president, where these would go.

It is not quite the mammoth tank force that Poland wanted, but it is a win nonetheless. Five years ago the American troops in Poland could all fit on a bus. Now

thousands will be spread across six sites. "Poland has joined today the small group of countries where US troops are permanently stationed," boasted the country's defence ministry. There will be a division headquarters in Poznan, a squadron of Reaper drones in Lask, a helicopter brigade and special forces in Powidz and more special forces in Lubliniec.

The troops in Poland serve as a tripwire. If Russia were to invade, it would have to kill Americans first, quickly pulling in the superpower. But the new forces will also be useful in circumstances short of all-out war. Lieutenant-General Rajmund Andrzejczak, Poland's army chief, says

that the drones and "low profile" special forces are especially helpful for spotting and countering murkier "hybrid scenarios" — a reference to techniques Russia has honed in next-door Ukraine, such as the use of cyber-attacks, disinformation and soldiers who don't wear identifiable uniforms.

**The troops in Poland serve as a tripwire. If Russia were to invade, it would have to kill Americans first, quickly pulling in the superpower. But the new forces will also be useful in circumstances short of all-out war**

Mr Duda hopes this is just the start. America and Poland are now haggling over a seventh site for another American armoured brigade combat team, a unit that can include over 100 tanks and armoured vehicles. America would like it to sit west of the Vistula river. Poland would prefer it in the south-east of the country,

pointedly closer to Russia. The "real deal" would be a full-blown defence co-operation agreement, says Michal Baranowski, head of the Warsaw office of the German Marshall Fund, an American think-tank.

Mr Duda has honed the art of speaking to Mr Trump in the languages he understands best: flattery, money and loyalty. Poland has gone on a spending spree for American arms, signing over \$11bn-worth of deals for rocket launchers, Patriot air defence systems and F-35 warplanes. On September 3rd it asked to buy 185 Javelin anti-tank missiles and five Hercules transport aircraft. Poland is not only one of the handful of allies that hits

the NATO target of spending 2% of GDP on defence, but also plans to raise that to 2.5% by 2030.

For Poland, the purpose of this build-up is clear. Russia is "definitely very, very aggressive", says General Andrzejczak. He points to its military exercises and challenges to Polish airspace using drones. For Mr Trump, it is more personal. Why, he was asked, had he sent troops? Was it because of the Russian threat? "No, I don't think so at all. I think it's just because we have a president of Poland who I like, who I respect."

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## AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

## Traffic, jammed

Blame Silicon Valley hype — and the limits of AI

FEW IDEAS have enthused technologists as much as the self-driving car. Advances in machine learning, a subfield of artificial intelligence (AI), would enable cars to teach themselves to drive by drawing on reams of data from the real world. The more they drove, the more data they would collect, and the better they would become. Robotaxis summoned with the flick of an app would make car ownership obsolete. Best of all, reflexes operating at the speed of electronics would drastically improve safety. Car- and tech-industry bosses talked of a world of "zero crashes".

And the technology was just around the corner. In 2015 Elon Musk, Tesla's boss, predicted his cars would be capable of "complete autonomy" by 2017. Mr Musk is famous for missing his own deadlines. But he is not alone. General Motors said in 2018 that it would launch a fleet of cars without steering wheels or pedals in 2019; in June it changed its mind. Waymo, the Alphabet subsidiary widely seen as the industry leader, committed itself to launching a driverless-taxi service in Phoenix, where it has been testing its cars, at the end of 2018. The plan has been a damp squib. Only part of the city is covered; only approved users can take part. Phoenix's wide, sun-soaked streets are some of the easiest to drive on anywhere in the world; even so, Waymo's cars have human safety drivers behind the wheel, just in case.

Jim Hackett, the boss of Ford, acknowledges that the industry "overestimated the arrival of autonomous vehicles". Chris Urmson, a linchpin in Alphabet's self-driving efforts (he left in 2016), used to hope his young son would never need a driving licence. Mr Urmson now talks of self-driving

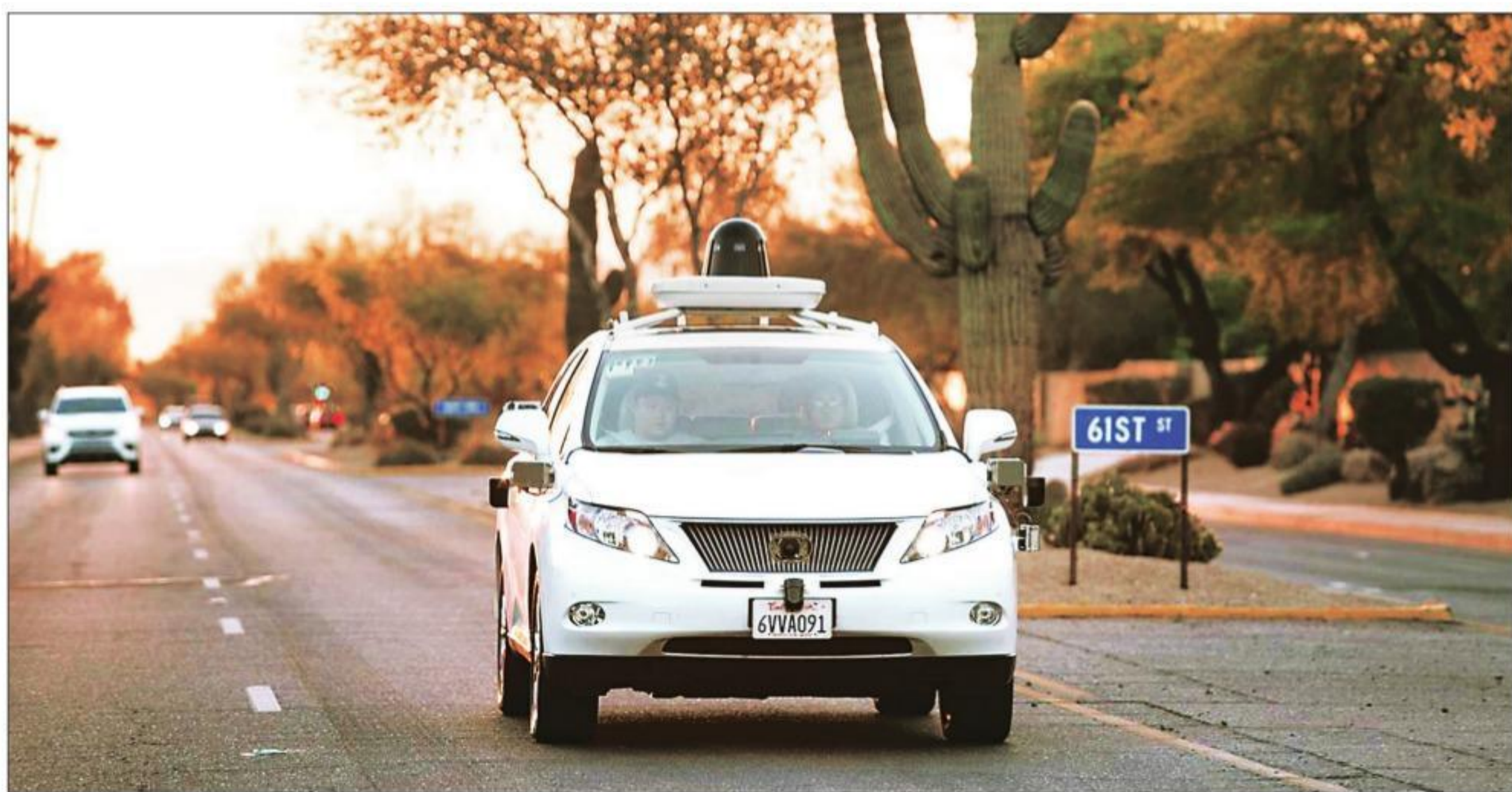
**Machine-learning systems are brittle. Learning solely from existing data means they struggle with situations that they have never seen before. Humans can use general knowledge and on-the-fly reasoning to react to things that are new to them**

cars appearing gradually over the next 30 to 50 years. Firms are increasingly switching to a more incremental approach, building on technologies such as lane-keeping or automatic parking. A string of fatalities involving self-driving cars have scotched the idea that a zero-crash world is anywhere close. Markets are starting to catch on. In September Morgan Stanley, a bank, cut its valuation of Waymo by 40%, to \$105bn, citing delays in its technology.

The future, in other words, is stuck in traffic. Partly that reflects the tech industry's predilection for grandiose promises. But self-driving cars were also meant to be a flagship for the power of AI. Their struggles offer valuable lessons in the limits of the world's trendiest technology.

## Hit the brakes

One is that, for all the advances in machine learning, machines are still not very good at learning. Most humans need a few dozen hours to master driving. Waymo's cars



Test drivers use a Lexus SUV, built as a self-driving car, to map the area prior to a journey without a driver in control, in Arizona, US, in 2016. Reuters

have had over 10m miles of practice, and still fall short. And once humans have learned to drive, even on the easy streets of Phoenix, they can, with a little effort, apply that knowledge anywhere, rapidly learning to adapt their skills to rush-hour Bangkok or a gravel-track in rural Greece. Computers are less flexible. AI researchers have expended much brow-sweat searching for techniques to help them match the quick-fire learning displayed by humans. So far, they have not succeeded. Another lesson is that machine-learning

systems are brittle. Learning solely from existing data means they struggle with situations that they have never seen before. Humans can use general knowledge and on-the-fly reasoning to react to things that are new to them — a light aircraft landing on a busy road, for instance, as happened in Washington state in August (thanks to humans' cognitive flexibility, no one was hurt). Autonomous-car researchers call these unusual situations "edge cases". Driving is full of them, though most are less

dramatic. Mishandled edge cases seem to have been a factor in at least some of the deaths caused by autonomous cars to date. The problem is so hard that some firms, particularly in China, think it may be easier to re-engineer entire cities to support limited self-driving than to build fully autonomous cars.

The most general point is that, like most technologies, what is currently called "AI" is both powerful and limited. Recent progress in machine learning has been transformative.

At the same time, the eventual goal—the creation in a machine of a fluid, general, human-like intelligence—remains distant. People need to separate the justified excitement from the opportunistic hyperbole. Few doubt that a completely autonomous car is possible in principle. But the consensus is, increasingly, that it is not imminent. Anyone counting on AI for business or pleasure could do worse than remember that cautionary tale.

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## Back at Eden, Ganguly talks cricket

Kohli's men need to win ICC events, pink ball Test way forward, spinners love SG ball, says BCCI prez-elect



### DRIVER'S SEAT

BCCI president-designate Sourav Ganguly arrives at Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Tuesday. PTI

**SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY**  
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 15

RED CARPET was rolled out at Eden Gardens for Sourav Ganguly as he returned from Mumbai after filing his nomination for the BCCI president's post. And as the BCCI president-elect arrived at the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB), things became chaotic. It felt like a throw-back to 1996, when the 'Prince of Calcutta' had returned home after scoring back-to-back hundreds in his debut Test series. Ganguly, however, described his century at Lord's on his Test debut "30 times bigger than this".

He took charge of the Indian team as its captain at the turn of the century, when Indian cricket was going through an upheaval in the wake of the match-fixing scandal. His leadership changed the Indian team. Along the way, Ganguly had put huge emphasis on winning overseas. As the BCCI president, is he satisfied with the way the current team performs away from home? According to him, India not winning an ICC tournament for the last six years is an area that needs to be addressed.

"I think it's (India's performance abroad) satisfactory and we have a very good side. My only thing is that we need to win big tournaments. I'm not saying they will win every time. It's not possible. But they have gone through seven big tournaments without winning one; they are much better side than that. That's the only area where they need to get themselves ready mentally. Talent is enormous, otherwise they couldn't have played so well in the World Cup till the semifinals. So that's an issue which Virat needs to address. And that doesn't happen in the boardroom," Ganguly said.

India won the 2013 Champions Trophy but they have faltered in the knockouts at the ICC events since. Between the lines, there was a message to the team management.

Ganguly also had a message for Wriddhiman Saha, who wowed the pundits and fans alike with his 'keeping in the Pune Test against South Africa. Kohli called his stumper the best in the world and few would argue. But

Ganguly wants the Bengal 'keeper-batsman to be equally good in front of the wicket, if he wants to play 100 Tests.

"I'm extremely happy that he (Saha) does well behind the stumps. But my suggestion to him is that in front of the stumps he should score a lot many runs. His wicket-keeping will never be doubted. (But) if he wants to play 100 Tests, he will have to score a lot more runs. He is our own boy. I wish him the best. Hopefully, in the third Test he will get a hundred."

#### An emergency-like situation

He is taking charge of the BCCI at a time, when the cricket board's functioning needs to be streamlined after nearly three years of the CoA rule. The former India captain called it an emergency-like situation.

"When I became the India captain, the team was going through a difficult phase. Now also, the administration is going through a major crisis for three years. It's actually an emergency, as I have said before, and I'm happy to get the responsibility to turn it around. That's what matters. When it is tough, people believe that you are good enough to do it. That's my biggest responsibility."

Last year, when West Indies came here, the

### Scheduling: Ganguly not on same page as ICC

**Kolkata:** On Monday, Sourav Ganguly had told reporters how time has come for the BCCI to assert itself at the ICC, with India's revenue share being considerably reduced by the global body. There's a bigger challenge at hand, as the game's governing body's proposed Futures Tours Programme (FTP) could significantly hit Indian cricket board's revenue stream.

Under the proposal, the ICC plans to have World T20 every year and 50-over World Cup every three years, apparently to hijack the BCCI's share of revenue from potential broadcasters for the 2023-

2028 cycle. With the BCCI looking forward to regain its might under its new dispensation, sparks are expected at the next ICC meeting. The BCCI president-elect showed restrained, when he was asked about the ICC's proposal.

"(I'm) not in a position to comment. But sometime less is more in life. So we got to be careful with that. And the football World Cup happens every four years and you see the madness. That's a decision the ICC has to make. I'm not in a position to talk or comment on it. As in, when I get an opportunity to be a part of the discussion, I will speak," Ganguly said.

BCCI acting secretary Amitabh Choudhary wanted the first Test at Rajkot to be a day-night affair. The Committee of Administrators (CoA) vetoed it, as according to them, players were reluctant. Ganguly, however, has always been a supporter of day-night Tests. After taking charge of the CAB, he brought in pink-ball games in local cricket. With him helming Indian cricket now, is there a chance that India would finally embrace day-night Tests?

"Let's see. Before talking to the team management, this needs the approval of the BCCI members. But I always believe that's the way forward in Test cricket. Games are being played before empty stands," Ganguly said.

Last year, Kohli had criticised the quality of the SG ball, that is used for home Tests. "To have a ball scuffed up in five overs is not something that we have seen before," the India captain had said. The MCC's cricket committee, with Ganguly on board, proposed standardisation of the red ball. The BCCI president-elect, however, dropped a hint that India would continue to have the SG ball for home Tests.

"When I was the India captain, the SG ball came in. The spinners wouldn't let the SG ball get off their hands. And Virat Kohli will face the same problem. Ravi Ashwin, Jadeja and

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**I have heard these political questions before, when I met Mamata Didi, the chief minister, and you have seen the results. I met Amit Shah for the first time ever. The questions were different. Neither was I asked a question on what's going to happen to the BCCI; whether I'm going to get a post or not. Neither was there any discussion of that sort (joining BJP) happened; that you only get this if we agree to that."**

**SOURAV GANGULY**  
ON HIS MEETING WITH AMIT SHAH HAD ANY POLITICAL UNDERTONE

Kuldeep will not let him change the SG ball." Ganguly reiterated his stand on the conflict-of-interest and how it is important for Indian cricket to have legends like Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Dev, Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid contributing to the game. He also mentioned how the BCCI is struggling to fill up the IPL governing council posts, because members are "reluctant" to give up their positions in their respective state associations.

The question with regards to his meeting with the Union Home Minister Amit Shah and if that had any political undertone, with an eye to the 2021 Assembly polls in Bengal, came in due course. "You must have seen Amit Shah's tweet yesterday and he has said very rightly. Not once has he said we will do this for doing that... You have got to give respect to that," Ganguly contended, adding: "I have heard these political questions before, when I met Mamata Didi, the chief minister, and you have seen the results. I met Amit Shah for the first time ever. The questions were different. Neither was I asked a question on what's going to happen to the BCCI; whether I'm going to get a post or not. Neither was there any discussion of that sort (joining BJP) happened; that you only get this if we agree to that."

cricket and cricketers. He has had been the CAB president for four years. So he knows what to do and what not to do. So we can request him and the BCCI to help the cricketers. We have a start. We have a meeting on October 16, where the directors of the ICA will sit and there will be a lot of brainstorming. Then, we have our spokespersons in Anshuman Gaekwad and Shantha Rangaswamy, who will be putting our words across to the BCCI.

**Are you satisfied with the way the ICA elections happened?**

Absolutely. It was e-voting. So, whosoever voted, everybody has his/her own mind. But for us, the eight of us (directors), to satisfy now the demand of these 1,250 cricketers is not going to be easy. And we are going to open the membership for the rest of the people. So it's a huge responsibility and I will only request the fellow cricketers to be a little bit patient. Because, it's not going to be an overnight job.

**What does it mean to you that you are the ICA president?**

Honestly, I'm surprised to say the least. I'm also surprised that I was elected unopposed.



Ashok Malhotra. Express File

### PAINE BACKS SMITH'S RETURN TO CAPTAINCY

Australian captain Tim Paine has addressed speculation over whether Steve Smith will again lead the team once a ban ends in March, saying he would be fully supportive if it happens "one day".

## CoA suggests dilution of 'conflict' clause...

**DEVENDRA PANDEY**  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 15

THE COMMITTEE of Administrators (CoA) has suggested the much-debated 'conflict of interest' clause in the new BCCI constitution be amended as it feels that it is "proving counter-effective and disproportionately restrictive to players — both current as well as former". Players will, however, have to make full disclosures at the outset, after which relaxations can be granted and they may be allowed to hold multiple posts.

A wide number of former players, including Kapil Dev, Sachin Tendulkar, VVS Laxman, Rahul Dravid and BCCI president-elect Sourav Ganguly were found to be in violation of the conflict of interest clause in the last few months. BCCI's Rule 38 (4) barred individuals from holding more than one post at the same time. This applied to players, selectors, members of cricket committees, team officials, franchise managers or commentators.

The CoA has now urged for a case-by-case discretion from the Ethics Officer. This had become necessary in light of the realisation that this was a crucial time in the revamp of BCCI and it was important that the Indian board "engaged with former players since the cricket reforms process requires cricketing activities to be managed only by cricket committees, exclusively comprising of former players."

The CoA suggested that former international players, who are not in long-term contract with the BCCI or in positions of governance in the BCCI or its member associations, be exempt from 38 (4)'s restrictions. So those contracted by BCCI for less than two years, may now be allowed to occupy more than one post so long as fulfilling this role or conducting that duty isn't compromised or prejudiced by donning of multiple hats.

According to the status report, the CoA felt that though vacancies needed to be filled, there were only few available individuals with the required superior cricketing skillset and expertise in the game. "Therefore restriction of their involvement to merely one post will adversely impact the utilization of the best cricketing expertise available for filling up cricketing positions and the overall improvement of the game," the report stated.

The CoA now wants to involve individuals in multiple capacities where none of the roles are hit by conflict, so it won't limit employment of former players, who can work with the BCCI on part-time basis. Several cricketers and their legal representatives had stressed that the conflict rules were imposing undue restriction on their right to earn a livelihood in the Indian cricketing ecosystem.

The report further read, "Rules pertaining to conflict of interest are too rigid and prohibit holding of two unrelated or remotely-related posts as listed by 38(4). It prohibits even former players and current players, who do not

## ...Recommends independent committee to pick Ombudsman

**DEVENDRA PANDEY**  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 15

AIMING TO ensure effectiveness and impartiality of the office of ombudsman and ethics officer, the Committee of Administrators has made a recommendation to the Supreme Court that the BCCI should constitute an independent committee that will pick candidates for the two watchdog posts. In its final status report, the CoA suggested that the committee should have a former Chief Justice of India and two international cricketers, one male and one female, nominated by the Indian Cricketers' Association.

This committee will recommend names for the posts of ombudsman and ethics officer at the BCCI's AGM on October 23. The same process should be undertaken for the state units. Under the current structure, as per the CoA, the ombudsman and ethics officer are selected by the BCCI and state associations itself. This has raised apprehensions that com-

**The CoA comprising Vinod Rai, Diana Edulji and Vinod Thodge were compelled to reconsider 38 (4) after a host of top retired Indian cricketers had to undergo legal scrutiny with BCCI's Ethics officer DK Jain.**

have long term contracts with the BCCI to hold other positions not only in the BCCI but within the entire Indian cricket ecosystem. The current players, not on an annual contract with the BCCI, and participating in limited number of cricket tournaments for limited part of the year are being unduly restricted from being gainfully employed even outside the BCCI during off season."

The CoA comprising Vinod Rai, Diana Edulji and Vinod Thodge were compelled to reconsider 38 (4) after a host of top retired Indian cricketers had to undergo legal scrutiny with BCCI's Ethics officer DK Jain.

Tendulkar had to recuse himself from CAC (Cricket Advisory Committee). Later, Jain ordered Laxman and Ganguly to choose between their IPL teams and their respective positions in state associations and BCCI. Kapil Dev resigned from his post of ad-hoc CAC chief whereas Dravid's hearing is still under process.

"The Committee of Administrators has come across various instances where the rules pertaining to conflict of interest have been applied to positions and scenarios which in its view did not warrant such application. Possibly, this is result of straightjacketed applications of the rules on the basis of certain illustrations given in the conflict rules which seem to cover within its ambit a wide range of scenarios and individual irrespective of their level of proximity or association within the BCCI administration," the status report read.

The CoA had held meetings with a number of past and current cricketers who were adamant that the BCCI needed to relax few clauses. Cricketers had argued how coaching two teams (franchise, state or national) could fall under conflict, or how playing cricket and commenting in IPL could possibly be seen as conflicting when the Indian board wasn't even offering a full contract to each cricketer, falling under their umbrella. The players had felt that it was too harsh on them as all their life they had "only known cricket".

The BCCI will however demand full disclosure within 15 days of potential problem areas. These may be deemed as tractable or intractable, and will then be acted upon by the Ethics Officer. It is suggested that players past or present, who are handed full-time contract shall strictly come under conflict of interest rules. Whereas those who are engaged on annual basis, or two-three years contract should be allowed to hold multiple positions except in Apex Council and Governing Council.

plaints that come up for consideration, may not be dealt with in a manner that is fair, expedient and reasonable.

The CoA, during the course of implementing the Lodha Committee's reforms had found how vested interests in some state associations had managed to remove and replace the ombudsman when faced with orders not in their favour. "This was observed particularly in the case of Bihar Cricket Association, which was fraught with factionalism and in-fighting. Representation were received from the Association alleging that two Ombudsmen were removed by the Office-Bearer of the Association when faced with orders against them," the CoA status report reads.

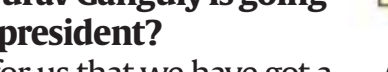
The CoA also wants to amend the part of the rule that requires the Apex Council to be kept in the loop while seeking redressal of grievances. It was suggested that those aggrieved could directly approach the ombudsman. This was deemed necessary after concerns of the Apex Council refusing to forward complaints.

**What's your take on conflict-of-interest?**

See, I'm doing an honorary job for the ICA. I have to earn my bread and butter. You can't expect me to do an honorary job and stop working as a commentator. I have to earn my livelihood. I have to run my house. So, conflict-of-interest is a bit bit of a funny kind of thing — I'm sure, as Sourav said, he will look into this and definitely good sense will prevail. I think the current conflict-of-interest clause carries things a little bit too far.

**Do you support the ICA's affiliation to the FICA?**

Why not? Once there's a cricketers' association, I'm sure we will have interaction with the cricketers' associations of the other countries. The FICA is recognised by the ICC and the BCCI comes under the ICC. I think the BCCI should be OK with that, now that they have decided to have a cricketers' association.





# The rude, bad and the ugly

Bulgarian football chief steps down after racist chants mar England game

REUTERS  
SOFIA, OCTOBER 15

BULGARIAN SOCCER chief Borislav Mihaylov resigned on Tuesday after fans taunted England's black players with Nazi salutes and monkey chants during a Euro 2020 qualifier in Sofia, prompting match officials to halt the game twice.

Prime Minister Boyko Borissov had called earlier for Mihaylov, a former goalkeeper and Bulgaria international, to go.

The fallout from what English FA chairman Greg Clarke described as "probably one of the most appalling nights I have seen in football" also triggered calls for urgent action from anti-racism campaigners and politicians.

A spokesman for British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said European governing body UEFA - the tournament organisers - needed to do more to tackle "vile" racism. UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said, however, that soccer could not solve the problem on its own, and politicians must play a greater role.

"The football family - everyone from administrators to players, coaches and fans - needs to work with governments and NGOs to wage war on the racists and to marginalise their abhorrent views to the fringes of society," the Slovenian said in a statement.

"Football associations themselves cannot solve this problem. Governments too need to do more in this area. Only by working together in the name of decency and honour will we make progress."

Monday's match was temporarily halted by the Croatian referee under a three-step UEFA protocol, but the stoppage did not go far enough for some anti-racism activists who felt the England



England's Sterling (left) tweeted that he felt sorry for Bulgaria "to be represented by such idiots in their stadium." Reuters

**Monday's match was temporarily halted by the Croatian referee under a three-step UEFA protocol, but the stoppage did not go far enough for some anti-racism activists who felt the England**

players should have walked off.

Anti-racism organisation Kick It Out said UEFA's existing sanctions were not fit for purpose and called for Bulgaria to be booted out.

"There can be no more pitiful fines or short stadium bans. If UEFA care at all about tackling discrimination - and if the Equal Game campaign means anything - then points deductions and tournament expulsion must follow," it said.

UEFA said it had opened disciplinary proceedings against Bulgaria on a number of charges including racist behaviour and the throwing of objects.

England were also charged for disruption of the national anthem and an insufficient number of travelling stewards.

Mihaylov had previously defended Bulgarian soccer from accusations of racism and criticised England for what he saw as a "fixation" on potential incidents that could raise tension.

His departure came just

hours after a Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) spokesman said Mihaylov would not resign because the state had no right to interfere in football.

A later statement said that Mihaylov's formal resignation would be presented to the Executive Committee on Friday.

"His position is a consequence of recent tensions; an environment that is detrimental to Bulgarian football and the Bulgarian Football Union," it said.

Reuters was not able to reach Mihaylov by telephone on Tuesday. More than 20 police officers swept into the (BFU) headquarters on Tuesday afternoon.

But the Bulgarian chief prosecutor's spokeswoman said that the operation was part of an investigation conducted by the Specialized Prosecutor's Office, and so not directly related to the racism row.

**Ron hits milestone**  
Cristiano Ronaldo has lost count of the number of records he has broken, the Portugal forward said after scoring the 700th goal of his career during a 2-1 defeat to Ukraine on Monday.

"The records come naturally, I don't look for them, the records look for me," he told reporters after scoring his 95th goal for his country. "It's not for anyone to reach this number and I thank everyone, team mates, colleagues, coaches and everyone who helped Cristiano become the player that he is."

However, Ronaldo said that the defeat to Ukraine in a Euro 2020 qualifier took some of the shine off the achievement.

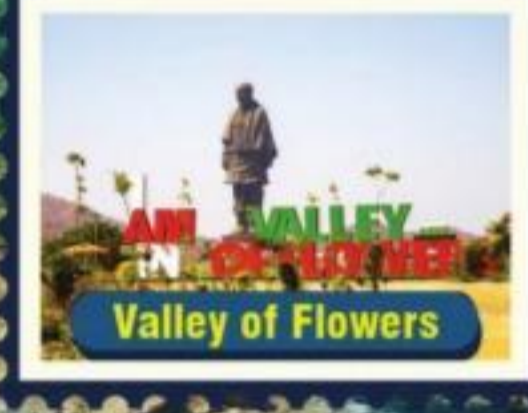
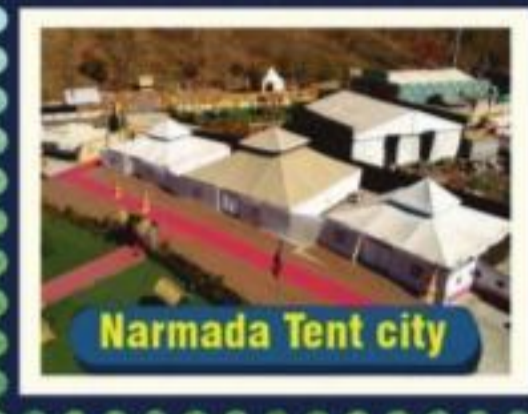
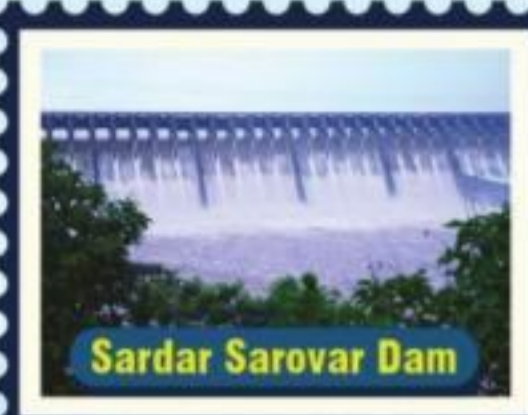
"It's a nice moment in my career but there was a bitter taste because we didn't win," he said. "We played well, but we didn't win. We did everything we could and we had plenty of chances."

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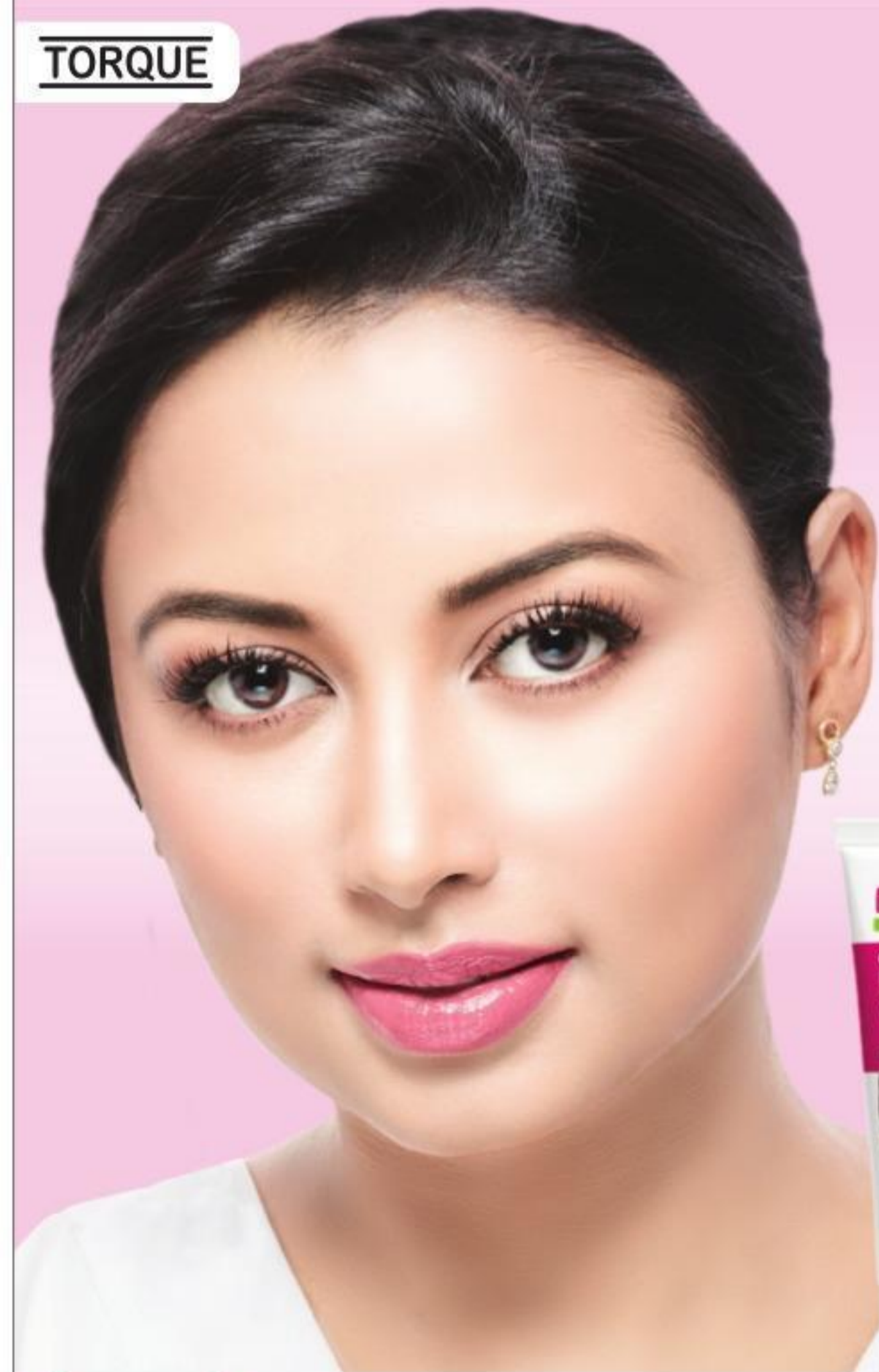
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