

NEWS D.A.D

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Crack Academy 404-A, World Trade Center Barakhamba, Near Connaught Place, New Delhi - 110001

LAUNCH OF Y - 12654 (MAHENDRAGIRI)

Source: www.pib.gov.in

Related News: Science & Technology
| Topic: Indigenization of technology
and developing new technology

Mahendragiri, the seventh Stealth Frigate of Project 17A being built at MDL, was launched today at the shipyard by Dr (Smt.) Sudesh Dhankhar, wife of Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar. As *Mahendragiri* descended into the waters of Arabian Sea, a wave of euphoria swept across the gathering. Dignitaries, Naval personnel, Shipbuilders, and spectators were united in their heartfelt applause, in admiration of the vessel and the team behind her creation. Hon'ble Vice President of India was the Chief Guest for the event. The Governor of Mumbai, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Chief of the Naval Staff, senior ministers from the State Government, senior dignitaries and senior officers from the Ministry of Defence and Indian Navy, were amongst the several dignitaries who attended the launch ceremony.

The Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited has played a pivotal role in contributing to our nation's maritime capabilities. MDL has consistently demonstrated expertise and technological prowess, in the construction of warships and delivering vessels ranging from patrol boats to stealth frigates. MDL's contributions have not only enhanced country's defence capabilities but has also played a significant role in bolstering indigenous manufacture and self-reliance. Following the launch, '*Mahendragiri*' will join its three sister ships at the Wet Basins of MDL, to progress remaining outfitting activities and

equipment trials, in the run up to their delivery and commissioning.

Project 17A Frigates are the follow-on class of the Project 17 (Shivalik Class) Frigates, with improved stealth features, advanced weapons & sensors and platform management systems. Seven Project 17A Frigates are under various stages of construction at MDL and GRSE. The design of Advanced Stealth Frigates also showcases the prowess of the Warship Design Bureau, in designing technologically advanced warships for the Indian Navy. With the launch, the Nation's indigenous expertise and engineering capabilities receives a major boost, reducing India's dependence on foreign suppliers, promoting self-reliance and fostering a robust defence industrial base. Over 75% of the order *AatmaNirbhars* of Project 17A, have been placed on indigenous firms including MSMEs, keeping in line with the Government's vision of '*Bharat*'. Economic development, employment generation, growth of MSMEs and ancillary industry in the country, are positive. May this warship serve as a powerful testament of our resolve and commitment to national security, and our vision of a prosperous and secure future.

During the event, the Hon'ble Vice President of India highlighted that the launch of *Mahendragiri* is significant milestone in India's maritime history and conveyed his profound satisfaction and heartfelt appreciation for the remarkable achievements of the Warship Design Bureau and other Naval Teams, for fulfilling the nation's aspiration of self-reliance in warship building. He also lauded MDL for its unwavering commitment and steadfast support to warship production and enhancement of country's defence capabilities. The shipyard effort, has significantly enabled the Indian Navy to successfully execute its ship induction plan and emerge as a formidable force in the Indian Ocean Region. The launch of the warship today carries the clear message that India will continue to invest in her maritime power. May this warship serve as a powerful



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testament of our resolve and commitment to national security, and our vision of a prosperous and secure future.

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HARYANA DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER SHRI DUSHYANT CHAUTALA PARTICIPATES IN MERA BILL MERA ADHIKAAR CAMPAIGN; ENCOURAGES CUSTOMERS TO DEMAND A GST INVOICE ON THEIR PURCHASES

Source: www.pib.gov.in

Related News: Indian Culture | Topic: Important Schemes & Programmes of the Government

In order to encourage the culture of generation of GST invoice/bills on payments, Deputy Chief Minister of Haryana, Shri Dushyant Chautala, participated in the *Mera Bill Mera Adhikaar* campaign in presence of Shri Sanjay Malhotra, Secretary, Department of Revenue (DoR), Government of India; and Shri Sanjay Aggarwal, Chairman, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) in Gurugram, today.



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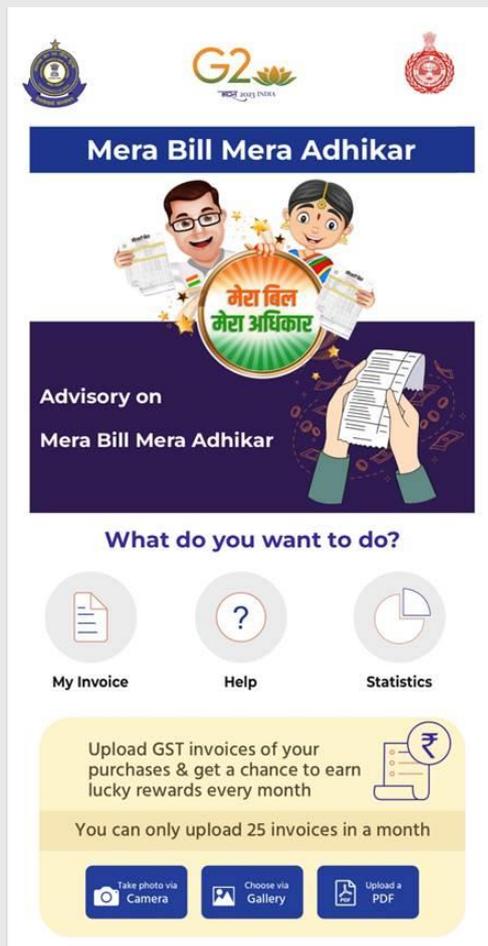
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Shri Chautala, along with senior officials of the DoR, visited a marketplace in Gurugram to encourage customers to demand a GST invoice on their purchases.



The *Mera Bill Mera Adhikaar* scheme became active from 12.00 AM on 1st September 2023 and has already gathered pace with more than 1.51 lakh downloads of the app with consumers actively participating in the pilot scheme.



On the occasion, Shri Chautala said, “I laud the GSTN for starting this new initiative from Gurugram in an effort towards making taxation more rewarding for the taxpayers. This scheme will encourage the citizens to ask for the invoice/bills after payment. This will also ensure that the taxpayer’s money reaches its desired destination in the Government.”

Informing about the details of the scheme, Shri Chautala said, “A corpus of Rs. 30 crore has been made available towards the fund under this initiative on an annual basis. Every Quarter of year, there will be 2 awards worth Rs. 1 crore each, which translates to 8 awards of Rs. 1 crore in a year, will be given to the winners through draw of lots. Every month, there will be 10 awards of Rs. 1 lakh each, and 800 awards of Rs. 10,000 each.”

Concluding his address, Shri Chautala appealed to all the businessmen to encourage customers to take their invoice/bill at the time of purchase and participate in the *Mera Bill Mera Adhikaar* scheme and make it a big success in Haryana.

In his address on the occasion, Shri Sanjay Malhotra, Secretary, DoR, said, “The main purpose of this scheme is to encourage customers to use their right to demand for an invoice/bill. This will ensure that they will participate in the *Mera Bill Mera Adhikaar* scheme and also induce them to use bills for other purposes related to the product.”



“We started this scheme on the pilot basis in 3 States and 2 Union Territories and going forward we’ll implement this scheme across India on the basis of the outcomes and learnings from this pilot scheme,” Shri Malhotra said.

Shri Sanjay Aggarwal, Chairman, CBIC, and Shri Shashank Priya, Member, CBIC, also made purchases in the marketplace and received their GST bills to participate in the *Mera Bill Mera Adhikaar* scheme.





scheme. Minimum value for invoices to be considered for a lucky draw has been kept at Rs. 200.

UNION HOME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF COOPERATION, SHRI AMIT SHAH, LAUNCHED THE AMRIT KALASH YATRA UNDER THE 'MERI MAATI-MERA DESH' CAMPAIGN IN NEW DELHI, TODAY

Source: www.pib.gov.in

Related News: Indian Culture | Topic: Important Schemes & Programmes of the Government

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, launched the Amrit Kalash Yatra under the 'Meri Mati-Mera Desh' campaign in New Delhi, today. Many dignitaries including the Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, Union Minister of Law and Justice Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, Minister of State for External Affairs, Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi and Secretary, Ministry of Culture were present on the occasion.

Mera Bill Mera Adhikaar Scheme shows the commitment of the Government of India to empower the consumer as it is designed to encourage consumers to demand bills for their purchases from vendors, thereby protecting their rights and promoting transparency in commercial transactions. This Scheme is built on a foundation of incentives and awareness campaigns, with a multi-pronged approach towards transforming consumer behaviour and fostering accountability among sellers. By facilitating consumers in obtaining and recording their bills, the government is actively involving citizens in combating tax evasion and promoting honest business practices.

On the occasion, Smt. Renu K. Jagdev, DG, Directorate General of Taxpayer Services (DGTS); Shri Upender Gupta, Chief Commissioner, CGST, Panchkula Zone; Shri D. S. Kalyan, Principal Secretary, Excise & Taxation Haryana, and other senior officials of Ministry of Finance, Government of India, and Government of Haryana were present.

All B2C invoices issued by GST registered suppliers (registered in the States of Assam, Gujarat & Haryana and UTs of Puducherry, Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu) to consumers will be eligible for the



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In his address, Shri Amit Shah said that today's event is somewhat like an evening, as it is happening at a time when India has completed 75 years of independence. He said that upcoming Amritkal and "Sankalp Se Siddhi" will put India at the forefront in every field globally by August 15, 2047. Shri Shah said that India, as envisioned by our freedom fighter, will be created in the next 25 years. He added that over the past 75 years, India has got many achievements, but they are not sufficient. Shri Shah said that after a long period of subjugation and the sacrifices of millions, we gained independence, and in the last 10 years under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, every Indian has been given the opportunity to come together and help create a greater India.



Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation said that the Meri Mati-Mera Desh programme expresses its meaning through its name itself. He said that now we are living in independent India, and for this, millions have made sacrifices. He added that from 1857 to 1947, for 90 years, a long struggle for freedom was fought, and countless known and

unknown freedom fighters sacrificed their life to the cause. He said that only a person like Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, who is full of patriotism in his heart, could have imagined initiating this journey of "Sankalp se Siddhi", by taking a pledge with 'Mitti' in his hand and paying homage to those who have made the sacrifices. Shri Shah said that the idea behind this programme is that every individual, family, citizen, and child should connect emotionally with the idea of creation of great India. He said that from 1-30th September, every household, ward, and village will collect the 'Mitti' or grains in a pot, following it up from 1-13th October at the block and later from 22-27th October at state level, and finally, from 28-30th October these 7,500 pots will reach New Delhi, the capital of the country. Shri Shah said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will put soil from these Amrit Kalash in the Amrit Vatika created at Delhi honour of our great veers, which will keep on reminding every citizen that we must make India great during the period of Amritkal.



Shri Amit Shah said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has integrated several programmes into this initiative, and has providing every Indian with an opportunity to become part of the initiative. He said that a new series has been made by 5 programmes aimed at re-dedicating oneself to the country. Under these programmes inscription have been installed in every village of the country, crores of citizens of the country have taken the pledge of 'Panch Pran' which will pave the way to make India great, 75 trees have been planted in the celebration of Amrit Mahotsav under the Vasudha Vandan programme and honouring the heroes and hoisting the national flag has been done.





Union Home Minister said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, organisation of over 2 lakh programmes during the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav have once again awakened the spirit of patriotism in the entire nation and these programmes will conclude with Meri Mati-Mera Desh programme. He said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had called upon all the countrymen from the ramparts of the Red Fort to take 'Panch Pran' – the goal of a developed India, to remove the mentality of slavery, to be proud of our traditions, to dedicate whole life for unity and integrity, and, to awaken a sense of duty in the mind of every citizen. Shri Shah said that these 'Panch Pran' are the highway to building a great India. He said that 23 crore houses, offices and buildings across the country were beautified with the Tricolour after Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's call for 'Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan'. Shri Shah said that the whole country joined the Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan by respecting the call of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the result of this patriotic feeling was that recently our Chandrayaan reached the Shivshakti point on the Moon, which is a very proud moment for all the countrymen. He said that the feeling of pride in the mind of every person of the country has arisen with the tricolor campaign in every house.

Shri Amit Shah said that connecting every person with the future of the country, connecting his feelings with the progress of the country and connecting the efforts of every person with the progress and development of the country is the test of leadership and its responsibility. He said that the whole country is fortunate that after a long time, we have got such a leader like Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, who is paving the way to make the country first in the world during Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. Shri Shah said that today our economy has moved from 11th to 5th position in the world and soon we will become the 3rd largest economy. He said that the self-confidence that has been awakened in the mind of every citizen of India has happened through such programmes. Shri Shah said that the confidence instilled in the minds of every Indian citizen through such programmes serves as inspiration for our courageous soldiers to carry out surgical strikes, empowers our scientists to develop the COVID-19 vaccine, and provides the courage for ISRO scientists to reach the Moon and the orbit of Sun.



UNION MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY & DAIRYING, SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA LEADS THE SECOND DAY OF SAGAR PARIKRAMA

Source: www.pib.gov.in

Related News: Indian Economy |
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incl. White, Blue & Pink Revolutions

Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Shri Parshottam Rupala led the second day of Sagar Parikrama along with Minister of State Dr. L. Murugan in the presence of Joint Secretary, Smt. Neetu Kumari Prasad and Chief Executive, National Fisheries Development Board, Dr. L.N Murthy. Sagar Parikrama Yatra reached today at Tharuvaikulam of Tamil Nadu .



Shri Parshottam Rupala along with other dignitaries visited the coastal regions of Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi Districts of Tamil Nadu. The delegation also visited Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi district and

interacted with beneficiaries such as fishermen, fish farmers. In subsequent interactions at the coastal village, fishermen urged the Ministers on various aspects such as establishing the Harbour at Uvari Village. Fishermen suggested that the department to be renamed with fishermen welfare department. Various scheme beneficiaries, fishermen, fisherwomen, fish farmers and boat owners shared their on-ground experiences with the delegation.

Union minister Shri Parshottam Rupala emphasized on Sea weed cultivation. Shri Rupala said that Sagar Parikrama is being undertaken to understand issues and challenges of fisherman, to directly connect with fishermen and fishing community, to see condition of infrastructure for overall improvement of the Fisheries sector, it will give opportunity to fishermen at their door step. He thanked everyone for providing their valuable time. He has also shared his opinion that carrying out the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojna (PMMSY) scheme activities shall have a significant impact on the fisheries sector in India which aims to enhance the production, strengthen coastal ecosystem and productivity of fish through the adoption of modern and scientific methods of fishing. This will not only boost the income of fishermen and fish farmers but also increase the availability of fish in the market, which will have a positive impact on food security and nutrition. Shri Rupala felicitated with KCC at Uvari Fishing Village to beneficiaries.



MoS, Dr. L. Murugan addressed regarding the schemes such as PMMSY and other multidimensional activities with major focus on increasing fisheries production and productivity for both inland & marine and its associated activities,



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including infra development, marketing, exports, and institutional arrangements. He highlighted on the announcement made by Government in 2019 about setting up of separate Department of fisheries which was immediately approved by the Prime Minister. He requested volunteers to help in creating awareness of the schemes so that the beneficiaries can take benefit of the same.



The program continued at Thoothukudi Fishing Harbour with a warm welcome of the delegation and other dignitaries by fishermen and fisher women followed by a prayer.

Shri Parshottam Rupala recognizes the critical role of fish farmers in meeting the growing demand and the invaluable contributions of fishermen and fish farmers who tirelessly work to provide us with a vital source of food and sustenance. He emphasized on sustainable fishing practices that not only increase productivity but also minimize environmental impacts.

Shri Rupala said that due to high demand of fishermen from all over the country to support them in improving their livelihood, Prime Minister established separate department of fisheries. He said that from 1950 to 2014, the investment in fisheries sector was of around Rs 3,681 Cr, since 2014 government has introduced the schemes such as PMMSY, FIDF and others with budget of about Rs. 32,000 Cr. for the development of fisheries sector by understanding the ground realities. He emphasized on the following parameters such as KCC which has been introduced for fishermen & fish farmers, requirement of seaweed cultivation for sustainable opportunity in Tamil Nadu, up gradation of fishing harbours in Tamil Nadu. He appreciated that fish production in Tamil Nadu have been increased and our fishermen have been able to interact through Sagar Parikrama Yatra.



Shri Parshottam Rupala interacted with the President of Fishermen Boat Owner Association, Mr John Boscoa regarding deep-sea fishing vessel and the President of JEEVA Oli Boat Owner Fishing Community Association, Mr Jobai, regarding infrastructure development which will be crucial to gather information and insights about their experiences and challenges. He felicitated the beneficiaries like fishermen, fish farmers and other stakeholders for PMMSY related activities at Thoothukudi Fishing Harbour.

The interaction continued at Tharuvaikulam Fishing Harbour and Mookaiyur Fishing Harbour with coastal communities and fishermen to understand the on-ground scenario which will be an instrument in making informed decisions and supporting fishermen livelihoods. Around more than 2000 fishermen, various fisheries stakeholders, scholars and other officials attended the Sagar Parikrama Phase VII program.

Joint Secretary Smt. Neetu Kumari Prasad enlightened on Sagar Parikrama Phase VIII Yatra in Tamil Nadu. She discussed many prominent issues regarding economic upliftment through various schemes such as PMMSY. She also informed that the team has been taking stoke of all the issues during Sagar Parikrama Yatra such as upgradation of harbours, requirement of new jetty, fishing nets etc. Sagar Parikrama Phase VIII, which started on 30th Aug 2023 from Vizhinjam, covered Muthalapozy Fishing Harbour, Vizhinjam Fishing Harbour, CMFRI Centre as well as covered along the coast to Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu. The Sagar Parikrama Yatra encompass felicitation of beneficiaries, addressing the gathering and interactions with fishermen at various fishing harbours and villages, including Thengapattanam



Fishing Harbour, Thoothoor Fishing Village, Vallavilai Fishing Village, Kurumpanai Fishing Village, Vaniyakudi Fishing Village, and Colachel Fishing Harbour. Sagar Parikrama is a program reflecting the far-reaching policy strategy of the government leading to the direct interaction with fishers and fish farmers to understand the issues of coastal areas and problems related to fishermen.

MOST AVIAN FLU OUTBREAKS IN INDIA REPORTED FROM POST-MONSOON TO PRE-SUMMER SEASON: STUDY

Source: www.thehindu.com

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Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) viruses, H5N1 and H5N8, have been one of the leading causes of avian diseases worldwide, resulting in severe economic losses and posing potential zoonotic risk. |

Photo Credit: Reuters

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) viruses, H5N1 and H5N8, have been one of the leading causes of avian diseases worldwide, resulting in severe economic losses and posing potential zoonotic risk. The viruses are known to cause infections in humans with a history of close contact with infected poultry, resulting in mild-to-severe respiratory disease and even fatality. Now, a study has shed more light on outbreaks of HPAI in India.

According to the latest research paper “Spatio-temporal distribution and seasonality of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 and H5N8 outbreaks in India, 2006-2021”, published in the Indian Journal of Medical Research, a total of 284 H5N1 outbreaks were reported since 2006 with a

surge in 2021. The initial outbreaks of H5N1 were predominantly in poultry. Similarly, since 2016, 57 outbreaks of H5N8 were also reported, predominantly in wild birds.

It further noted that most of the outbreaks of HPAI were reported between post-monsoon and pre-summer season (i.e. between October and March), with their peak in January, during winter.

Apart from poultry, bird species such as owl, Indian peafowl, lesser adjutant, crows, and wild migratory birds such as demoiselle crane, northern pintail, and bar-headed goose tested positive for HPAI.

“Studies on the seasonality of HPAI outbreaks would help in the development of prevention and control strategies. Recent human infections of H5N1 and H9N2 viruses highlight the need to strengthen surveillance in wild, resident, migratory birds and in poultry,” noted the paper.

For the paper, data on the occurrence and locations of outbreaks in India and affected bird species were collated from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations database and grouped by month and year. The distribution and seasonality of HPAI H5N1 and H5N8 viruses were analysed.

As of December 2021, H5N1 virus outbreaks were documented on a large scale among poultry and wild birds in more than 77 countries. And as of March 2022, 863 human cases of avian influenza (AI) H5N1 were reported worldwide with an average case fatality ratio of 53%.

According to the paper a significant rise in HPAI outbreaks in domestic and wild birds had been reported in October 2021, signalling expanded virus circulation. The first human case of H5N1 virus infection in India was reported in June 2021, coinciding with the monsoon season in the country.

“The HPAI H5N1 viruses are constantly evolving globally through complex genetic changes, which have infected poultry, wild birds as well as humans,” noted the study.

As per the paper, the first HPAI H5N1 outbreak in India was reported in 2006 from Navapur, Maharashtra, followed by a series of outbreaks annually. Later, from 2007 to 2010, most of the outbreaks were reported from the eastern and northeastern States but predominantly from West Bengal. Odisha reported outbreaks from 2011 to 2020, with the highest in 2018. The H5N8 virus was first reported in India in November 2016, with



mortality in wild birds from five States, and Kerala reported most number of events (25). There were no reports of H5N8 from India in the years 2018 and 2019.

A sudden rise in the number of H5N8 outbreaks was reported from 2020 onwards, indicating a probable reintroduction of the virus.

THE MANY FACES OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

Source: www.thehindu.com

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A protest in New Delhi against violent attacks across the country targetting Muslims minority. File | Photo Credit: AP

A video clip of an incident that happened in Khubbapur village in Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, where [a Muslim boy was slapped by his classmates on the instruction of their teacher](#) is Islamophobic. In this case, the victim and the perpetrator belong to the Tyagi clan. Despite hailing from different religions they share a cultural bond. Their neighbourhood was not directly affected during the Muzaffarnagar riots in U.P. in 2013 and has an established history of social harmony between the Hindu Tyagis and Muslim Tyagis. This is why reconciliation could happen so swiftly. It also highlights the roots of the indigenous Indian Islam. Yet, Islamophobia has reared its ugly head and left the sacred trust between teacher and student broken. This is how much India has changed. Islamophobia is a global phenomenon. But the sources and issues from which it emanates vary from region to region. What is being witnessed in India is quite different from what is seen in the West. In India, Islamophobia, communalism and intolerance are some of the key concepts used to explain the troubled Hindu-Muslim relations. Of the three, the use of the notion of communalism has disproportionately dominated scholarly works particularly during the 20th century. In a Rawlsian sense, each is a

freestanding concept, but possesses overlapping attributes. It is only by unravelling these attributes that the threat that Islamophobia poses to India's secular social order can be understood. With its pejorative connotation, the concept of communalism is applied exclusively in a South Asian context; the concepts of Islamophobia and intolerance are universal in usage.

How does the Indian brand of Islamophobia vary from the western one? For instance, lynching in India is a violent expression of Islamophobia that occurs mainly due to the cow slaughter issue. Given the rising number of Muslim victims from cow vigilantism, it needs to be seen as Islamophobia by other means. But in Europe and the United States, cow slaughter is neither the source nor the issue of Islamophobia.

On the Masjid-related issue, there are interesting comparative insights that can be drawn. In 2009, a Swiss federal referendum to ban minarets on masjids was passed, and its Egerkingen Committee campaign posters displayed minarets as being reminiscent of missiles. In New York, controversy regarding "ground zero mosques" was driven by Islamophobic arguments. It was argued among other things that it would mean disrespecting the victims of 9/11, as if entire Islam is responsible for the violence committed by a handful of disoriented Muslims.

In India, there are major disputes such as the Babri Masjid issue or the ongoing Gyanvapi Masjid issue in Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. But these are more related to a power struggle that pertains to Muslim rulers and the consequences of their actions. Indian Muslims do face the impact of these disputes, but Islamophobia is not purely derived from architecture or structures, as is the case in Europe. It may change in the days ahead. There is Islamophobia reflected in the use of loudspeakers during Azaan. In India, a country where there is constant automobile honking and other forms of major noise pollution in many of its towns and cities, it is absurd to argue that the use of loudspeakers for Azaan for a few minutes causes intolerable noise pollution — and that it calls for a law.

There were controversies over this issue in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. More than 11,000 loudspeakers were removed from all religious places, both Hindu and Muslim, in 2022 in Uttar Pradesh. Likewise, the veil has been an Islamophobic issue in Europe. It is the hijab controversy in Karnataka.



There seems to be a growing list of common issues that drive Islamophobia in India and Europe.

But everything concerning Muslims cannot be viewed as Islamophobia either. Some issues concern Muslims but not Islam. For instance, the Hindu Right's argument against Urdu as a language of Muslims, which it is not. Muslims across the world speak a variety of languages based on a number of factors. In that sense, Urdu has a very limited relationship with the Muslim identity. It was the gross arrogance of the erstwhile West Pakistani Muslim elite bullying the Bengali Muslims of then East Pakistan to embrace Urdu that fuelled Bengali nationalism. Therefore, the Hindu Right's attempt to resist Urdu or see it as a language of Muslims could be explained more accurately as Muslimphobia than Islamophobia.

In the wake of the growth of Islamophobia in India, Hindutva politics and V.D. Savarkar's Essentials of Hindutva, published almost at the end of Khilafat movement, have played a major role. According to Savarkar, Indian Muslims cannot be completely loyal to India because Mecca and Madina are located outside India; it is Savarkar's most troubling Islamophobic reasoning. But foot soldiers such as Monu Manesar or Babu Bajrangi might not have any idea what Savarkar's Hindutva says. Islamophobia in India existed long before Savarkar wrote his tract. Indeed, there were riots resulting from cow slaughter in the latter part of the 19th century just as Hindi received equal status with Urdu in 1900 because of the debate between Hindu and Muslim elites. During the great Kanpur Riot in 1931, 18 mosques were razed.

What is the difference then between present-day Islamophobia inspired by Hindutva and during colonial India? Or even before? The difference is that Savarkar's Hindutva has inspired a new political class in India that wishes to weaponise Islamophobia and make it a part of a state policy. The state responses on Azaan or a ban on cow slaughter are a result of this. This is what poses a mortal threat to the secular fabric of the Indian state and its society at large.

Shaikh Mujibur Rehman teaches at Jamia Millia Islamia Central University, New Delhi. He is the author of forthcoming, Shikwa-e-Hind: The Political Future of Indian Muslims

CHINA'S ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN, ITS RIPPLE EFFECT

Source: www.thehindu.com

Related News: International Relations
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'China continues to add a significant number of the working age population as each new batch graduates. That is why unemployment numbers are soaring' | Photo Credit: AFP

The news about China's economic slowdown has caused mixed reactions. China, for long, had been worried about fears of a slowdown and a middle-income trap. Now, there are [fears of deflation](#) which may bring bad news for China and the rest of the world. Thus, understanding the causes and the magnitude of China's present-day economic challenges is essential.

Speaking at the National People's Congress (NPS) in 2007, then Premier Wen Jiabao had cautioned that "the biggest problem with China's economy is that the growth is unstable, unbalanced, uncoordinated, and unsustainable". It was expected that some form of course correction would be undertaken in the subsequent period. However, as the world experienced the global financial meltdown in 2008, China chose the strategy of investing in infrastructure that included railways, highways and the energy and construction sectors. It had swept the core problems of a lack of consumption, regional inequality, and lack of social security under the carpet in order to sustain double-digit growth rate. Why it did was simple — the domestic legitimacy of the leadership in China has depended on creating prosperity and making it available to a greater number of citizens, year on year. However, by the time Xi Jinping came to power, the steroids had run their course and the wean-off period was worse off. Chinese financial markets suffered from lack of regulatory oversight since loans to business were distributed on the basis of proximity, or the famous Chinese term Guanxi — the nodal networks based on factions, friendships and relationships.

When Mr. Xi says that China is the world's second largest economy, he is right. And he is also right when



he says that China is the world's largest developing country. During the 19th party congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2017, Mr. Xi announced that from here on, the party would focus on quality-of-life issues as part of its growth strategy. Within this announcement there was a recognition that people's expectations of the state had changed; but there was also an acceptance that the era of growth driven by exports, infrastructure spending and big-ticket investments was over. China termed this an era of "new normal" where the country had to overcome the two-and-half-decade-long habit of enjoying more than 10% growth. The higher growth had translated into more jobs and greater disposable income. Now, with lower than usual rates, new jobs were hard to come by. China continues to add a significant number of the working age population as each new batch graduates. That is why unemployment numbers are soaring. It is also why the government is advising students to delay their graduation and to do extra courses.

During the first term of Mr. Xi (2012-17), exports growth rates had cooled dramatically, a hint that China's labour costs were rising due to wage increase and social security investments. This was the consequence of the Foxconn suicides issue, which was seen as a political embarrassment and a social challenge. On the other hand, bad investments and easy credit availability have meant that sectors such as housing, energy, and construction have got into the bad habit of overproducing far beyond the immediate projected demand. As a consequence, these sectors have been stuck with inventory without any demand. This has happened despite the early success of the supply side reforms which shut down many underperforming companies and regulated the commodities markets.

No other country has as much a political economy as China does. China's ability to overcome its economic challenges today also has to be a political choice. In December 2020, Mr. Xi used the term "Disorderly expansion of capital"; while this term was not elaborated upon much either by Mr. Xi or by others, its timing of having appeared within a few weeks of the withdrawal of the Ant Group IPO was seen to be significant. Most scholars of China have doubted the Chinese economy's ability to be truly innovative while the party wants to control what the capitalists can and cannot do. Having made the promise of

allowing the markets play a greater role in the allocation of resources during the third plenum of the 18th Central Committee in 2013, Mr. Xi has rolled back many of the promises made then. It was hoped then that political interventions in loans and investment decisions would reduce; the government did intervene when the stock markets tumbled in 2015, forcing banks to acquire stakes in slow moving stocks. It has tightened the convertibility of the RMB. The Chinese, who save more than 50% of their income did not like that their money was going to be locked in longer because of speculation by a few others, leading to a few protests. China has initiated several social security measures to counter this tendency of saving a huge proportion of income but progress has been really slow. Also, policies such as "Common Prosperity" (aimed at sharing the fruits of the progress better), and "Dual Circulation" (aimed at increasing domestic consumption and competitiveness of the domestic markets and cutting down inter-provincial red tape) have not succeeded to the level the leadership would have liked.

There is a perception that China's serious slowdown began in 2015 but was held in control by government spending on projects such as urbanisation. The trade war between the United States and China and policies such as de-risking and China plus one (that seeks alternate production destinations for investments) accelerated the process. Finally, China's zero-COVID policy may be considered as the last straw as far as the economy is concerned. Recent data from the second quarter of the year suggest that people and companies have become even more cash conscious and are holding onto their cash. It has been hard to come out of the COVID-19 experience — food supplies ran out even in the urban areas in some parts of the country. For investors, there is a fear of an even bigger slump, thus making them wait for new bottom out levels.

The state-owned enterprises or the SoEs, have been another problem for the political leadership. Their assured contracts and political networks mean that they get away by political bargain and without changing their methods of operation. They also provide social security to several hundred thousand working and retired workers which means that touching them is a politically sensitive issue.

The Evergrande crisis (2020–2023) exposed China's housing bubble. It was also a symptom of



misregulation and path-dependency which may be considered as symptomatic of the ills that affect the Chinese economy in general. The fact that path-dependency may cause a crash landing has been feared for nearly a decade, and the leadership is also aware of it. The middle income trap has been another long-term concern as well as China's desire to climb up the value chain — that is, not just making things in China but also designing them — may be a distant dream. It may also affect Mr. Xi's national targets for 2035 and 2049.

Even then, China's economy growing at an estimated rate of 5% would mean adding more value when compared to India's projected growth rate of 6.1% for 2023 given the size difference. For India, it may mean a cooling off of the prices of crude oil and other commodities such as cement and steel for which China has been a gigantic market. Whether economic instability would change China's perception of its rise and its risk appetite on the border is another important issue to watch.

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JIOGAMES, OMEN, AND INTEL TEAM UP FOR 'DIGITAL LEVEL UP' ESPORTS EVENT

Source: www.thehindu.com

Related News: Science & Technology
| Topic: Science and Technology-developments and their applications and effects in everyday life

JioGames has joined forces with OMEN and Intel to introduce its 'Digital Level Up.' Esports event | Photo Credit: Special arrangement.

JioGames has joined forces with OMEN and Intel to introduce its Esports event 'Digital Level Up.' The event will start on September 1, exclusively on the JioGames app Esports platform.

One of the key objectives of 'Digital Level Up' is to encourage greater participation among gamers, regardless of their experience.

The event will feature two popular gaming titles: Battlegrounds Mobile India (BGMI) and Valorant. Both seasoned professionals and starters will be able to participate in the tournament and possibly earn a winning share from the prize pool of ₹20 lakhs.

Additionally, 'Digital Level Up' aims to foster a stronger sense of community collaboration and deliver top-notch gaming content through live streams and showcases.

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Valorant and BGMI registrations will be open from September 1 to September 10. The tournament dates include BGMI on September 13, Valorant (Open Tournament) on September 17, and Valorant (College only) from September 5 to October 7.

The grand finale for BGMI is set for October 2. For Valorant (College and Open Tournament), it is scheduled on October 8. Additional events, such as the Streamer Showdown and Cosplay Competition, are slated for the end of October.

To participate, users need to visit the JioGames app and register as per the game/games of their choosing. The event is open to participants above the age of 13 and there are registration or participation fees involved.

Brian Bade, Chief Executive of Reliance Digital, expressed the brand's dedication to nurturing the thriving gaming community, stating, "The surge of interest among Indian youth in gaming is unprecedented. We aim to encourage gaming at all levels, and 'Digital Level Up' is our contribution to this vibrant community. Our stores house the widest range of gaming laptops, catering to both gamers and content creators, along with an array of gaming gear for enthusiasts who demand nothing but the latest and greatest."



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SEVEN YEARS ON, MISSION TO CLEAN THE GANGA REMAINS A WORK IN PROGRESS

Source: www.thehindu.com

Related News: Environment | Topic:
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Soil & E-waste

The government unveiled its ambitious ₹20,000 crore National Mission for Clean Ganga | representative images | Photo Credit: DEEPAK K.R.

In the seven years since the government unveiled its ambitious ₹20,000 crore National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), it has installed treatment plants capable of treating just 20% of the sewage estimated to be generated in the five major States that lie along the river. This is expected to increase to about 33% by 2024; and according to the latest projections by senior officials in the NMCG, treatment plants will be capable of treating 60% of sewage by December 2026.

These calculations are premised on sewage to the tune of 11,765 million litres per day (MLD) being generated in the five States – Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal – through which the river courses. This figure derives from a report submitted to the National Green Tribunal earlier this year. However, the NMCG plans on setting up sewage treatment plants (STPs) capable of treating about 7,000 MLD of sewage by 2026; States are expected to set up the remaining capacity, both on their own, and drawing on separate initiatives by other arms of the Union government.

“The main objective of the Namami Ganga mission is to ensure that no untreated sewage flows into the river. The estimate of 11,765 MLD is dynamic and also includes sewage that is generated within the State, but which doesn’t necessarily flow into the river. It also isn’t exact and is a projection based on expected population trends,” NMCG director general G. Asok Kumar told *The Hindu*. “Other States are

also working on their own in setting up plants and we work with them. By our projections, if we are able to set up capacity worth 7,000 MLD, it should suffice, for now, to ensure no untreated sewage flows in the main stem of the river.”

Projects to set up STPs and sewerage networks are at the heart of the Namami Ganga mission, and account for about 80% of the overall project outlay. As of July 2023, STPs capable of treating 2,665 MLD have actually been commissioned, and are now functional. From 2014, when the mission was first announced, to 2021, only 811 MLD of capacity was completed. In the last financial year 2022-23, however, 1,455 MLD capacity was completed.

Several plants took time to be commissioned as there were problems with land acquisition. In many instances, the Detailed Project Reports — which prescribe all the steps necessary to execute a project, and the roles of agencies, Centre, State and the private contractors — needed revision, said Mr. Kumar. “States were under the impression that building treatment plants was entirely the Centre’s responsibility. We had to work to correct that and now most of the sanctioned projects are progressing well,” he added.

So far the maximum number of plants have been set up — or upgraded in the case of older plants — in Uttarakhand (36), followed by Uttar Pradesh (35), and West Bengal (11). Though NMCG is a ₹20,000 crore mission, the government has so far given in-principle approval for projects worth ₹37,396 crore, of which only ₹14,745 crore has been released to States for infrastructure work, as of June 2023.

The river’s water quality is now within “prescribed limits of notified primary bathing water quality,” an NMCG fact-sheet, viewed by *The Hindu*, notes.

Mr. Kumar said that a conspicuous sign of the improvement in water quality along the Ganga was a rise in the dolphin population — both adult and juvenile — from 2,000 to about 4,000. “We are also seeing the presence of dolphins in new stretches of the river as well as in tributaries [of the Ganga]. Fishermen are also reporting the increased presence of Indian carp [a fish species] that only thrives in clean water. So we have nature’s verdict on river improvement,” he added.

The typical parameters used by the Central Pollution Control Board — such as the levels of dissolved oxygen, biochemical oxygen demand, and faecal



coliform — vary widely along various stretches of the river. The NMCG is now working to develop a water quality index, on the lines of the air quality index, to be able to better communicate about river-water quality, he added.

AN UNEVEN REBOUND: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON THE ECONOMY

Source: www.thehindu.com

Related News: Indian Economy | Topic: Issues relating to Growth & Development - Inflation & Monetary Policy

India's economy, as measured by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as well as the Gross Value Added (GVA), [grew 7.8% in the first quarter \(Q1\)](#) of the year. This is the highest GDP uptick in four quarters, but slightly underwhelming relative to the [8% growth estimated by the Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#). The central bank's 6.5% growth projection for 2023-24 factors in a decline in the uptick rate in each of the subsequent quarters of this year, culminating at 5.7% in the final quarter. One will have to wait till October's meeting of the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to assess how this math is reworked, although the Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran believes these GDP numbers do not signal any discomfort in hitting the 6.5% mark for the full year. India remains the fastest growing major economy by a comfortable margin, with China recording a 6.3% rise in the same quarter and facing a fresh slowdown. But the months ahead could prove to be more challenging with global headwinds that have hit goods exports and manufacturing already, combining with domestic pressures from the renewed spurt in inflation and the likelihood of a weak monsoon playing truant with crop yields and farm incomes.

Farm sector GVA maintained its growth pace to rise 3.5% in Q1, but may taper off thanks to the

monsoon's tepid progress and the fear that low reservoir levels may also hurt the rabi crop. The headline growth rates for the services sectors were robust. Trade, hotels and transport rose 9.2%, but in absolute terms, the employment-intensive segment remained 1.9% below pre-COVID-19 levels, indicating the recovery is still incomplete. While the government has been asserting that the private investment cycle has finally taken off, the gross fixed capital formation trends indicate it is still government capital spending that is doing the heavy lifting. Manufacturing GVA grew for the second successive quarter after six months of contraction, but only accelerated slightly from 4.5% to 4.7%, so a broader rebound in consumption demand is likely still awaited. Private consumption spending rose 6% but economists believe this is still dominated by demand from high income earners. Depending on how long the current streak of spiked inflation, especially in food items, persists, demand from lower income segments would be dented afresh. A feeble recovery in rural demand could also come undone if farm incomes take a hit. Interventions to counter inflation, such as export curbs on rice and onions, will hurt growth and the external trade balance, while relief measures, such as the ₹200 cut in LPG cylinder prices, that may proliferate ahead of the general election, also pose risks to the fiscal math and growth.

ALTERING STATUS QUO: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON JAMMU AND KASHMIR AND STATEHOOD

Source: www.thehindu.com

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The Centre's stand that [it is unable to commit itself to a timeline for restoration of Statehood for Jammu and Kashmir \(J&K\)](#) is quite disappointing. Four years after the [State's status was downgraded to that of a Union Territory](#), all that the Union government can say about it now is that the status as a Union Territory is temporary and that it is taking steps towards making J&K a complete State. When queried by the Supreme Court Bench, which is hearing the [challenge to the abrogation of J&K's special status under Article 370](#) of the Constitution, about a timeline for the return of Statehood, the Solicitor-General said he was unable to give an exact time period. It is true that the State had faced disturbances for decades, but whether it can still be cited as the reason for the delay in restoration of statehood is a relevant question to raise. Alongside the President's declaration of Article 370 as inoperative and the application of the whole of the Constitution to J&K, the State was reorganised into two Union Territories — Jammu and Kashmir, with a Legislative Assembly, and Ladakh, without an Assembly. The Centre favours holding of panchayat and municipal elections as well as polls to the Assembly. The Election Commission of India and the State's Election Commission will have to take a call soon, as even the work of updating the electoral rolls is said to be nearing completion.

Given the government's claim that the situation is quite normal and that terrorism, infiltration and incidents of stone-throwing have all substantially come down, it is difficult to account for any further delay in the holding of elections. However, the picture of normality portrayed by the government should not, and is unlikely to, influence the adjudication of the constitutional issues arising from the manner in which the abrogation of special status was achieved. As the Chief Justice of India, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, observed during the proceedings, the development work the government says it has undertaken after August 2019 is not relevant to the constitutional challenge. Any positive change brought about by the administration in the ground situation should be a pointer to the need for early elections and the restoration of popular government as well as Statehood, and should not be used to demonstrate the correctness of the government's actions in 2019. To be fair, the hearing before a Constitution Bench, which has gone on for 14 days so

far, has been quite rigorous in its focus on the constitutional and historical issues that will ultimately determine the validity of the manner in which the State's status was altered and its territory reorganised.

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ADITYA-L1 MISSION TO MARK 25TH FLIGHT OF PSLV-XL VARIANT

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ISRO's PSLV-C57 carrying Aditya-L1 spacecraft at the launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on September 1, 2023. | Photo Credit: PTI For [launching its Aditya-L1 mission](#) on September 2, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will

be using a variant of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) which also launched India's first missions to the moon and Mars.

With the PSLV-C57/Aditya-L1 mission, India's first solar mission, the PSLV-XL variant will mark its 25th flight.

The PSLV-XL is the 'full configuration' PSLV, fitted with six strap-on motors, the maximum for this expendable launch vehicle. The XL configuration was first used for launching India's first lunar probe, the Chandrayaan-1, in October 2008. It has since been used for several high-profile missions, including the Mars Orbiter Mission – Mangalyaan – launched in November 2013.

PSLV flew in the XL configuration last in November 2022, placing the EOS-06 satellite, the main payload, and eight nano-satellites in orbit around the earth.

Often dubbed 'ISRO's trusted workhorse,' the four-stage PSLV has variants that feature six (the XL variant), four (QL) and two (DL) rocket strap-on motors to augment the thrust provided by its first stage. The strap-ons are powered by the solid rocket propellant Hydroxyl-terminated polybutadiene (HTPB).

Then there is also the CA (core alone) version where no strap-on motors are used. The previous two PSLV missions, the PSLV-C55 and PSLV-C56 which placed the TeLEOS-2 and DS-SAR satellites in orbit respectively in April and July this year, had used the CA variant.

The PSLV-C57/Aditya-L1 mission is scheduled to lift off from Sriharikota at 11.50 a.m. on Saturday. The Aditya-L1 spacecraft, which had seven scientific payloads to study the sun, has a mass of 1,480.7 kg and is India's first space-based observatory-class solar mission. After a four-month journey covering 1.5 million km, it will be positioned in a halo orbit at the Lagrangian point L1.

