

# The Blue Moon

.....because your critic is your best friend



Vol.15 No. 144

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## The West looks on as

## Putin pals with Xi Jinping





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# Cheetahs Dream

## Turning Sour

**T**otal of 20 cheetahs were 'imported' into the country, eight from Namibia and 12 from South Africa in two batches, flown to Kuno National Park which was supposed to have been readied for lions from neighbouring overcrowded Gir forest in Gujarat. The first batch of eight came in September 2022 while the second lot was flown in February 2023.

One can say that they were quarantined since they were kept in closed enclosures segregated from the local fauna for the beginning.

The forest authorities thought it fit to release them in the open in March this year. And here it all begins.

One of those released, or so it can be summarised, was found to have strayed into a village Vijaypur, some 20 kilometres away from the National Park. A danger to the villagers and their cattle. Was this never thought of when translocation of the animal was planned? Like the tiger or lion, cheetahs also walk across miles in search of prey or rather greener pastures. Those planning the translocation should

have given a serious thought to this factor too or was the translocation done in a hurry to please the higher authorities.

To add to this yet another tragic news is of death of two cheetahs due to so-called 'unknown reasons'. Strange it appears that the forest officials have not been able to specify the cause of the death or the cause is being hidden for obvious reasons. After all it was with much fanfare that these animals were released into the Park by none other than the Prime Minister himself.

**O**ne of the cheetah straying into nearby village obviously did it in search of easy prey – humans and cattle. Once the cheetah tastes human flesh it will become man-eater and the end of a man-eater is well known – either in a zoo or being hit by a bullet.

The story of cheetahs in Kuno National Park will then turn into a tragedy. Six more of the Namibian descent will be released in the open forest. Then it could turn into a free for all with so many of them looking for prey, even if the prey is being provided to them.

12 from South Africa will also be free for the wild shortly and together 18 would be looking for prey --- maneaters or cattle lifters?

Amit Mittal |



## FORM IV

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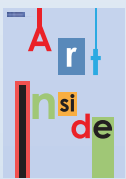


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# The West looks on as Putin pals with Xi Jinping

Russian President Vladimir Putin  
toasts with Chinese President Xi  
Jinping

The relationship between China  
and Russia seems to grow closer as  
the U.S. and China look at each  
other with hostile eyes.



**C**hina's leader, Xi Jinping, may soon be heading to Moscow to visit Vladimir Putin.

President Xi was reportedly more than happy to hail his “no limits” friendship with Putin when he played host in early 2022 to his Russian counterpart — one of the few world leaders to endorse China's controversial staging of the Winter Olympics.

But their very meeting was a signal that Xi was nevertheless still willing to stand with his friend in the face of Western backing for Kiev.

It is typical of China's approach, a mix of caution and support.

China has seized on the opportunity to burnish its credentials as a counterbalance to U.S. power, particularly as their relationship has cooled sharply since Donald Trump first introduced sanctions and Joe Biden expanded them.

Xi regards Putin as an important ally in standing up to U.S. global influence.

Xi certainly does not want to see his friend defeated on the battlefield.

If Russia were to lose the war and Putin fell from power, then China could face the prospect of an unknown leadership in Moscow — possibly even a pro-Western liberal — where at present it is certain of a firm and similarly autocratic ally.

With Russia's army bogged down by Ukraine's

fierce defence of its territory, the overarching question for China must be whether it should move away from its pro-Moscow neutrality and actually supply Russia with weapons.

U.S. intelligence has said that Beijing is indeed actively considering whether to help Putin with much-needed shipments of such munitions as artillery shells and drones.

China has repeatedly denied that it has any such intentions.

But the decision is not a simple one.

One view in Beijing is that if it signals to the U.S. that it won't allow Russia to lose the war then that could encourage the U.S. to push Ukraine towards a peace settlement.

China would much prefer a negotiated solution that would keep Russia as a strong ally. Indeed, it has proposed a 12-point peace plan so vague that it was dismissed at once by the U.S.

Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, was more positive and suggested a meeting with Xi. So far, China has not responded.

Beijing must also be anxious that a Russian defeat would only strengthen the U.S. and the West, which might then turn their attention towards ways to weaken China. This is already a real concern for Xi.

“It (the U.S.) regards China as its primary rival and the most consequential geopolitical challenge,” said Foreign Minister Qin Gang last week. “This is like the first button in the shirt being put wrong. If the U.S. does not put on the brakes and continues to roar down the wrong road, no amount of guardrails can stop the derailment and overturning, and it is bound to fall into conflict and confrontation. Who will bear its disastrous consequences?”

But Chinese analysts are also aware that the dispatch of armaments to Russia could provoke a furious reaction from Washington.

As Zhou Bo, a former colonel in China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA) wrote in the Financial Times: “If Beijing takes Moscow’s side in the conflict then we are already in the dawn of the third world war.”

A cold war would be more likely than armed open conflict between China and the U.S., and still have significant ramifications for China. Rage in Washington, where suspicions about China’s rise and the nature of its ambitions are already intense, could convert easily from current limits on technological exports into much broader penalties on trade.

A hit to economic growth could fuel unemployment and stir up the popular unrest that is Beijing’s greatest fear.

Meanwhile, China has seen the unity of the West in backing Ukraine and must have drawn lessons in relation to Taiwan.

On 20 March, President Xi Jinping arrived in Moscow on a special plane to pay a state visit to Russia at the invitation of President Vladimir Putin.

President Xi was warmly greeted by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko and other senior Russian officials at the ramp.

The military band played the national anthems of China and Russia. President Xi Jinping inspected the honour guard of the three services and watched the march-past.

President Xi Jinping delivered an arrival statement, extending warm greetings and best wishes to the Russian government and people on behalf of the Chinese government and people. He stressed that China and Russia are friendly neighbours connected

by shared mountains and rivers. Our two countries have consolidated and grown the bilateral relationship on the basis of no-alliance, no-confrontation and not targeting any third party, and set a fine example for developing a new model of major-country relations. The growth of China-Russia relations has not only brought tangible benefits to the people of our two countries, but also made important contributions to the development and progress of the world.

President Xi noted that both being major countries in the world and permanent members of the UN Security Council, China and Russia play important roles in international affairs. In a world of volatility and transformation, China will continue to work with Russia to safeguard the international system with the UN at its core, the international order underpinned by international law, and the basic norms of international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

China will work with Russia to uphold true multilateralism, promote a multi-polar world and greater democracy in international relations, and help make global governance more just and equitable.

He is confident that the visit will produce fruitful results, and inject fresh impetus into the sound and steady growth of China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for the new era.



President Xi’s special plane arrived at the Moscow Vnukovo Airport. President Xi was warmly greeted by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko. The Russian side held a grand welcome ceremony at the airport. The military band played the national anthems of China and Russia. President Xi Jinping inspected the honour guard of the three services and watched the march-past.



# 'Dangerous Manoeuvres' in China and Philippines' Sea Chase

A Chinese Coast Guard ship blocked a Philippine patrol vessel in the South China Sea, causing a near collision in waters where Beijing's vast claims have alarmed the US and its allies.

Throughout the 1,670km journey of two Philippine Coast Guard ships over six days Chinese ships shadowed the Filipinos, sending them radio warnings to leave or face **"consequences"**. The Philippine Coast Guard said it had invited journalists to join their routine patrol in the hotly-contested waters for the first time to witness China's actions.

The tense encounter took place near the remote Spratly archipelago last Sunday. It happened the day after Philippines' President Ferdinand Marcos Jr met Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang in Manila, and expressed hope for open communication lines on the South China Sea dispute.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, including the Spratlys, which is also claimed in part by the Philippines. There are also competing claims by Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei and

Taiwan.

This has turned the South China Sea into one of the world's biggest flashpoints, especially as US-China tensions have soared. The reason being these waters is key to defending Taiwan at a time when China's claims over the self-governed island have intensified. And secondly the waterways also host \$5tn of global trade every year, raising concerns that Beijing's increasing footprint could restrict commerce.

But China has ignored an international arbitration court's ruling that its claim to almost the entire South China Sea is ill-founded. It has instead built artificial islands over reefs, heightened patrols, and more recently, shone lasers at Philippine ships to obstruct their view.

When the stand-off happened, the US and the Philippines were in the final days of their largest ever war games. This came on the heels of the US gaining access to key Philippine military bases, many of which face Taiwan.

Eventually the Chinese ship caught up with the Philippine boat, and it became clear that the latter could not outmanoeuvre a vessel more than twice its size. The Chinese ship blocked the way and refused to budge, forcing the Malapascua to turn off its engine to avoid a collision.





# Australian PM Visits INS Vikrant

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese visited INS Vikrant in Mumbai on 09 Mar 23 as part of his visit to India. This is his first bilateral visit to India after he assumed charge in May 2022.

The Australian PM was received onboard by Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff. Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command was also present.

The PM was accorded a guard of honour onboard and briefed about the roles and capabilities of INS Vikrant. He was also introduced to the Light Combat Aircraft. He then interacted with a cross-section of personnel of the Indian Navy. While addressing the media, he underscored the strong diplomatic and military ties between the two countries and announced that Australia, for the first time, will host the 27th edition of the annual multilateral naval wargaming exercise, MALABAR, that is scheduled later this year among the navies of the USA, India, Japan and Australia.

The MALABAR Exercise is an annual multilateral naval wargaming exercise that began in 1992 between the navies of India and the United States. Japan joined the exercise in 2015, while Australia became part of it in 2020.



Australia and India upgraded their bilateral relationship from a Strategic Partnership in 2009 to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) in 2020. Over the years, they have put in place several institutional mechanisms to promote their bilateral cooperation, including high-level visits, annual meetings of Prime Ministers, the Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue, 2+2 Defence and Foreign Ministers' Dialogue, Joint Trade and Commerce Ministerial Commission, Defence Policy Talks, Australia-India Education Council interactions, Defence Services Staff Talks, Energy Dialogue, and consultations of Joint Working Groups on different issues.

In Jun 2020, the two sides signed the pact that enables reciprocal access to military bases for logistics support, the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) that allows the militaries of the two countries to use each other's bases for repair and replenishment of supplies, besides scaling up overall defence cooperation.



# Chief of Royal Australian Navy visit to India

V-Adm Mark Hammond, Chief of Royal Australian Navy (RAN) was on a three-day official visit to India from 09 – 11 Mar 23. During the visit, V-Adm Mark Hammond interacted with Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff, at New Delhi. He was welcomed with an impressive Guard of Honour on the South Block Lawns.

During the interaction, avenues to strengthen the growing cooperation between the two nations and navies, cooperative ways to deal with prevalent/ emerging maritime security challenges, and initiatives to enhance collaboration and interoperability towards realisation of a Free, Open and Inclusive Indo-Pacific/ IOR, were discussed.

Indian Navy closely cooperates with RAN on numerous issues, which include operational interactions such as AUSINDEX, KAKADU and P8 operations, training exchanges, exchange of White Shipping Information and Subject Matter Experts in various fields, all of which are coordinated through the medium of Staff Talks meetings conducted annually.

In addition, warships from both Navies regularly make port calls at each other's ports and interact in multilateral exercises such as MALABAR, RIMPAC, LaPerouse. Both Navies have also been cooperating towards exploring new avenues for collaboration in the areas of Defence industries, Defence innovation and emerging Defence technologies in support of 'Make in India' vision.

CN RAN's visit is an important event in the continued and regular dialogue between Indian Navy and the Royal Australian Navy and it reinforces the Navy to Navy cooperation in keeping with the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two countries.



V-Adm Mark Hammond, Chief of Royal Australian Navy (RAN) welcomed with an impressive Guard of Honour on the South Block Lawns.

# North Korea Warns of serious danger over US-South Korea Deterrence Deal

**N**orth Korean leader Kim Jong-un's powerful sister has warned that a recent US-South Korean deal will lead to a "more serious danger".

Kim Yo-jong said North Korea's nuclear deterrent "should be brought to further perfection", state media reported.

The US agreed to deploy nuclear-armed submarines to South Korea and involve Seoul in its nuclear planning to counter nuclear threats from the North.

In return, South Korea agreed to not develop its own nuclear weapons.

The deal - known as the Washington Declaration - was announced this week during President Joe Biden's talks with his South Korean counterpart Yoon Suk-yeol's in the American capital .

Referring to the agreement, Ms Kim said: "The more the enemies are dead set on staging nuclear war exercises, and the more nuclear assets they deploy in the vicinity of the Korean peninsula, the stronger the exercise of our right to self-defence will become in direct proportion to them."

She warned that the move would "only result in making peace and security of North-East Asia and the world be exposed to more serious danger".

Ms Kim holds a senior position in the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, and is reported to have influence on her brother.

President Biden hailed the deal, saying it would strengthen the allies' co-operation in deterring a North Korean attack.

President Yoon said the agreement marked an

"unprecedented" commitment by the US to deter attacks and protect allies by using nuclear weapons.

China warned against "deliberately stirring up tensions, provoking confrontation and playing up threats".

Under the deal, the US will make its defence commitments more visible by sending a nuclear-armed submarine to South Korea for the first time in 40 years, along with other assets, including nuclear-capable bombers.

The two sides will also develop a Nuclear Consultative Group to discuss planning issues.

Politicians in Seoul have long been pushing Washington to involve them more in planning for how and when to use nuclear weapons against North Korea.

**C**oncern has been rising on both sides about the nuclear threat posed by North Korea. Pyongyang is developing tactical nuclear weapons that can target South Korea, and refining its long-range weapons that can reach the US mainland.

The US already has a treaty obligation to defend South Korea, and has previously pledged to use nuclear weapons if necessary. But some in South Korea have started to doubt that commitment and call for the country to pursue its own nuclear programme.

Korea

# Statement of 18<sup>th</sup> India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission (Jmc)

India's Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and Australia's Minister for Trade and Tourism Senator the Hon Don Farrell met 11 March to discuss next steps for further enhancing the bilateral economic relationship.

Ministers discussed implementation of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), negotiations for the India-Australia Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) and further developing two-way investment. Ministers also discussed engagement in the G20, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The Ministers noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese look forward to swift progress in negotiations and for an early conclusion of an ambitious Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), which will build on the foundation laid by the ECTA, including new areas of trade, investment and cooperation.

CECA will create new employment opportunities, raise living standards and improve the general welfare in both countries. Ministers look forward to concluding CECA as soon as possible, are pleased with the progress resolving various bilateral

technical market access issues and look forward to continuing engagement.

Ministers highlighted the importance of a smooth and timely clean energy transition as both countries work towards achieving their respective net zero goals. Ministers noted the complementary nature of Australia and India's economies and committed to further enhancing economic, technology, and trade and investment cooperation to get to net zero emissions.

Minister Farrell reiterated Australia's strong support for India's G20 Presidency. Ministers agreed that the G20 needs to help the world navigate a pathway back to strong, sustainable and inclusive growth, including accelerating progress to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ministers agreed that Australia and India share high ambition for the IPEF, as evidenced at the special round of IPEF negotiations in New Delhi, and would continue to work together through IPEF on areas of mutual interest, including the clean economy and resilient supply chains.

Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its core. They agreed to build on the success of the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva and reaffirmed their commitment towards improving WTO functions and having a fully functioning dispute settlement system by 2024.

They agreed to work towards a productive engagement in the run up to the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in Abu Dhabi in 2024.

Ministers acknowledged that Australia and India are important trading partners. India-Australia bilateral trade exceeded US\$31 billion last financial year. Both agreed that given the trade complementarities between the two countries, there is considerable potential for significantly enhancing bilateral trade within the next 5 years.

# Credentials



President Droupadi Murmu accepted credentials from Mr Haymandoyal Dillum, High Commissioner of the Republic of Mauritius at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on 24 March, 2023.



President Droupadi Murmu accepted credentials from Mohammed Ahmed Salem Mohammed Rara, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on 24 March, 2023.



President Droupadi Murmu accepted credentials from Mr Istvan Szabo, Ambassador of Hungary at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on 24 March, 2023.

President of India Droupadi Murmu accepted credentials from five foreign Ambassadors/High Commissioners at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 24 March 2023. Those who presented their credentials were:



President Droupadi Murmu accepted credentials from Mr Askar Beshimov, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on 24 March, 2023.



President Droupadi Murmu accepted credentials from Mr Joao Manuel Mendes Ribeiro de Almeida, Ambassador of Portugal at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on 24 March, 2023.

# Tropex-23 – Indian Navy’s Largest War Game

Indian Navy’s major Operational level exercise TROPEX for the year 2023, conducted across the expanse of IOR over a duration of four months from Nov 22 - Mar 23, culminated this week in the Arabian Sea.

The overall exercise construct included Coastal Defence exercise Sea Vigil and the Amphibious Exercise AMPHEX. Together, these exercises also witnessed significant participation from the Indian Army, the Indian Air Force and the Coast Guard.

Set in the Indian Ocean including the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, the theatre of operations for the exercise extended approximately 4300 nm from North to South upto 35 deg South Latitude and 5000 nm from Persian Gulf in the West to North Australia coast in the East, spanning an area of over 21 million square nautical miles. TROPEX 23 witnessed participation of approximately 70 Indian Navy ships, six submarines and over 75 aircraft.

The culmination of TROPEX 23 brings to an end an intense operational phase for the Indian Navy that commenced in Nov 2022.

As part of the final Joint Phase, the Defence Minister spent a day at sea on board the newly commissioned Indigenous Aircraft Carrier Vikrant on 6 March 23. He reviewed the Indian Navy’s

operational preparedness and material readiness wherein the Navy demonstrated operational manoeuvres and various facets of combat operations, including deck operations of indigenous LCA and live weapon firings.

While addressing the Fleets, he lauded the



Operational preparedness of the Indian Navy and emphasised that the country looks up to the Navy to ensure that the economic lifelines and military capabilities of our adversaries are disrupted to the extent where their war-fighting endeavours can no longer be sustained.

He also stated that he is fully reassured that Indian Navy is wholly capable of safeguarding India’s national interests in the maritime domain and will thwart the diabolical designs of any potential adversaries who seek to threaten India’s peaceful existence.



TROPEX 23

## Mod Signs Six Dornier-228 Aircraft From HAL to Further Bolster Operational Capability of Indian Air Force

**M**inistry of Defence, on 10 March, 2023, signed a contract for procurement of six Dornier-228 aircraft for the Indian Air Force (IAF) from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) at a cost of Rs 667 crore.

The aircraft was used by IAF for Route Transport Role and communication duties. Subsequently, it has also been used for training of transport pilots of the IAF.

The present lot of six aircraft will be procured with an upgraded fuel-efficient engine coupled with a five bladed composite propeller.

The aircraft is ideally suited for short haul operations from semi-prepared/short runways of the North East and island chains of India. The addition of the six aircraft will further bolster the operational capability of the IAF in the remote areas.

## Lithium Deposits Found in J & K

**G**eological Survey of India (GSI) carried out a G3 stage mineral exploration project during Field Season 2020-21 and 2021-22 in Salal-Haimna areas of Reasi district, Jammu & Kashmir and estimated an inferred resource (G3) of 5.9 million tonnes of lithium ore and the report has been handed over to the Government of Union Territory of J&K.

GSI proposes to carry out more exploration activities in J&K for identifying lithium resources. The estimated value of lithium in J&K will be estimated on completion of further exploration.

GSI carries out systematic mineral exploration activities for various major mineral commodities including lithium.

In part of Jammu & Kashmir, as a follow up of lithium exploration in Salal Haimna areas of Reasi district, GSI has taken up another reconnaissance G4 stage exploration programme on lithium and

associated mineral in Panasa – Dugga – Baldhanun – Chakar - Sangarmarg (Saro-da-Bas) area of Reasi district during current field season 2022-23 and the work is in progress.

Based on the mapping outcome more exploration programme on various mineral commodities including lithium will be taken up in future in different parts of the country including Jammu & Kashmir.

Geological Survey of India (GSI) and Mineral Exploration & Consultancy Limited (MECL) have taken up a number of exploration projects of lithium and will take up more projects in future.

Ministry of Mines provides 100 per cent funding from National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) to State Governments and private exploration agencies, if they take up lithium exploration projects.

# Grants-in Aid to NGOs for Welfare of Senior Citizens Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (Avyay)

**T**he Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSrC), a component of Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY), under which grant in aid is provided to NGOs/Voluntary Organisations (VOs) for running and maintenance of Senior Citizens Homes (old age homes), Continuous Care Homes. Facilities like shelter, nutrition, medicare and recreation are provided free of cost to the indigent senior citizens who live in such homes.

For monitoring of the projects receiving grant in aid under IPSrC the Department has set up a Project Monitoring Unit (PMU).

The PMU coordinators visit these projects for assess the performance of these projects. In case of a negative report received from the PMU the NGO running the project concerned is provided an opportunity to explain its position. The reply of the NGO is analysed in the Department, and the project is closed if the reply is found unsatisfactory.

## Green National Highway Corridor Project with Financial Assistance of World Bank

**T**he Government of India and the World Bank have signed an agreement for the construction of Green National Highway Corridors Project (GNHCP) in an aggregate length of 781 km in the states of Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, with loan assistance of US \$ 500 million against total project cost of US \$ 1288.24 million (Rs. 7,662.47 crore).

The objective of the GNHCP is to demonstrate safe and green highway keeping in view climate resilience and use of green technologies by incorporating the

provisions of conservation of natural resources using cement treated sub base/reclaimed asphalt pavement, use of local/ marginal material such as lime, fly ash, waste plastic, bio-engineering measures for slope protection such as hydroseeding, coco/jute fibre etc., which will enhance the ability of Ministry to bring Green technologies into the mainstream.

This information was given by Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.



# Organic Farming

**P**aramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) and Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER) stress on end to end support to farmers engaged in organic farming i.e. from production to processing, certification and marketing and post-harvest management support including processing.

PKVY is being implemented in all the States other-than North Eastern States, across the country. MOVCDNER scheme is implemented exclusively in the NE States.

Since 2015-16, an area of 11.85 lakh ha has been brought under organic farming through PKVY scheme and Government also intends to another 6.00 lakh ha area to organic during 2022-23 to 2025-26.

Under PKVY, farmers of various states of the country are provided financial assistance of Rs 50000/ha for 3 years out of which, Rs 31000/ ha / 3 years is provided directly to farmers through DBT for on-farm and off-farm organic inputs. Financial

assistance of Rs 20 lakh/ cluster of 1000 ha for 3 years are provided for value addition and infrastructure creation. Under the scheme assistance is provided @ Rs 7500/ha for 3 years for training and capacity building whereas, Apart from this, Rs 2700/ha for 3 years is provided for certification and residual analysis.

**U**nder MOVCDNER, there is provision of financial assistance of Rs 10000/ha for 3 years for training, handholding and ICS documentation and farmers are provided assistance @ Rs 32500/ ha for 3 years for off farm /on –farm organic inputs.

Under the scheme need based assistance is provided for various component namely Integrated Processing unit @ Rs. 600 lakh, Collection, aggregation and grading unit @ Rs. 10.00 lakh, Integrated Pack house @ Rs 37.50 lakh, Refrigerated vehicle @ Rs 18.75 lakh, Pre-cooling, cold stores, ripening chambers @ 18.75 lakh and Transportation / 4 wheeler @ Rs 6.00 lakh.



# Amritpal Singh arrested after weeks on the run

**S**elf-styled preacher Amritpal Singh has been arrested in Punjab state.

The 30-year-old had been on the run for more than a month after evading arrest in Punjab in third week of March.

He and his supporters have been accused of attempted murder and attacking police officials.

Punjab Police officials confirmed news of the arrest and also appealed for peace.

Singh was arrested from Rode village in Punjab's Moga district at around 6.45am on Sunday, the state's inspector general Sukhchain Singh Gill said in a press conference.

He has been arrested under the National Security Act (NSA), which allows for individuals to be detained without being charged for up to a year. He will be taken to the high-security Dibrugarh jail in Assam state, where some of his supporters have been kept.

Singh shot to prominence in February after hundreds of his supporters stormed a police station, demanding the release of an arrested aide. His campaign brought back memories from the 1980s of a separatist insurgency and subsequent crackdown in Punjab in which thousands of people were killed.

Singh claims to draw inspiration from Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a preacher accused by the government of leading an armed insurgency in the 1980s. Bhindranwale was killed in the army's storming of the Golden Temple in 1984.

The manhunt for Singh spanned several parts of northern India, including the capital Delhi and the states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Nepal had also put him on its surveillance list at India's request.

Police first attempted to arrest Singh on 18 March - thousands of personnel were deployed and traffic blockades were set up across the state to check vehicles.

But he escaped in a dramatic car chase which was live-streamed by some of his associates.

Within hours of Singh's escape internet services in Punjab were blocked - where 27 million people live - restricted the movement of people, and arrested hundreds of Singh's supporters. Many of them were later released.

Akal Takht had asked Singh to surrender to the police and co-operate with their investigation.

Sikh groups in Canada held widespread protests against the government action in Punjab. Protests



were also held outside the Indian High Commission in London, where demonstrators removed the Indian flag. India had strongly condemned the incident and summoned the UK's deputy high commissioner in New Delhi to register its protest.

In San Francisco, pro-Khalistan supporters vandalised the Indian consulate, calling for Singh to be freed.

A couple of weeks after his arrest, Singh had released a video from an undisclosed location, where he termed the crackdown as an "attack on the Sikh community". He had also termed as "unfair" the invocation of the NSA against him and his supporters.

# Now comes Ramayana Yatra train

Indian Railways has decided to operate “Shri Ramayana Yatra” by Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourists train to promote Pilgrimage Tourism. This tour will start from Delhi Safdarjung Railway Station on 7th April 2023 and cover prominent places associated with the life of Lord Rama. The proposed train tour is going to be operated in Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC tourist train having modern amenities.

So far, 26 Bharat Gaurav Trains have been started.

The State of Art Deluxe AC Tourist Train has a host of amazing features including two fine dining restaurants, a modern kitchen, shower cubicles in coaches, sensor based washroom functions, foot massager. The fully air-conditioned train provides two types of accommodation 1st AC and 2nd AC. The train has enhanced security features of CCTV cameras and Security Guards for each coach.

The tour will be completed in 18 days. The first halt of this train will be Ayodhya where tourists will visit Shri Ram Janmabhoomi temple, Hanuman temple and Saryuaarti. Bharat Mandirat Nandigram follows next. The subsequent destination will be Sitamarhi in Bihar wherefrom tourists shall be visiting Sita Ji’s birth place and Ram Janki Temple in Janakpur (Nepal) which will be covered by road. Post Sitamarhi, the train proceeds for Buxar where the sightseeing would include Ramrekhaghat, Rameshwarnath temple followed by a dip into the holy Ganga. The next destination is Varanasi where the tourists will visit the Kashi Vishwanath temple and corridor, the Tulsi Mandir & Sankat Mochan Hanuman Mandir temples. On completion the passengers would be taken to Prayagraj, Chitrakoot by road. Night stay will be provided at Varanasi, Prayagraj and Chitrakoot.

Further, next halt of the train will be Nashik wherein visit of Trimbakeshwar temple and Panchvati will be covered. Next destination after Nashik will be Hampi, the ancient

Krishkindha city. Here the temple of Shri Hanuman birth place and other heritage and religious sites will be covered.

Rameshwaram will be the next destination of this train tour. Ramanathaswamy temple and Dhanuskodi are a part of the visit.

Next halt is at Bhadrachalam where Sita Ram temple will be a part of the tour.

The last stop is Nagpur before the train starts back on its return journey. Ramtek Fort & Temple, where Lord Rama is believed to have stopped over for resting while on exile, is the



sightseeing site at Nagpur. The train returns back to Delhi on 18th day of its journey. Guests will be traveling roughly 7500 kms in this entire tour.

The special tourist train has been launched in line with the Government of India initiative “Dekho Apna Desh” and “Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat” to promote domestic tourism, at a price of Rs. 1,14,065/- per person for 2AC and Rs.1,46,545/- for 1AC class cabin and Rs.1,68,950/- for 1AC coupe.

Package Price covers train journey in AC classes, Accommodation in AC Hotels, All meals (VEG ONLY), all transfer & sight-seeing in AC Vehicles, Travel Insurance and services of IRCTC Tour Managers etc. All necessary health precautions measures will be taken care by providing safe and healthy travel during the tour.

# India History debate after chapter on Mughals dropped

**T**he deletion of a chapter on Mughal rulers from Indian school textbooks has reignited a debate on how history should be taught to schoolchildren.

The discussion was sparked by the publication of a new set of textbooks by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), an autonomous organisation under the federal education ministry. The NCERT oversees syllabus changes and textbook content for children taking exams under the government-run Central Board of Secondary Education.

Other changes include the removal of some references to the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi and the 2002 riots in Gujarat.

NCERT has said that the changes, which were first announced last year as part of a syllabus "rationalisation" exercise, wouldn't affect knowledge but instead reduce the load on children after the Covid-19 pandemic.

But critics argue that the omissions are worrying and will affect the students' understanding of their country.

They are particularly alarmed at the removal of references to the Mughal dynasty and accuse the NCERT of erasing portions of history that Hindu right-wing groups have campaigned against for years.

Many right-wing activists and historians view the Mughals - who ruled large swathes of the Indian subcontinent for centuries - as foreign invaders who plundered Indian lands and corrupted the country's Hindu civilisation.

"Students are learning about our nation's history in a deeply divided time. By removing what is uncomfortable or seen as inconvenient we are not encouraging them to think critically," says Hilal Ahmed, who works on political Islam and teaches at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies.

Supporters of the exercise argue that some degree of course correction in school history textbooks is necessary because

these books gave too much importance to Muslim rulers.

"The Mughal rule was one of the bloodiest periods in Indian history," says Makhan Lal, a historian and academic who has written many chapters for NCERT textbooks.

"Can't we write more about Vijay Nagar empire or the Cholas or the Pandyas instead?" he asks, referring to Hindu dynasties that ruled southern India.

Others, however, say this is an oversimplified and reductive understanding of India's syncretic past.

"What is happening now is a suggestion that the Mughals were peculiarly violent - when in fact violence was part of kingship as an institution everywhere - and that they saw themselves primarily as Muslims, determined to torment Hindus," says historian and author Manu S Pillai.

"The record, however, is more complicated," he adds.

NCERT director Dinesh Saklani has clarified that the history of Mughals is still taught to schoolchildren. The BBC reached out to Mr Saklani for comment but he said he was no longer available

for media queries.

Revisions to the history curriculum are not new in India - textbooks have been revised in the past under different governments.

"So when you remove something arbitrarily, you strip it of its context, making it distortive," Prof Ahmed says.

The chapter that was removed appeared in Class 12 textbooks: Kings and Chronicles: The Mughal Courts.

While history is not necessarily some kind of competition, Mr Pillai says that emotional propositions such as these do end up acquiring a hold in politics and public consciousness.

Brutality, Mr Pillai adds, was not a quality exclusive to the Mughals - kings in general were violent people, and violence was a corollary to power well into the 19th Century.

Besides, Mr Pillai says that Mughals also dominate popular imagination because of just how recent they are as well as the cultural importance they enjoyed even after their reign. We know a lot more about the Mughals, he says, simply because they were more recent - and records of their time exist in great abundance compared with, say, the Cholas who dissolved by the 13th Century.

"Perhaps it is these complexities that students should read about, instead of entirely erasing segments from textbooks," Mr Pillai adds.

Mr Ahmed says it is ironic that a colonial view of Indian history where ancient is seen as a Hindu past and medieval is seen as a Muslim one is being reiterated by some. "You are reducing India's overlapping cultures and religions into a mere insider vs outsider debate, when the past is actually a lot more complicated," he says.

He adds that if key portions of history are removed this arbitrarily, then there would be "a void" in formal education.

"And it would result in a learning of a very different kind."



# The Ultimate Delhi Art Guide

**F**ROM GRAND, HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURAL LANDMARKS TO CUTTING-EDGE CONTEMPORARY ART HOTSPOTS, HERE'S A GUIDE TO ALL THINGS ART IN OUR HOME CITY – CURATED WITH LOVE BY THE INDIA ART FAIR TEAM.

The grand history of Delhi is apparent to anyone who has spent even a day in the city – every part of the sprawling metropolis and national capital is dotted with awe-inspiring historical monuments from centuries past. From impressive forts, tombs, parks, markets, mosques, temples and more, the list of must-see places on any tour-guide website will run to pages and pages. But ask a Delhiite what truly makes this city special, and it'll be the everyday, unassuming nooks and crannies that will be the most dear to them. So, here is our Delhi for you – including the “tourist-traps” that we actually think live up to the hype and the many many little art spots that have made this city truly ours. Welcome to Delhi, make yourself at home.

## THE OLD BROADWAY OF NEW DELHI



With the spectacular India Gate in the centre, Lutyens' Delhi is dotted with cultural gems, including the oldest theatres, performing arts organisations and visual arts centres that have been around since pre-independence days. Lalit Kala Akademi to your left. Kamani Auditorium to your right. The National School of Drama and the Sahitya Akademi, a little way ahead. Triveni Kala Sangam on the first right turn, and Shri Ram Centre for Performing Arts right next to it. To the North, we have one of the absolute anchors of Indian art, the National Gallery of Modern Art with two massive historical buildings housing more than 1700 master-works of Indian art by some of our most important modernists including the ‘first Indian modernist’ Raja Ravi Varma, Bengal school stalwarts Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose and Jamini Roy and the artist ‘to whom Indian belonged’, Amrita Sher-Gil. Walk a little ahead and find Bikaner House – one of the city’s grandest and active contemporary art venues – where exhibitions and events are always taking place.

And there's more! Some of our most beloved galleries including Art Heritage, Art Pilgrim and Gallerie Nvyra are housed in Triveni Kala Sangam, an important cultural and educational centre buzzing with students, artists and those flocking to the famous Triveni Cafe for an afternoon chai. Close by in Connaught Place is historic and modernist-focused Dhoomimal Art Gallery, and DAG, while pioneers of sculpture; contemporary art hubs, Art Indus, Blueprint12, Modern Art Gallery and Palette Art Gallery, folk art champion Gallery Ragini and a wonderful display of the Chennai-based Apparao Galleries at The Lodhi hotel – all situated within a 500 metre radius in this central Delhi neighbourhood. Have a look at who is showing what on the India Art Fair Parallel tab and create your perfect art itinerary.

**LOCATED IN THE HEART OF THE CITY,  
CONNAUGHT PLACE IS YOUR GO-TO  
PLACE FOR DISCOVERING THE BEST OF  
THE CITY'S HISTORY**

**THE SECRETS OF DEFENCE COLONY**



*ONE OF DELHI'S BELOVED RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS, DEFENCE COLONY IS ALSO HOME TO SOME OF INDIA'S LEADING GALLERIES AND FOUNDATIONS, ALL LOCATED AT A WALKING DISTANCE FROM EACH OTHER*

Once the hold-out of veterans of the Indian Armed Forces, Defence Colony was one of the many occupational colonies that sprang up around modern-day Delhi during the 1960s. Now, a major art hub, Defence Colony or Def Col as it's lovingly called, is one of our favourite places to spend our weekends, with its string of iconic galleries right across the street from the bustling lanes of Lajpat Nagar Market.

Vadehra Art Gallery, which has brought and nurtured some of the biggest names in South Asian art to Delhi since 1987, has two spaces here, one each for its modern and contemporary exhibitions. Nearby, Akar Prakar's New Delhi outpost houses one of the most exquisite collections of works from the masters of Indian art, and specially the Bengal school artists. Hidden in the lanes of Def Col is the Shrine Empire Gallery with its unique collection of the best and brightest contemporary artists not just from India, but across South Asia.

Also make sure to stop by Treasure Art Gallery and attend one of Serendipity Arts Foundation's pop-up and artist-led events at their space in the neighbourhood. No visit to Defence Colony, however, is complete without a stroll through the Defence Colony Market, where cutlets from Kent's and a slice of chocolate truffle cake from the iconic Defence Bakery are a must!

**LADO SARAI, THE URBAN ART VILLAGE**

Floating between the old-world charm of Delhi and the new-age charisma of Gurgaon, Lado Sarai is Delhi's response to the idea of an urban village, housing some of the best hangout spots that are removed from the city's hustle and bustle. Enjoy walking around its lanes and bylanes, spotted with countless small boutiques, design ventures, architecture firms and of course some of our favourite galleries nurturing up-and-coming talent – including the cutting-edge Gallery Latitude28, Exhibit320, Foundation of Indian Contemporary Art and Art District XIII, photographers paradise, Wonderwall and rising art space Gallery Art Positive.

In between galleries, look towards the skyline for picture-postcard views of the mighty Qutub Minar that frames the skyline almost like in a postcard. Any history buff must spend a few hours at the impressive Qutub complex, housing ruins and monuments dating from the Sultanate era in the 12th century, and which challenges the Acropolis in its majesty and beauty (top tip: don't miss the hidden Jamali Kamali tomb in the complex for a taste of queer history). Afterwards, walk around Mehrauli for a taste of luxury, with its offering of fashion boutiques, restaurants and art spaces including the folk art-led Ojas Art at 1AQ, PHOTOINK, Art Centrix Space, and GALLERYYSKE in Vasant Kunj and end your day at the ultra-contemporary gallery, Nature Morte at Dhan Mill.

A short drive away, don't miss out on a visit to the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art's Saket space for its beautifully curated shows of the best Indian art, and the spaces defining what's next in art – and check out Khoj Studios, both in the locality.

*WITH THE ICONIC QUTUB MINAR AS ITS BACKDROP, THE LADO SARAI ART DISTRICT IS A HUB FOR EMERGING ARTISTS, DESIGNERS AND CREATIVES*



## ART OUTPOSTS OF OKHLA AND NOIDA



*LOCATING IN CLOSE VICINITY TO THE FAIR VENUE, THE EXPANDING MODERN CITY GETS ITS ALT-ART SPACE IN THE INDUSTRIAL HUB OF OKHLA AND NOIDA*

Ask any member of the India Art Fair team for their favourite Delhi localities and Okhla will probably be on the top of their list. With the NSIC Exhibition Grounds being home to the fair for the longest time, Okhla holds a special place in our hearts.

The modern-day neighbourhood of Okhla has largely developed around the ancient Okhla barrage on the banks of the Yamuna River. An industrial strong-hold, it is not just the industrial warehouses or the Tughlaqabad Fort, but rather the individual contemporary galleries, artist studios and the architectural marvel that is the Jamia Millia Islamia that makes this locality an important stronghold in the art-scene of Delhi. The art spaces here give voice to the latest in the contemporary visual arts, be it Gallery Espace and Studio Art's experimental bent or Pulp Society's celebration of all things print-making. Fun fact: you can make your silk screen prints at Pulp Society's workshop space during their open hours! When in Okhla, get your fill of street food in the thronging lanes of Jamia Nagar.

Situated between Okhla and the industrial hub NOIDA is the Okhla Bird Sanctuary, perfect for a

robust morning walk surrounded by the beauty of the Yamuna river. Drive across the river towards NOIDA afterwards, not just a major centre for developing industries and corporate conglomerates, but also many arts and cultural organisations. Of these, most significant is perhaps the NOIDA Film City, home to large-scale production houses, entertainment giants and news TV channels thriving here, with their close proximity to the national public broadcaster Doordarshan headquarters in central New Delhi. Of course, there are special treats here for us visual art lovers too, with impeccable art the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art's permanent collection and Anant Art Gallery's gallery space both in the area.

## GURGAON, THE MILLENNIUM CITY



*AN EVER-GROWING METROPOLIS, GURUGRAM FINDS ITSELF ENDOWED WITH NEW ARTS AND CULTURAL SPACES AIMED TO INVOLVE A NEW GENERATION OF ARTISTS, CREATIVES AND COLLECTORS*

The millennium city, hub of glistening high-rises and India's corporate capital, Gurgaon, or Gurugram as it is officially known, is the ever-growing base of Delhi's millennials. Not just the perks of modern life, Gurgaon also offers a wealth of contemporary art from across the country. From Museo Camera, the first museum in India dedicated to photography to budding galleries, Gallery Dotwalk are must visit spots between eating and shopping in Cyber City.





# Service Clubs

**S**A service club or service organization is a voluntary non-profit organization where members meet regularly to perform charitable works either by direct hands-on efforts or by raising money for other organizations.

**E**A service club is defined firstly by its service mission and secondly its membership benefits, such as social occasions, networking, and personal growth opportunities that encourage involvement.

**R**Service club, an organization, usually composed of business and professional men or women, that promotes fellowship among its members and is devoted to the principle of volunteer community service.

**V**The idea of the service club originated in the United States and has had its greatest popularity there, though service clubs now exist in many other countries and are often linked in international associations.

**I**Many of today's service clubs got their start as social clubs for business networking, but quickly evolved into organizations devoted more to service than to networking, although networking may still be the primary reason many members decided to join.

**C**A service organization is not necessarily exclusive of ideological motives, although organizations with such defined motives are more likely to identify themselves through their association.

**E**Much like the historical religious organizations that formed the basis for many societal institutions, such as hospitals, service organizations perform many essential services for their community and other worthy causes. In the United States, some of these clubs usually also have a component club organization that is a tax exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

**S**All service clubs have high-principled mottos and creeds, such as Rotary International's "Service Above Self." About half of these clubs are in semi-rural communities and have memberships of less than 50. Most hold a luncheon or dinner meeting each week. The larger service organizations publish magazines that report their activities and also carry articles of general interest. Many of the service organizations have clubs in more than one country.

**E**The idea of creating a civilian service club originated in 1905 with Paul P. Harris, a young attorney in Chicago. His plan of organization envisioned all the

**essential features of the present-day service club and included the classification principle that restricts membership in a given club to a quota from each business or profession. Because meetings were to be held in rotation in members' offices, Harris proposed the name Rotary. Growth was rapid. With the formation of clubs in Winnipeg, Man., Dublin, and London, the name International Association of Rotary Clubs was adopted but was replaced in 1922 by the name Rotary International. By the late 20th century, there were more than 28,000 Rotary clubs in 158 countries, with a total membership nearing 1.2 million.**

**Other clubs of somewhat similar design followed in rapid succession.**

**In 1915 Kiwanis (International) was organized in Detroit, the name being derived from Indian lore suggesting self-expression. Kiwanis clubs may select two members from each business or profession. The International Association of Lions Clubs was organized in Dallas, Texas, in 1917. Lions clubs adopted more lenient rules for admission and did not follow the classification principle rigidly. As a result, their membership increased rapidly, and the Lions soon became one of the largest of the**

service-club organizations.

Other large service clubs include Sertoma (International), 1912; Gyro (International), 1912; National Exchange Club, 1917; Optimist (International), 1919; Civitan (International), 1920; Ruritan (National), 1928; and Cosmopolitan (International), 1933. Major women's service clubs include Altrusa (International), 1917; Quota (International), 1919; Zonta (International), 1919; Association of Junior Leagues International Inc. (International), 1921; Soroptimist (International), 1921; and Pilot Club, 1921.

It is estimated that each year service clubs carry on several hundred thousand local community projects, ranging in complexity from sponsoring bazaars to building and equipping hospitals or summer camps for underprivileged children.

Historically, most service clubs consist of community-based groups that share the same name, goals, membership requirements, and meeting structure. Many of these clubs meet weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly on a recurring established day and time, commonly at a mealtime.

Most of these clubs started with a single club in a single city, but then replicated themselves by organizing similar clubs in other communities. Many of the service club organizations have become worldwide movements, and have obtained official recognition by the United Nations and various governments as non-governmental organizations (NGO).

The May Court Club was founded in Ottawa Canada in 1898 by Lady Aberdeen, the wife of the Governor General. She was a visionary and an advocate for social justice for all, and she believed that women needed to volunteer their time and skills in the community. In addition to May Court she founded the Victorian Order of Nurses and the Council of Women during her time in Canada.

The Rotary Club of Chicago, was formed in 1905 by Paul Harris, an attorney who wanted to create a professional club with the same friendly spirit he had felt in the small towns of his youth. The Rotary name derived from the early practice of rotating meetings among members' offices.






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# Print Leaves a Lasting Impression!

You have read many articles decrying the death of print. These articles tend to shout about the benefits of e-readers, digital magazines, vlogs, and blogging websites. If you were to read all of these articles, you would soon come away with the impression that nobody prints anything anymore.

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