

## Govt's failure to take up works to check floods gives Warangal citizens sleepless nights

Warangal: Despite rain creating havoc in Warangal city during monsoon last year, the State government has so far not taken any concrete measures to deal with floods in the city, especially in the low-lying areas. With the Monsoon fast approaching and the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting above-normal rainfall in the country during the monsoon season, fear of inundation is giving sleepless nights to residents of Warangal city as the government has not completed the works related to deal with heavy rains in the city so far. During the tenure of the BRS government, Rs. 158.50 crore was sanctioned to take up works on the Bondivagu Nala, which was causing floods during the monsoon season in Warangal city and surrounding areas. Although the irrigation department has completed the tendering process and the contractor was also selected, six months have passed but so far works have not started causing worry among the people of the city.

According to sources, the nala expansion, the construction of walls on both sides, the installation of head regulatory at Bhadrakali tank, the installation of downstream pwalng shutters at Pothananagar and Kapuvada Mattadi have been designed. The Irrigation Department Engineer-in-Chief(ENC) has also inspected the

sites several times, but the work never took off. Greater Warangal officials too have written to the Irrigation Department to start work on the expansion of Bondivagu Nala, setting up of downstream ploughing shutters at Pothananagar and Kapuvada Mattadi, but so far there is no response from the department, the sources added.

Sources say, the study conducted by the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC) engineers have confirmed that the Warangal area inundated mainly due to Bondivagu Nala last year. According to GWMC officials, the Bondivagu Nala was overflowing due to the flood water of Thimmapur, Bestam Cheruvu, Maddelakunta, Ammavaripeta Damera Cheruvu, Ursu Cheruvu, Bhattupalli and New Shayampet Koti tanks. Officials estimate that 15,000-18,000 cusecs of water was discharged in July last year, which caused floods in the city. Last July traffic on Hunter Road was stopped for four days due to floods and residential houses in NTR Nagar, Santoshimata Colony, Brindavan Colony, Sai Nagar, Gayatri Colony and Bhadrakali Nagar colonies were under flood water for five to six days. Officials claimed that Nala encroachments and illegal constructions within the Full Tank Level (FTL) limits of several tanks and lakes have resulted in inundation, exacerbating the



impact of heavy rains in Warangal and Hanamkonda areas. Over 80 residential colonies were submerged due to the floods under the GWMC limits during July floods last year. In fact, the floods caught the attention of the nation. An Inter-ministerial Central team comprising seven members, led by NDMA Joint Secretary Kunal Satyarthi, visited Hanamkonda and Warangal districts to assess the extent of

damage caused by the heavy floods last July. Since the government failed to take up works related to checking floods on various water bodies and nalas, the people of the city are looking worried as they would have to face a similar situation like last July. It seems that there is zero accountability and citizens continue to suffer because of the lackadaisical approach of the concerned authorities.

## Restaurants to soon get hygiene ratings



Hyderabad: In view of recent food inspections that highlighted poor hygiene, cleanliness and expired food products in the kitchens of the restaurants in the city and elsewhere in the State, the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) Hyderabad chapter decided to immediately develop a hygiene rating system for restaurants. For this, a special food safety task force has been constituted by the NRAI

Hyderabad chapter to come up with the rating system besides ensuring an effective implementation of FSSAI standards in the restaurants. As per the action plan, the task force will ensure a hygiene audit programme for restaurants with third-party auditors, who can keep tabs on the quality. The 15-member taskforce chaired by NRAI Hyderabad chapter head Sampath Tummala will organize multiple FSSAI

awareness workshops/trainings to educate all restaurant members with the first such session held on Thursday. In association with the FSSAI and GHMC, the taskforce is also planning to organize a food safety week in the next few weeks and medical camps to provide food handlers certificates to restaurant staff. "As a responsible body, we have constituted this special taskforce that will take all necessary measures of utmost priority to enhance awareness and knowledge about all required protocols of food safety amongst all F&B Operators," Sampath Tummala

said. NRAI food safety taskforce members who met Telangana State Food Safety Commissioner RV Karnan on Thursday apprised him of the taskforce created by NRAI to work in collaboration with the FSSAI body and GHMC to raise food and hygiene standards in the city.

During the meeting, Karnan suggested the possibility of adding hygiene ratings and displaying them in restaurants for customer awareness. Both parties have agreed to host a large event in coming months to further enhance awareness of required protocols.

## BRS demands white paper on seed availability for Khariff

Hyderabad: Former Minister Jogu Ramanna on Thursday demanded that the government come out with a white paper on district wise availability of seeds for the ensuing kharif. Addressing a news conference along with Anil Jadhav, MLA and Johnson Naik, BRS leader at Telangana Bhavan, he said the farmers were made to stand up in serpentine queues waiting for their turn just to buy one or two packets of cotton seeds. He said the seed scarcity had become a common feature all over the state ever since the Congress Party came to power in December last. It is exposing the failure of not only the Minister for Agriculture but the government as a whole, he said.

# This century, heat waves are moving slower and lasting longer

Growing up in the 1990s in India meant having seen an ad for a glucose-based drink on television in which the Sun literally sucks the life-force out of children with a giant straw as they are playing. This ad has started to hit closer to reality. India has increasingly been in the grip of more frequent and intense heat waves, with outdoor workers especially struggling with the rising mercury. A recent study published in *Science Advances* showed that it wasn't just India: the whole world is grappling with slower and longer heat waves.

Heat waves have a terrible impact on human and animal life, with increased risk of wildfires, damaged crops, and worse health. Analysing temperatures around the world from 1979 to 2020, Wei Zhang, a climate scientist at Utah State University, and his colleagues studied how they have changed over time. On average, they found, heat waves have slowed down nearly 8 km/day each decade and lasted longer by about four days — the effects being particularly drastic in North America and Eurasia. Heat waves have also increased in frequency, from about 75 events averaged over 1979-1983 to about 98 over 2016-2020. "In thinking about heat waves and how they would change in the future, there are two pieces of the puzzle that climate scientists think about," Rachel White, an atmospheric scientist at the University of British Columbia, said. "One of them is thermodynamics: it's just about the temperature. As temperatures are getting warmer, heat waves are going to get warmer. The second piece is the dynamics: the atmospheric circulation patterns that cause heat waves." There are still some open questions around how those might change in a warming world.

Previous studies have mostly focused on how frequent heat waves are or how hot it gets during one. In this study, the researchers classified contiguous heatwaves as events with extremely high temperatures, covering more than a million square kilometres, and lasting for longer than three days. They then tracked the movement of these huge masses of hot air over space and time, studying how far and how fast they were moving — one of the first groups of scientists to do so. Instead of just focusing on the frequency and the intensity of heatwaves, the study also checked how fast they were propagating and how long they lasted. By looking at how heat waves move over time and space, Dr. White believes the study has bridged the gap between the thermodynamic and dynamic pieces of the heat waves puzzle a little more than before. "This study is looking at heatwaves like an object that can move and can travel and propagate, which you would miss if you were just looking at one point," she said. "If you just look at one point, you can be like, 'oh, the heat wave lasted for 5 days'. But the object itself lasted for longer, it just moved. That's what they are doing here, tracking them as they are moving, which is cool." The guiding hand falters. But what could be causing them to move so sluggish? The scientists analysed the upper

atmosphere's air circulation patterns, to see how the moving air could affect these big blobs of heat. They found that over the years, the jet stream — a fast, narrow current of air that flows from west to east high up in the troposphere — has become weaker.

The jet stream guides atmospheric waves, waves that are caused by the earth's rotation and which influence the earth's surface temperature. As the jet stream weakens, these waves also move more slowly, leading to more persistent weather events, and more spells of high and slow-moving heat. To check if human activity had played a role in this outcome, the researchers ran simulations with temperature data from 1979 to 2020, but included scenarios with and without human greenhouse gas emissions. They found that though natural climate variability and natural events also influenced how heat waves had changed, human activity and greenhouse gas emissions have played a dominant role in rendering the slower-moving and longer-lasting heat. Dr. White said the next steps would be to further tease apart the role of atmospheric air circulation patterns in contributing to heat-wave dynamics on the ground. Country-specific changes in heat waves over time would also be some of the missing pieces of the puzzle she would like to see. "I think there's just a lot that can be done with this dataset, now that they have created it," she said. Dr.



Zhang does plan to delve deeper into regional differences as part of the group's next steps, while also working on climate adaptation strategies. "Given that heat waves have such a huge impact on human health and the environment, we need to think about climate adaptation," he said. In densely populated urban areas, some strategies to better mitigate changes in heat waves would be to plant more trees and increase green infrastructure — an undertaking Dr. Zhang has himself been involved in. Together with Tree Utah, an NGO, he has been engaging people in planting and taking care of trees. He has also been teaching a class on Climate

Adaptation Science at Utah State University, where he helps students learn and apply climate adaptation strategies, with projects like working with farmers on alternative crops. "This paper is another form of evidence that climate change is altering these extreme weather events," Dr. Zhang said. Adding to the already long list of studies, like how the intensity of hurricanes has increased or how there is extreme precipitation, this study, in Dr. Zhang's words, "is another signal of how climate change could influence our daily lives, our health, our environment — by changing the behaviour of heat waves." Rohini Subrahmanyam is a freelance journalist.

## How Europe's AI convention balances innovation and human rights | Explained

The story so far: The global governance of artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming more complex even as countries try to govern AI within their borders in various ways, ranging from acts of law to executive orders. Many experts (as well as the Pope) have articulated a global treaty to this effect, but the obstacles in its path are daunting.

What is Europe's AI convention?

Although there are many ethical guidelines, 'soft law' tools, and governance principles enshrined in many documents, none of them are binding or are likely to result in a global treaty. There are also no ongoing negotiations for an AI treaty at the global or regional levels anywhere. Against this background, the Council of Europe (COE) took a big step by adopting the Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law — a.k.a. the 'AI convention' — on May 17. The COE is an inter-governmental organisation formed in 1949, with 46 members today, including the Holy See, Japan, and the U.S., plus countries of the EU bloc and others. The agreement is a comprehensive convention covering AI governance and links to human rights, democracy, and the responsible use of AI.

The framework convention will be opened for signature in Vilnius, in Lithuania, on September 5. What is a framework convention? A 'framework convention' is a legally binding treaty that specifies the broader commitments and objectives under the Convention, and sets mechanisms to achieve them. The task of setting specific targets, if required, is left to subsequent agreements. Those agreements that are negotiated under the framework convention will be called protocols. For example, the Convention on Biological Diversity is a framework convention while the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a protocol under it that deals with living modified organisms. Similarly, in future, there may be a 'Protocol on AI Risk' under Europe's AI convention. The framework convention approach is useful because it allows flexibility even as it encodes the core principles and processes by which the objectives are to be realised. Parties to the Convention have the discretion to decide the ways in which to achieve the objectives, depending on their capacities and priorities. The AI convention can catalyse the negotiation of similar conventions at the regional level in other places. Then again, as the U.S. is also a member of the COE, the convention can indirectly affect AI governance in the

U.S. as well, which matters because the country is currently a hotbed of AI innovation. A related disadvantage (of sorts) of the AI convention is it could be perceived as being influenced more by European values and norms in technology governance. What is the scope of the convention? "The provisions of this Convention aim to ensure that activities within the lifecycle of artificial intelligence systems are fully consistent with human rights, democracy and the rule of law". The definition of AI is similar to the one in the EU AI Act, which is based on the OECD's definition of AI: "An AI system is a machine-based system that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments." "The scope of this Convention covers the activities within the lifecycle of artificial intelligence systems that have the potential to interfere with human rights, democracy, and the rule of law as follows: a. Each Party shall apply this Convention to the activities within the lifecycle of artificial intelligence systems undertaken by public authorities or private actors acting on their behalf.

# The country has new aspirations, new hopes, and new confidence: PM Modi



Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), May 30: Claiming the progress India has made under his leadership, in a public rally in Hoshiarpur, Punjab, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed confidence in the country's future. "Today the country has new aspirations, new hopes, new confidence. After decades, a majority central government is going to score a hat-trick," he said. Emphasizing the dream of a developed India, he noted, "Every Indian is connected with this dream, and that's why they are blessing us." PM Modi reiterated his commitment to transforming India in the 21st century, citing the unprecedented development of the past decade. "When people from Punjab and other states go abroad, they see for themselves how much respect for India and Indians has increased," he stated, attributing this respect to the strength of a stable government. Prime Minister Modi, on Thursday, concluded his 2024 election campaign with a public rally in Hoshiarpur, Punjab, paying homage to the sacred land of Guru Ravidas Ji and emphasizing his government's commitment to development and heritage preservation.

"Hoshiarpur is called the small Kashi. This is the sacred land of Guru Ravidas Ji. Ending the election campaign here is nothing short of a blessing," PM Modi remarked, connecting the spiritual significance of Hoshiarpur with his constituency, Varanasi, which is also the birthplace of Guru Ravidas Ji. Drawing inspiration from Guru Ravidas Ji's teachings, PM Modi emphasized his government's focus on the welfare of the poor. "Guru Ravidas Ji used to say, 'I desire such a rule, where everyone has food.' In the past 10 years, we have provided free grain and free treatment facilities to the poorest of the poor," he declared.

Highlighting the impact of his government's welfare schemes, PM Modi

noted, "Today, no poor, Dalit, or deprived child has to sleep on an empty stomach. Today, a poor woman does not have to hide her illness out of compulsion. Now she has a ration card and an Ayushman card." PM Modi underscored his government's efforts to eliminate caste discrimination and promote social equality. "Guru Ravidas Ji wanted a society without discrimination based on caste. Today, the benefits of the Modi government's schemes are reaching everyone without discrimination," he said, listing achievements such as providing concrete houses, gas connections, toilets, and electricity connections to all sections of society. He reaffirmed his commitment to the principle of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" which he described as a guiding philosophy for his administration.

PM Modi highlighted his government's initiatives to honour the heritage of Guru Ravidas Ji. "In Madhya Pradesh, I laid the foundation stone of a grand memorial to Guru Ravidas Ji. Facilities are being increased at Guru Ravidas Ji's birthplace in Kashi. Even in Delhi, there is a holy place of Guru Ravidas Ji Maharaj in Tughlakabad," he announced. He also expressed his desire to name the Adampur airport after Guru Ravidas Ji, promising swift action once the government is formed. Addressing the challenges faced by his government, PM Modi criticized the self-serving politics of Congress and the INDI alliance. He accused them of indulging in vote bank politics and failing to assert India's rights during the partition. "Their love for the vote bank was such that during the partition, they couldn't assert India's right over our Kartarpur Sahib," he said. PM Modi also condemned their opposition to the Ram temple and the CAA, attributing it to their appeasement politics. "These are the same people who strangled the consti-

tution during the Emergency and did not think of the constitution during the 1984 riots," he asserted. Criticizing the INDI alliance's misgovernance, PM Modi recalled the dark hour of Indian history and said, "Nowadays, the country's people hear much about the constitution from the INDI alliance members. These are the same people who strangled the Constitution during the Emergency. When Sikhs were being burned with tires around their necks during the 1984 riots, they did not think of the Constitution."

"In the 10 years of my government, I have continuously protected the reservation of SC-ST-OBC. Congress and the INDI alliance are furious about my efforts. Their intentions regarding reservation are very dangerous. Their entire track record is about snatching the reservation of SC-ST-OBC," said PM Modi condemning the INDI alliance and Congress' appeasement politics. Taking a sharp dig at Congress and the INDI alliance, PM Modi highlighted, "Congress is the mother of corruption."

Congress has done a double Ph.D. in corruption in 60 years. And now another corrupt party has joined Congress. This party is also extremely deceitful. These people came in the name of making Punjab drug-free. But they have made drugs their means of income. The whole world knows about the liquor scam in Delhi. Here, the mining mafia is also running unchecked. "These hardcore corrupt people, these extreme deceivers have thrown Punjab into gang wars. These people have ruined both industry and agriculture in Punjab. These hardcore corrupt people, extreme deceivers are also becoming number one in women's oppression. Today the world is seeing their deeds from Delhi to Punjab," he added. During his concluding remarks, PM Modi urged the people of Punjab to support BJP candidates in the upcoming elections. "The coming 5 years will be for the rise of the poor, farmers, youth, and women empowerment. I urge you to make the lotus bloom on every seat in Punjab on June 1st," he appealed.

## Woman beaten up for additional dowry by husband, in-laws

Hyderabad: A woman was brutally beaten up by her husband and in-laws at Madhuranagar in Banjara Hills allegedly for additional dowry. The woman, aged around 28, was married to a car driver, Akhil Hussain (42), a resident of Yellareddyguda four years ago. At the time of marriage, the parents of the woman gave four tolas of gold, Rs 2 lakh cash and other articles as gifts to the couple. "The woman in her complaint told us that the husband and in-laws were torturing her for additional money.



# PhonePe extends loan offerings to consumers across multiple categories

PhonePe, today expanded its loan distribution offerings on its platform across six major categories - Bike Loan, Car Loan, Home Loan, Gold Loan, Education Loan and Mutual Fund Loan, in partnership with a network of trusted banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and fintechs. With its unmatched distribution strength of 535+ Million registered users, PhonePe aims to create a powerful and seamless user experience in the secured loans category. PhonePe has partnered with a carefully curated selection of top lenders such as Tata Capital, L&T Finance, Hero FinCorp, Muthoot Fincorp, DMI Housing Finance, Home First Finance, rupyy, Volt Money, Gradright and more lenders to be added in the coming weeks. The platform currently has 15 active partners and aims to scale to 25 by the next quarter. Users can avail the loan facility under the existing 'Loan' section on their PhonePe app, select their desired loan category, and choose from a list of lenders. The loan application journey is initiated within PhonePe's familiar app environment, eliminating the need to navigate multiple applications and simplifying the process for the user.

Speaking on the launch, Hemant Gala, CEO, PhonePe Lending said, "We are excited to announce the launch of our lending platform across all major categories with top Banks and NBFCs. This provides us with the opportunity to connect lenders and millions of our customers across the country on a single platform to meet their financial needs. Lenders are investing heavily in digitising the secured loan journeys and customers are adapting to the digitisation at a rapid pace. We believe it's a great time to revolutionise secured lending product experience for the customers working with the lending ecosystem."

About PhonePe Group:

PhonePe Group is India's leading fintech company. Its flagship product, the PhonePe digital payments app, was launched in Aug 2016. In just 7 years, the company has scaled rapidly to become India's leading consumer payments app with 535+ million registered users and a digital payments acceptance network of 39+ million merchants. PhonePe also processes over 255 million daily transactions with an annualized Total Payment Value



Enables users to access loans across six categories including Mutual Fund Loan, Bike Loan, Car Loan, Home Loan/ Loan against Property, Gold Loan and Education Loan on the PhonePe app

(TPV) of USD 1.5+ Trillion. On the back of its leadership in digital payments, PhonePe Group has expanded into financial services (Insurance, Lending, Wealth) as well as new consumer tech businesses (Pincode - hyperlocal e-commerce and Indus App Store - India's first localized App

Store). PhonePe Group is an India headquartered technology company with a portfolio of businesses aligned with the company's vision to offer every Indian an equal opportunity to accelerate their progress by unlocking the flow of money and access to services.

## Days after Bangladesh MP's 'murder', police in two countries grapple with a missing link: Where is the body?

A friendly entry into a duplex flat on the outskirts of Kolkata, a "murder" near the kitchen, a missing body and a suspected gold smuggling racket. As investigators from the West Bengal police and their Dhaka counterparts attempt to join the dots in the alleged murder of Anwarul Azim Anar, 56, a three-time Bangladesh MP of the ruling Awami League party, there are, for now, more questions than answers. For one, the body is still to be recovered and the probe has so far hinged on drops of blood found in a duplex flat in the New Town area on the outskirts of Kolkata. And if the body of the MP was skinned and cut into pieces, as the investigators suspect it was, they are still to trace the weapon used in the crime or the body parts. What makes their job tougher is that the prime suspect and the alleged mastermind is a US citizen.

While reconstructing the victim's last few hours in Kolkata, the investigators have so far found that it was on May 12, around 2.40 pm, that Anar, the MP from Jhenaidah-4 in Khulna district of Bangladesh, arrived in Kolkata through the Gede border checkpoint in Nadia district. He first drove nearly 150 km to Mondolpara lane in Baranagar near Kolkata to meet his friend Gopal Biswas. He had allegedly told his family back home that he was going to Kolkata for a medical check-up. The next day, May 13, Anar left Biswas's home, after which he remained incommunicado. The same day, his daughter Mumtari

Ferdoush Dorin filed a complaint with the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Thana in Dhaka and the police registered a case under sections related to kidnapping. In Kolkata, Anar's friend Biswas too filed a missing complaint at the Baranagar police station. On May 15, the West Bengal police acted on a tip-off and reached a flat in New Town, in the Greater Kolkata area, where they found blood stains, after which the investigators of the two countries claimed that the MP had been murdered. Police said the state Criminal Investigation Department (CID), which is probing the case, has sent the blood samples from the flat for DNA profiling, which will be matched with the MP's daughter.

Speaking from Dhaka, Mahtujur Rahman, Senior Assistant Police Commissioner, Detective Branch (DB), Dhaka Metropolitan Police, and the Investigating Officer (IO) in the case, told The Indian Express, "The MP went inside the flat but didn't come out. In New Town, Indian cops found blood stains. Circumstantial evidence and investigation by both sides so far confirm that the MP has been murdered." The names that have cropped up so far in the case are: Akhtaruzzaman Shaheen, 50, a Bangladesh-origin US citizen who is said to be a childhood friend of the MP and a "business partner" in the "gold trade" they were allegedly involved in; Akhtaruzzaman's friend and alleged contract killer Amanullah Syed alias Simul Bhuiyan, 56; Amanullah's assistant Saiful

Alam; Tanvir Bhuiyan; Siam alias Saim; and Silasti Rahman, 24, a college student and a friend of the US-based Akhtaruzzaman. Police are also investigating the roles of Faizal and Jihad Hawaldar, 30, both butchers.

While Akhtaruzzaman is allegedly the main conspirator, Amanullah, Tanvir Bhuiyan, Siam and Faizal and Jihad Hawaldar are accused of carrying out the murder. Police say Silasti Rahman, a resident of Tangail in Bangladesh, was not directly involved in the act of the murder, though she has been booked for conspiracy. On reports that Silasti Rahman allegedly honey-trapped the MP, IO Mahfuzur Rahman said, "There is some evidence that points towards that... but it is being verified."

So far, Amanullah, Saiful Alam, Tanvir Bhuiyan, and Silasti Rahman are in the custody of the Bangladesh Police while Jihad Hawaldar, the Mumbai-based butcher, was arrested by the West Bengal CID on May 24. According to sources in the CID, days before the murder, Akhtaruzzaman, the alleged conspirator, Amanullah (the alleged contract killer and a murder convict who had served 20 years in a Bangladesh jail), and Silasti Rahman flew down to India on the same flight. They said Amanullah, Tanvir Bhuiyan and Silasti Rahman had been staying in the New Town duplex flat since April 30, allegedly planning the murder. Police say they have evidence to show that on May 13, MP Anar,

Amanullah and the Dhaka-based butcher, Faisal, arrived together at the Sanjeeva Gardens apartments in New Town and took off their shoes before entering the flat. The West Bengal CID say Jihad, the Mumbai-based butcher, allegedly told them that he and Siam were already in the flat when the MP and the others came. Minutes later, the attackers allegedly used chloroform to render the MP unconscious and then smothered him to death. Harun-or-Rashid, Chief of Detective Branch, Dhaka, who is visiting Kolkata as part of a three-member team of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Indian Express, "Prima facie, the murder was completed within half an hour of the MP entering the flat." Police sources said the investigation has so far revealed he was killed in an open space adjacent to the kitchen. "The CCTV cameras of the house were covered with clothes and thick adhesive tapes. Jihad told us that preparations related to the murder were completed by May 7," said an officer part of the investigation.

Police sources said Jihad told them that after the MP was murdered, the body was taken to the kitchen, hacked into pieces and put into multiple packets. "CCTV footage shows that around 4 am on May 13, the assailants picked the MP's shoes lying outside the flat and put them in a box before leaving. He also said that the weapons used in the murder and to cut the body were disposed of in the Bagjola Canal on Bhangore Road near Krishnamati Bridge on May 14.

# 'India has a tradition of eating fresh foods, so a reset is far easier': Author Johann Hari

British-Swiss author Johann Hari book suggests that obesity has nearly tripled globally since 1975. British-Swiss author Johann Hari book suggests that obesity has nearly tripled globally since 1975 (Credit: Kathrin Baumbach). When British-Swiss author Johann Hari gained weight during Covid lockdown, he was surprised by the noticeably gaunt people he met at a Hollywood party in the winter of 2022. He wondered if everybody had taken up Pilates while he continued to be slothful. "They seemed to have altered themselves on Snapchat. Then a friend told me all about the Ozempic pen (a semaglutide injection that mimics a hormone, called glucagon-like peptide 1 or GLP1, which stimulates the pancreas to produce more insulin, in turn lowering blood sugar, and reducing hunger by slowing digestion). This blockbuster weight loss drug has taken the world by storm and has become a potent tool for managing obesity and diabetes.

"With the latest drugs reducing your existing body weight by 15-21 per cent and the new drugs next year expected to reduce it further by up to 24 per cent, it seemed like a magic pill indeed," says Hari. Yet, having seen earlier miracle weight loss drugs, leaving a trail of broken people battling side effects, he was conflicted. After researching about it across continents and talking to experts, he realised that at the moment, the benefits outflanked the risks for somebody like him who was obese. "My body mass index (BMI) was 30. In our heads, we don't think we are as fat but given my family history of the men dying of heart attacks and my dad surviving with a quadruple bypass, I was exposed to co-morbidities. There's enough evidence that obesity worsens over 200 diseases, including dementia, heart disease, cancer and stroke. I could see the implications and took the shot," says Hari, who dropped from 90 kg to 73 kg in a year. He has documented his experiences in a new book titled, *The Magic Pill: The Extraordinary Benefits and Disturbing Risks of the New Weight-Loss Drugs* (Crown). In it, he questions if there are ways to avoid getting to the drug phase at all by reimagining the way we think about food. Excerpts:

What we eat is the most crucial part of the weight loss puzzle because food controls our brain. Drugs are just an artificial solution to an artificial problem. Why become obese in the first place? Paul Kennyhead, Chair of Neurosciences at Mt Sinai, New York, did an experiment with lab rats, who were first given healthy food. Using natural nutritional wisdom, they would stop when full. But when fed on fatty and carb-rich cheesecake and Snickers, they ate and ate and ate. Within a few days, they became obese as manufactured foods had changed their body conditioning. However, when they were taken off junk food and given healthy food, they shunned it with such severity that they went back to having it only when they were driven to the point of starvation. Something about the food we are eating daily is undermining our ability to know when to stop. That explains the WHO data, saying obesity had nearly tripled globally since 1975.

This has never happened before in the 300,000-year history of our species. The weight loss drug Ozempic gave me back some sense of satiety... I can now have four mouthfuls of my favourite food and feel full. Most Indians are not in the weight trap yet. And India is taking some policy decisions like eliminating trans fats. We know processed and ultra-processed foods trigger weight gain and India has a tradition of eating freshly-prepared, whole foods and seasonal produce. So a reset for you is far easier before dependency creeps in. If you are obese at the age of 18, you have a 70 per cent chance of developing diabetes during a lifetime. The drug could be magic in three ways. One, when it solves the problem quickly and effectively. My whole life I have had junk food and now I know a weekly injection in the leg can keep me away from it. Second, it is like a card trick, so you do not see what goes on behind. Third, you ask the genie for a wish and you never get it the way you want... The conveniences are huge but then we are seeing risks of addictive behaviour. Scientists say there is a good reason to be assured of safety of this class of drugs considering they have been used by diabetics to control blood glucose for the last eight years and short to medium effects would have showed up among them. But Jean-Luc Faillie, of the University of Montpellier, France, who was asked by French medical agencies to look into drug safety, found that mice fed on these drugs had increased their existing risk of developing thyroid cancer by 50 to 70 per cent. This means a



higher chance of whatever chance you already have. Then people said that only 1.2 per cent of people get thyroid cancer anyway. But the results show a big increase in a small risk. Now weigh it with Cancer Research UK's warning on how excess weight means more fat cells. These are not inert and send signals to cells to multiply faster. That's why obesity is the biggest cause of cancer in the developed world. So you have to measure comparative risks and

benefits. As Dr Shauna Levy of the Tulane School of Medicine told me, we don't know the effects of these drugs but we do know the effects of obesity. If you are overweight to the extent that exercise isn't working, you need help. Similarly, if you are using these to be just skinny, then you are taking risks, which will need another five years to understand, with none of the health benefits. I would say it's better not to use it unless your BMI is really high.

## In the second Congress-led UPA term, how pro-public policies gave way to corruption allegations

In winning the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, the game changer for the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) proved to be the promise of a farm loan waiver of around Rs 75,000 crore. With the UPA's return to power, party leader Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul managed to prove their critics wrong. In 2007, Pratibha Patil was elected as President — the first woman to hold the post in India — and former Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer Hamid Ansari as Vice-President. While an ailing BJP patriarch, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, 85, decided not to contest the 2009 polls, the 81-year-old L K Advani was projected as the party's prime ministerial face. However, Advani's differences with Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, the former Vice-President, surfaced before his campaign started and the BJP returned to make a successful comeback.

Parliament proceedings before the 2009 polls were highly disrupted. In fact, the Lok Sabha only had 46 sittings in 2008, the lowest since Independence. In the 2008 Assembly polls, the Congress managed to retain power in Delhi and Rajasthan, but the BJP returned in Madhya Pradesh and

Chhattisgarh, besides winning Karnataka. Then, as the world watched on its television screens in horror on November 26, 2008, 10 members of the Lashkar-e-Taiba carried out a planned terror strike across Mumbai for nearly four days. Meanwhile, a controversy cropped up in the Election Commission (EC) just before the 2009 general elections. N Gopalaswami, who was appointed as Election Commissioner in February 2004 and elevated as the Chief Election Commissioner in 2006, was due to retire on April 20, 2009. Though he wanted at least one phase of the 2009 polls to be held while he was still around, Gopalaswami's successor Navin Chawla was against this. In a controversial move, in January 2009, Gopalaswami recommended that the President should sack Chawla on grounds of being "partisan". However, his recommendation was rejected by both Patil and later the Supreme Court. But Gopalaswami had his way in the end. The five-phase 2009 election was held between April 16 and May 13.

Since the report of the Delimitation Commission, headed by retired Supreme Court judge Justice Kuldeep Singh, was

implemented before this election, the polls were held based on delimited constituencies and boundaries. This resulted in changes in the composition of voters from nearly 500 constituencies. Of 71.69 crore voters, 41.71 crore or 58.21% voted at 8.30 lakh polling stations across India. A total of 8,070 candidates were in the fray, including 556 women candidates. The Congress performed better this time — 206 seats against the 145 it got in 2004 — but the BJP's share dipped from 138 in 2004 to 116 seats this time. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) won 21 seats, Communist Party of India (Marxist) 16, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) nine and CPI four in this election. Among the biggest losers in 2009 was UPA's alliance partner, the Lalu Prasad Yadav-led Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). The party won just four seats, with Lalu himself losing from one of the two seats he contested from. He lost from Bihar's Patliputra seat but won from Saran, defeating BJP's Rajiv Pratap Rudy. Yet another UPA ally, Ram Vilas Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) also suffered setbacks. Paswan lost on his home turf in Bihar's Hajipur to Janata Dal United's (JD-U) Ram Sundar Das.

# What is the current status with respect to spice exports? | Explained

The story so far: Last month, Hong Kong and Singapore recalled certain spice mix products of the MDH and Everest Group allegedly over the presence of a higher than prescribed level of the sterilising agent Ethylene Oxide (ETO). The Indian authorities have now initiated several measures to ensure that Indian spices comply with food safety standards of the importing countries.

Where does contamination occur?

Ganeshan Varadarajan, promoter of Lifespice, says that India does not use ETO as a pesticide but only as a sterilising agent to reduce microbial load in finished (spice) goods. Most of the agro products, including spices, are heaped in mandies (auction yards for farmers) where they are contaminated by human, bird, reptile and insect contact. Many of the large factories receive material from the mandies, which is then fed on automated lines. It leaves them with high microbial levels and forces them to opt for ETO sterilisation. However, the contamination levels can be reduced early through the processes adopted for value addition. Consumers should start looking at the quality of products and not just the price, he says.

How big are Indian spice exports?

A quick export estimate data available with the Spices Board India shows that India enjoys a significant share in the global market for spices and spice products. In 2023-2024, India exported spices worth \$4.4 billion (nearly 14 lakh tonnes), which is 12.3% higher than the financial year

2022-2023. Data shared by the United Planters Association of Southern India reveals that chilli, spice oils and oleoresins, curry powder and paste, cumin, mint products, cardamom and pepper are some of the largest exported spices and spice products in the financial year 2022-2023. In terms of production, garlic, ginger and chilli were the top three spices produced in FY23. China, Bangladesh, west Asian countries and the U.S. are important markets for Indian spices.

What has been impact of the recall?

An office bearer of the Federation of Indian Spice Stakeholders pointed out that Singapore and Hong Kong had not banned the Indian products, but only recalled them. Exports have resumed to these countries and hence there may not be much impact in the coming months because of this issue. India's share in total spice production globally is about 70%. Countries have different standards for ETO and maximum (pesticide) residue levels (MRL). The European Union has stringent norms for both ETO and MRLs while Japan largely sources only organic products. The industry has been talking to the Indian government demanding discussions with the EU to relax the norms in order to boost Indian spice exports to the EU market.

A section of chilli growers in Telangana said the issue is not likely to affect farmers much as most of them do not export directly. Further, Indian food exports have faced several challenges in the past



too because of stringent norms of the buying countries. A planter pointed out that cardamom and black pepper are cultivated as inter crops with tea, coffee or rubber. The MRL is stringent for these main crops and hence the two spices are able to meet the norms. Manufacturers of spice mixes and pastes should look at sourcing genuine Indian grown spices rather than using imported spices. Further, they should be cautious when they import spices from other countries and export value added products, said a cardamom grower in Kerala. A turmeric exporter based out of Erode in Tamil Nadu says that while ETO is permitted by the U.S., the EU seeks steaming as the method for sterilisation. But while the

cost of using ETO as a sterilising agent is ₹5 per kg, for steaming it is ₹20-₹25 a kg. "The Indian government should lay down achievable guidelines and tell the buying countries about it," he says.

What has the Spices Board done?

Following the recall by Hong Kong and Singapore, the Spices Board issued a detailed protocol to all manufacturing exporters to prevent ETO contamination. The Board also said it was starting mandatory testing of spice consignments to Singapore and Hong Kong for ETO. It has also taken up with the international food standards body the need for ETO usage limit as it varies for each country.

## How the cracks in OpenAI's foundation reignited mistrust in Sam Altman

In November last year, over the two-day snafu when OpenAI chief Sam Altman was fired and reinstated, his perception was dramatically different. Mr. Altman, who had led the company into spearheading an artificial intelligence changeover with the release of ChatGPT couldn't seem more adored. OpenAI employees had collectively flooded X with tweets saying, "I love OpenAI" in what was seen as an uprising against the decision of the OpenAI board. However, in the week gone by, much of the goodwill towards Mr. Altman seems to have changed. And the board's statement that called Mr. Altman "not consistently candid", while announcing his firing, has returned in a boomerang effect.

OpenAI's rough week started with the departure of Ilya Sutskever, the co-founder and former chief scientist at the company. Mr. Sutskever, who was a key member of the team that had built ChatGPT had surprisingly backed the three board members who had voted to fire Altman. The speculation was that Mr. Altman's views on AI safety was very different from the board's which was worrying given the momentum of AI development. Since Mr. Altman's reinstatement, Mr. Sutskever has practically van-

ished into oblivion.

AI safety seemingly was of importance to Mr. Sutskever who formed the 'superalignment team' in the company last year in July. Mr. Sutskever co-lead the team, with Jan Leike, with the goal of shepherding superintelligence so it stayed on track with its reins firmly in human hands by 2027. Aside from alignment, the team would also be "improving the safety of current models like ChatGPT, as well as understanding and mitigating other risks from AI such as misuse, economic disruption, disinformation, bias and discrimination, addiction and overreliance, and others," the statement for the announcement read. And for an ambition this lofty, the company said it would commit "20% of the compute we've secured to date over the next four years" for the initiative.

Last week, Mr. Sutskever waved goodbye to the company he founded. Two days later, Mr. Leike, a longtime researcher at OpenAI, announced his resignation as well saying he had reached a dead end after continuous disagreements with "OpenAI leadership about the company's core priorities." Signalling that the prom-

ised share of compute wasn't granted to the team, Mr. Leike expressed concern that in the recent past "safety culture and processes have taken a backseat to shiny products." Shortly after, the team which still had more than 25 people was disbanded. A Fortune report shared that there was no specification around when and how the 20% compute would be distributed — was it equally over the four-year period or 20% every year or an arbitrary amount each year that would total to 20%? Regardless, it was enough reason for Mr. Sutskever and Mr. Leike to quit. String of resignations

Even as rumblings of discord had just started, a few more researchers working on AI policy and governance quit soon after. Cullen O'Keefe quit his role as research lead on policy in April. Daniel Kokotajlo who had been working on the risks around AI models quit and responded on a forum saying he "quit OpenAI due to losing confidence that it would behave responsibly around the time of AGI." Gretchen Kruege, another policy researcher, shared that she had resigned from the company on May 14. "One of the ways tech companies in general can disempower those seeking to hold them accountable is to sow division

among those raising concerns or challenging their power. I care deeply about preventing this," her post read on X. On May 17, Vox reported that former employees had been under duress to sign lengthy exit documents that restricted them from ever speaking negatively about the company if they wanted to retain their vested equity in the company. Leaked emails showed that employees asking for more time to review the documents or seek legal counsel weren't given any leeway. "The General Release and Separation Agreement requires your signature within 7 days," a reply said for someone who had requested another week. Mr. Altman professed on X that he had been ignorant to this clause and apologised for it. The backlash to the severe tactics forced the company to back-track and take the non-disparagement clause down. Jacob Hilton, a researcher at the Alignment Research Center, who quit OpenAI a year ago tweeted on X saying tech companies are responsible for protecting researchers who speak about the tech in public interest because of how powerful it is. Mr. Hilton, who had also signed the NDA lest he lose equity said while he had received a call from OpenAI management about the change in policy.

# Can Bengaluru Metro's last mile connectivity gaps be filled by players beyond BMTC?

Last mile connectivity was always the biggest gap in Bengaluru's Namma Metro scheme of things. As the Metro spread out far and wide in the city, this gap stood out as a perennial sore point. But the entry of BMTC Metro Feeder buses has finally begun to make an impact, while triggering another key question: Can the last mile be filled by players beyond BMTC? For years, commuters have had to depend on their cars or two-wheelers to fill that glaring gap between home and Metro Station, and from station to office/ workplace and back. Inevitably, this added to the city's congestion, while exposing the lack of adequate parking spaces at most Metro stations. Feeder shuttle bus services were seen as the best bet to address this.

But are the long nine or 12-metre BMTC buses the right option for feeders?

"Bengaluru has big congestion issues with narrow roads around Metro stations. Our regular big buses will not work. We should really start thinking of deploying 15-seater, 20-seater mini buses as last mile feeders. They will also work in terms of the economics, and be competitive to other modes," explains Pawan Mulukutla, Executive Director, Transport and Clean Air Programme at the World Resources Institute (WRI) India. There has to be a method in the feeder system, its design and frequency. Pawan suggests setting up a Last Mile Cell at the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) with access to all the commuter data. Feeder bus frequency could be based on the number of people getting in and off the stations during peak and off-peak hours. BMRCL and BMTC should align the frequency of buses, understand the patterns of where people are living around metro stations, and connect those. As Pawan points out, "This should be the way rather than saying let's deploy buses every 30 minutes and that's our frequency. The benefit of the Metro is lost if the last mile is not immediately available." Talking of options, experts say it need not be all about BMTC buses. Says independent mobility analyst and consultant Sathya Arikutharam, "The city should now consider what Delhi has done, by giving licence to Uber Shuttle buses. They can aggregate mini buses, by repurposing so many modes. For example, company shuttle buses are mostly idle in the afternoons. They can be repurposed for smart travel so that people don't need to think of two-wheelers or cars at all for going out." The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) approval allows Uber to encourage upper middle class commuters to switch to public transport. The aggregator could set dynamic pricing but it should not be less than the peak fare of DTC air-conditioned buses. Sathya says the transport department here could regulate all these parameters and allow Uber shuttles to operate in designated zones. Metro Mithra issues Autorickshaws, if run professionally with a predefined fare structure, could be a real option. The Metro Mithra service was introduced at a few stations with this objective but failed to take off. "Unfortunately, there are a lot of security issues at these

stations. There are rowdy drivers who don't want to operate by meters and professionalism. That is why Metro Mithra autos were not able to get parking spaces at the Metro stations. They wrote to the police commissioner but in vain. They also requested BMRCL to ask the security guards to ensure some sort of harmony. Everybody is responsible but nobody is accountable," laments Sathya. Community minibuses to bridge the last mile, local communities too could run minibuses on a private-public partnership (PPP) model, says Pawan. "Such partnerships can involve residents' welfare associations (RWAs). For instance, in the J.P. Nagar – Konankunte area, there are so many big apartments with at least 10-15% of people who want to use the Metro. But the last mile is a deterrent. Now, if the last mile is starting from your community itself, and buses can be purchased on a PPP model, things will change," he elaborates. The last mile, he says, should be thought of as a very innovative solution. Let BMTC use its logo, routes and planning. But involve other players in on-boarding of operators, running it for RWAs to connect and giving them drop off and pickup, and scheduling.

But within the BMTC Metro feeder ecosystem, there are areas for improvement, says Yathish Kumar S., member of an active collective called 'Friends of BMTC.' "Feeders have to serve the internal areas within 3-4 km surrounding a Metro station. But there are some services that run on the same route as the regular services where the frequency is even higher. Just because they run between two Metro stations, they don't qualify as a Metro feeder service," he points out. Yathish draws attention to the feeders that operate between K.R. Puram and Silk Board. "They literally run on the same route as 500A and 500B, where the frequency is really huge. That really does not make any sense." Restricting the feeder service to areas in close proximity to a Metro station has its benefits. "Like in the Southern end of the green line, there are quite a few stations such as Vadarahalli, Yelachenahalli, and Talaghattapura, where the areas close to the stations are densely populated with several apartments. They prefer the Metro but the last mile is a problem. So, a loop service will work out." The feeder service that runs from Brigade Meadows on Kanakapura Road to Konankunte Cross has good potential. "This is quite helpful considering the number of apartments there and the good frequency. If it gets more patronage and people get to know more about it, there will be an upswing in commuters," he feels. In-train announcements but awareness is an issue. Although BMTC releases newspaper statements and displays information on its social media channels, many commuters tend to miss them. One option is to display the bus timings and routes within the train. The availability of feeders to multiple routes could be announced as the train approaches a station. This information could also be prominently displayed at the entrance and exits of all stations with creative visual design. By March this month, the



network of Metro feeder buses had expanded to 151 services across 43 stations. This is likely to be increased to 300 services. As a BMTC official informs, an estimated one lakh people take these buses

every day. "BMTC has also installed QR code scanners at all stations, which takes a commuter to the BMTC website. There is also an option to live-track a feeder bus," informs the official.

## 'Zora Singh Mann di rooh': In Akali stronghold Ferozepur, party's debut face Bobby Mann relies on father's legacy

"Aa rahe ne saade vichkaar Zora Singh Mann ji de farjand, balki ohna de saputtar (Arriving among us is Zora Singh Mann's son... not just a son, but a worthy son)", announces a party worker on Tuesday at a public meeting at Panje Ke Uttar village in the Ferozepur seat of Punjab. The announcement is for 49-year-old Nardev Singh Bobby Mann, the son of Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) stalwart Zora Singh Mann and the party's candidate from the Ferozepur seat.

Many at the meeting can be seen wearing a badge that speaks of Zora Singh Mann di rooh (The soul of Zora Singh Mann). It is clear that Nardev Singh Mann, or Bobby Mann as he is popularly known, is banking on his late father's legacy as he contests his first election.

Ferozepur is a SAD bastion, a seat the party won six consecutive times starting 1998. Zora Singh Mann represented the seat between 1998 and 2004. Most recently, former deputy Chief Minister and Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal won the seat in 2019. "Tussi pehlan vi mere swargwasi baapu nu maan-samman ditte hai (Earlier, you have always blessed my late father)," says Bobby at the meeting.

He then proceeds to attack other parties. "You gave five years to the Congress and two years to jhaadu (broom, the Aam Aadmi Party's poll symbol). In 2017, (former CM) Captain Amarinder Singh had vowed to give you jobs and to waive loans of farmers. But he never stepped out of his palace. Do you know where the money went? His friend Bibi Aroosa (former Pakistan journalist and Singh's friend Aroosa Alam) took it all away," he tells voters. Attacking the Charanjit Singh Channi-led Congress gov-

ernment next, he says: "After becoming the CM, he started milking goats and cows. Going by this logic, everyone who can milk animals should become a CM. Did he do anything for the people?"

He then calls the AAP "jhoothy inquilabi (fake revolutionaries)". "This CM (Bhagwant Mann) doesn't know what happens in Punjab after 4 pm. Thanks to his drinking habit. Have you ever seen the face of Kaka Brar (the AAP's Ferozepur candidate)?" When he talks of the Badals, Bobby invokes the idea of a "khetri (regional)" identity. "The national parties will only think about Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and other states which have more seats. We have to make Sukhbir Badal the next CM of Punjab. These Lok Sabha elections will lay a foundation for that," he says, while reiterating the party's promise to give land ownership rights to farmers in villages near the Indo-Pak border. Speaking to The Indian Express, Bobby, who is an agriculturalist, says: "It has been 14 years since my father died but even today people remember him for his work. I am asking for votes in this election in my father's name. After working for people, I will ask for votes in my name."

The Ferozepur Lok Sabha seat consists of nine Assembly segments: Ferozepur rural, Ferozepur city, Guru Har Sahai, Abohar, Balluana, Fazilka, Jalalabad, Muktsar and Malout. In the 2022 Punjab Assembly elections, all segments except one were won by the AAP. The Congress's Sandeep Jakhar, who has since been suspended from the party, had won Abohar. Sukhbir Badal had won the Ferozepur Lok Sabha seat by over 1.98 lakh votes in 2019.

# India's citizenship laws: The Constituent Assembly dilemma

When lines are drawn and land violently cleaved apart, new questions are asked. Who belongs where? And how does one articulate this nature of belonging? After India won a hard-fought independence in 1947, this conundrum fell to the Constituent Assembly in August 1949. The Partition had triggered waves of migrations across India's western and eastern frontiers; many Indians also lived abroad, sometimes in difficult conditions. It was imperative to discuss citizenship and define the notion of an Indian Citizen. All articles related to citizenship "received far more thought and consideration during the last few months than any other article contained in this Constitution," India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru remarked, standing tall in the circular Central Hall, on August 12. The Constituent Assembly would debate, deliberate and dissent over citizenship and minority rights. In the face of anxiety over migration and a perceived threat from "illegal immigrants," some saw religious identity as the rightful determinant. But consensus then deemed this was a discriminatory yardstick, and citizenship by religion was put to bed. The path of citizenship has since wended its way through numerous circuitous routes, but returned to this contentious point of origin. The new Citizenship Amendment Act fast-tracks naturalisation for non-Muslim religious minorities fleeing neighbouring countries. On May 15, the Union government on Wednesday granted citizenship certificates to more than 300 people who applied under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, marking the first such naturalisation under the new Act. Religion, among other things, will decide who gets to be a citizen in today's India. The river of time has also carried forth fragments of arbitrary deadlines and cutoff dates, regulated through somewhat opaque tribunals and bureaucrats.

Think of the colonial rule in two phases: when India was governed by the East India Company between 1757 and 1858, and when the Crown officially took over, extending its imperial arms from 1858 to 1947. In the first phase, there were no official citizenship laws, noted historian Arun Sinha in the journal *Law of Citizenship and Aliens in India*. Whatever Acts the British had granted rights to 'British subjects.' Did people living in India count as British subjects? It is unclear; there was uncertainty at the time if the definition applied only to European British subjects or to native Indians too. The first official citizenship law was crafted in the second phase of the colonial rule. The mainland was split two ways: British India covered 54% of the territory and included 70% of the population, whereas the princely states governed by local princes and feudal lords enjoyed a degree of autonomy. The British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act, 1914, was codified to confer rights to 'national-born British subjects' and those who obtained naturalisation certificates from colonial officials. People born on the British mainland or to British parents were given a higher status than people born in the British colonies. Put differently, people of Indian descent received a "second-class citi-

zenship," Mr. Sinha noted.

Independence allowed India to consider and conceptualise the notion of citizenship for the first time. This conversation was complicated by two factors: the flow of migration on India's eastern and western frontiers, and a looming anxiety over security and identity. Sri Prakasa, India's High Commissioner in Pakistan, acknowledged the unique position, noting on April 12, 1948, that "Partition is such a novel thing... that we have been unable to adjust ourselves psychologically with the new situation and many people, particularly the minorities have been unable to adjust ourselves psychologically with the new situation and many people..." The boundary lines of Bengal, Punjab and Assam saw mass migration on both sides. About 10 million people moved across the boundaries in the first year, according to government census figures. This figure crossed 20 million by the 1960s. On the western frontier, between West Pakistan and India, the movement happened in two waves: first came the Hindus and Sikhs who chose India as their home; the second wave comprised largely of Muslims "who had left their homes in the initial months of the Partition — or, often, fled in fear of their lives — to travel to West Pakistan, but found the new nation less than ideal," scholar Manav Kapur pointed out in a paper. Mr. Nehru's government had expressed concern about the "exodus" of Hindus from East Bengal and Eastern Pakistan due to reported harassment and fears; urging them to not leave their homes and hearths. If this was not checked immediately, "the two Dominions would be faced with another serious problem which might prove beyond their control," he said, according to an April 6 report published in *The Hindu*. Regarding discrimination faced by Muslim refugees in Delhi, Mr. Nehru said they would be administered "fair treatment": the "Indian State was a secular state", and the government "would welcome [Muslim] refugees back to Delhi if they returned," to ensure fair treatment. A Hindu editorial dated July 21, 1948, titled "Refugees and Resettlement" captured the magnitude of the problem assailing the Indian Government. The "one-way traffic" from West Pakistan threatened the resettlement efforts of more than five million refugees. The limited land could not accommodate the surplus bodies. The property of those who were unable to return to India before Independence was labelled 'evacuee property,' and the Custodian of Evacuee Property took charge of it. It was proposed that non-Muslim refugees (about 3-3.5 million) who followed agriculture and other related occupations would be placed "without much difficulty" on land in East Punjab. But a large-scale migration of Muslims, who had been employed on this land in the pre-partition era, would "greatly impede this programme." The reasoning was that they might take possession of some of the property and thereby reduce the share of refugees or displaced persons who might otherwise take possession of it. Mr. Nehru reportedly suggested that an officer be designated to exclusively address the concern of Muslim migrants



whose property had been taken over by the Government; a proposition which was rejected by the Relief and Rehabilitation Ministry, according to a letter from Mr. Nehru to Mohanlal Saxena, dated May 19, 1949.

The second concern crept in through the cracks of national security. A 'numbers game' determined the boundary lines. The sudden influx or existence of minority populations gave way to fears, old and new. By June 1948, there were fears of returned 'Muslim Leaguers' organising campaigns against the Indian Government, according to a letter from a government official. As Muslims returned to regions like the United Provinces, Delhi and Rajputana, anxious whispers grew louder about the emergence of a "miniature Pakistan" within the Indian territory, Mr. Kapur added. Estimates show almost 45 million Muslims remained in India after partition. Sudden action was taken to implement the permit system through the colonial instrument of ordinances in June 1948. From July 9, 1948, any migrants from West Pakistan would require a permit to cross the border. The permits were divided into three ranks: permits for temporary visits, those for resettlement or permanent returns and "permanent permits," to be issued by the High Commissioner at Karachi. Only government officers and businessmen who travelled frequently on duty or business were entitled to receive permanent permits. As of August 1949, the government had issued 2,000-3,000 of permanent permits, Mr. Nehru told the Constituent Assembly. "For Muslim refugees who wished to resettle into the Indian Dominion, different provisions of the permit system were laid out. A February 21, 1949 report noted that the number of Muslim refugees coming to India for permanent resettlement was eight per day; but those on temporary permits were "not allowed to settle down in India." Pakistan would, in September, that year plan to introduce a similar permit system for travellers in from the Indian union, in both East and West Pakistan. The communicate itself is an interesting display of the contradiction. The *Hindu* in a July 14 report quoted how the return of Muslims evidenced "the excellent treatment the minorities receive in India"; their arrival a "source of gratification," adding that "the Government of India would,

therefore, be most reluctant to take any measures which may choke this natural flow." "There are other problems, however, which compel the Government of India to give the matter serious consideration. They have nearly six million refugees who have come out of Pakistan to provide for and migration still continues. The settlement of these refugees is the first charge on the resources of the Government of India, but the large scale of one-way traffic of Muslims returning to India has reached a stage when it is beginning to interfere with the rehabilitation plans for refugees," it noted. The government tried to approach the Pakistani officials for reactions but "no replies were received," reports noted. The gaining momentum of return and ramping up settlement plans for minorities compelled the government to take measures. "The Government of India regret that they have to impose this restriction. It will be removed as soon as conditions settle down," the government ordinance issued in June 1948 read. It was August 1949 when the citizenship question loomed large over the Constituent Assembly. Articles 5 and 6, prepared by the Dr. B. R. Ambedkar-led Drafting Committee, were taken up for discussion, morphing into an inflamed debate which would go on for three days. A report in *The Hindu* noted the impossible task that lay before the Assembly. The partition had made victims of people in some way or the other, and it was impossible to draft anything, however meticulous, that met "completely the very difficult and complicated situation that had arisen from partition." The immediate challenge was to find an anchor: should citizenship be determined by virtue of one's birth on the nation's soil (*jus soli*) or through descent or birth (*jus sanguinis*)? The Assembly was torn between the two. One camp was in favour of granting citizenship to anyone born on Indian soil. The *jus soli* principle reflected the ethos of an "enlightened, modern, civilised" and democratic form of citizenship, according to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel; citizenship based on descent endorsed "an ideal of racial citizenship," commented Krishnaswami Ayyar. The other camp resisted. P.S. Deshmukh from Maharashtra said Dr. Ambedkar's definition would make "Indian citizenship the cheapest on Earth."