

CWG success will hold Indian athletes in good stead

The Commonwealth Games (CWG), alluding to a happily ever-after between England and its former colonies, may have its legacy issues. And in terms of the competitive yardstick, with the obvious absence of the United States of America, Russia and China, the CWG is considered a notch below the Olympics and the Asian Games. Yet, the CWG has a certain value in being a multi-nation quadrennial event that pits a disparate group of countries split by continents and fused by a shared past linked to the British Empire. It offers athletes one more shot at glory besides inspiring their fans to pursue sport with added vigour. In the latest edition that concluded at Birmingham on Monday, India with a medal haul of 61, inclusive of 22 golds, was placed fourth while Australia, host England and Canada led the charts. With shooting excluded from the CWG, India lost out on an additional yield. Most Indian medals told a tale etched by hope, diligence and hard work. If Sharath Kamal's table tennis exploits, even at 40, proved that sportspersons can fight the dimming light, weightlifter Sanket Sargar's silver in the men's 55kg segment, showed that financial difficulties cannot derail a focused athlete. Four years ago, Sanket used to sell paan from a tiny shop at Sangli in Maharashtra, and his is a story that needs to be cherished. Similar is the personal history linked to weightlifter Achinta Sheuli, who won gold in the 73kg division. Achinta, his brother Alok and mother did embroidery. The siblings also worked in the fields, fighting poverty and coping with the demise of their father. Like Sanket, Achinta's too is a story of hope and redemption. That sport is not always war minus the shooting was evident when Neeraj Chopra effusively praised Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who won gold in the men's javelin. The latest success in the CWG, should hold the Indian athletes in good stead as they prepare for next year's Asian Games in China.

LETTERBOX

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"Don't worry about being successful, but work toward being significant and the success will naturally follow."
Oprah Winfrey

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MUKUL SANWAL EXPLAINS WHY A SHIFT IS REQUIRED TO COLLABORATION AROUND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

A new global vision for G20



While India has taken a clear view of the role of the G20, there is concern that the agenda, themes and focus areas which India will set for 2023 lack vision.

The G20 plays an important role in shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues. It recognises that global prosperity is interdependent and economic opportunities and challenges are interlinked. The challenge is to craft new approaches to overcome the acute global discord.

However, according to the Ministry of External Affairs, in 190 meetings, India will strengthen international support for priorities of vital importance to developing countries in diverse social and economic sectors, ranging from energy, agriculture, trade, digital economy, health and environment to employment, tourism, anti-corruption and women empowerment, including in focus areas that impact the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. Without specificity, India has lost a chance to nudge the G20 and regional organisations towards its focus areas.

The fractured world makes trade-offs, the essence of current multilateralism, difficult and suggests a new model of international cooperation.

First, multilateral commitments on aid and trade are faltering. Governance in a world that is steadily becoming more equal needs institutional innovation. This is because the role of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization in securing cooperation between donor and recipient country groups is losing centrality. There are now three socio-economic systems — the G7, China-Russia, and India and the others — and they will jointly set the global agenda.

Second, Ukraine's long shadow, rival finance, the expanding influence of the trade and value chains dominated by the U.S. and China, and the reluctance of developing countries to take sides in the strategic competition as they have a real choice requires fresh thinking on the nature and form of collaboration from the G20.

Third, the primary role of the G20, which

accounts for 95% of the world's patents, 85% of global GDP, 75% of international trade and 65% of the world population, needs to be reoriented to prevent a clash of ideas to the detriment of the global good. The solution lies in a new conceptual model seeking agreement on an agenda limited to principles rather than long negotiated ad-hoc text. The Rio Declaration of 1992 is an appropriate model. For example, incorporating the three major priorities of each of the groups as part of a global agenda will inform smaller groupings of countries which have issue-based linkages and overlaps between them instead of struggling for meaningful agreement on single concerns of groups which are not even talking to each other.

India should seek collaboration on limited focus areas around science and technology, building on resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and other multilateral bodies.

A new conceptual frame is needed. First, the presumed equality that we are all in the same boat, recognised in the case of climate change, needs to be expanded to other areas with a global impact redefining 'common concerns'. Second, emerging economies are no longer to be considered the source of problems needing external solutions but source of solutions to shared problems. Third, the BRICS provides an appropriate

model for governance institutions suitable for the 21st century where a narrow group of states dominated by one power will not shape the agenda.

The starting point should be building on the global consensus in the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights 1993 reaffirming the indivisibility of all human rights. There is a growing recognition of economic and social rights — for example, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ensuring adequate food, housing, education, health, water and sanitation and work for all should guide international cooperation. Principles of common but differentiated responsibilities for improving the quality of life of all households can guide deliberations in other fora on problems that seem intractable in multilateralism based on trade and aid.

Second, the global agenda has been tilted towards investment, whereas science and technology are the driving force for economic diversification, sustainably urbanising the world, and ushering the hydrogen economy and new crop varieties as the answer to both human well-being and global climate change. Innovation supports dematerialising production and consumption and moving towards renewable sources of energy. The shift in lifestyles in the post-war period created urban jobs in services and retail that made up for the losses to high productivity

manufacturing, and climate change. A forum to exchange experiences on societal benefits and growth as complementary goals would lead to fresh thinking on employment and environment.

Third, harnessing the potential of the digital-information-technology revolution requires redefining digital access as a "universal service" that goes beyond physical connectivity to sharing specific opportunities available. For global society to reap the fruits of the new set of network technologies, open access software should be offered for more cost-effective service delivery options, good governance and sustainable development.

Fourth, space is the next frontier for finding solutions to problems of natural resource management ranging from climate change-related natural disasters, supporting agricultural innovation to urban and infrastructure planning. Analysing Earth observation data will require regional and international collaboration through existing centres which have massive computing capacities, machine learning and artificial intelligence. Open access to geospatial data, data products and services and lower costs of geospatial information technology facilities do not require huge financial resources.

Fifth, public health has to learn from the COVID-19 fiasco with infectious diseases representing a market failure. A major global challenge is the rapidly growing antimicrobial resistance which needs new antibiotics and collaboration between existing biotechnology facilities.

Sixth, overriding priority to development suggests avoiding strategic competition. Countries in the region will support building on the 1971 UNGA Declaration designating for all time the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace and non-extension into the region of rivalries and conflicts that are foreign to it.

Lastly, a Global Financial Transaction Tax, considered by the G20 in 2011, needs to be revived to be paid to a Green Technology Fund for Least Developed Countries.

Mukul Sanwal is a former UN diplomat. Views are personal



RAHUL MUKHERJI ON WHY THE PARTY MUST SELF-REFLECT CRITICALLY TO FATHOM ITS PREDICAMENT

Words of wisdom for the Congress's 'last Mughals'

On the eve of India's 75th year of Independence, we the people of India are groaning under the poison of Hindutva and a rudderless Opposition. Collectively, these two factors are overseeing the destruction of India's political liberalism. There is little hope for constitutional values such as sarva dharma sama bhava (equal respect for all religions under the law), and the same treatment for all citizens. Quite tragically, we are in a situation where India could morph into a Hindu Pakistan, as was willed by the assassins of Mohandas Gandhi.

India's foundational figures had understood the importance of religious diversity. Swami Vivekananda, the patron saint of the Indian youth, had argued for the necessity of religious diversity. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's Indian National Army had consistently worked with all the faiths to defeat the British. Bose's closest associates were Muslims. The experience of the struggle for freedom was enshrined in the constitutional idea of India, that was created by Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, B.R. Ambedkar, Sardar Patel, among numerous other stalwarts.

The legacy of the freedom struggle was the fundamental reason India shocked the world by turning into a resilient democracy with abundant poverty, where civilian control over the military was established. The Congress Party, led by Sonia Gandhi, largely built on those foundations. It not only engendered a rapidly growing and globalising India but even consolidated citizenship rights and welfare. India's growth even surpassed China's during the first decade of the new millennium, while historic financial and human investments were made to redistribute



that wealth. These remarkable achievements are forgotten today.

Today, we find only paper champions defending that idea of India. The once mighty Congress Party, the bulwark of the Indian nationalist movement, is in a state of such disarray that even Opposition parties consider it to be a liability. How is it that a party that governed India for nearly 60 years has been reduced to a sideshow? To comprehend this predicament and evolve, the Party must self-reflect critically on four salient factors.

First, the Congress Party has a leadership problem. It has much to do with those who control the reins of the party in the name of the Gandhis. Sonia Gandhi's managers such as Ahmed Patel, Motilal Vora, Janardan Dwivedi, Oscar Fernandes and Ambika Soni were politically grounded, and well versed with realpolitik.

Second, while experimentation with political tactics is healthy, ideological confusion

is not. Today's Congress high command swings between the extreme right (flirting with soft Hindutva) and the extreme left (flirting with radical anti-establishment ideas). The right-wing leadership matches Hindutva by visiting temples, flaunting the sacred thread, and soft peddling on issues such as the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the dilution of Article 370, and numerous attacks on minorities. Such a disposition of the three Gandhis would have saddened Jawaharlal Nehru.

Third, successful political leadership demands a combination of charisma and astute political management. The charismatic leader can draw the crowds while the political manager strategises elections, makes the machinery of government work, and ensures adherence to the party's ideological agenda.

Nehru had a Sardar Patel to work with. While Nehru articulated the idea of India, Patel ran the party. This model was replicated

under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, which Dr. Manmohan Singh ran, while Ahmed Patel managed the party. The same can be said regarding the political success of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah.

And, finally, the Congress's enviable connections within the state and society have collapsed. The party once commanded an enormous network within the administration, media, civil society, and even with foreign governments. It could raise substantial funds. This infrastructure was a resource that the party could leverage to support less well-endowed parties in a coalition. If it cannot deliver on all these, why should Opposition parties work with the Congress? Yet, the team led by Rahul Gandhi has failed in strengthening old bonds and creating new ties. This is why the Congress's sphere of influence is shrinking rapidly.

The million-dollar question is: where will the Congress go? Will the party gerrymander its internal polls due in September 2022 till a Gandhi is reappointed as president? Or, will it once again delay the election hoping that Rahul Gandhi changes his mind after the Bharat Jodo Yatra (now from September)? In that case, the Gandhis, like Bahadur Shah Zafar and his sons, might well be the Congress's last Mughals. However, they still have the time to invest in the right persons, so that the Congress Party can move forward. This is the best service that the Gandhi can perform for the party, and for preserving much that is precious in India's civilisational journey.

Rahul Mukherji is Professor and Chair, Modern Politics of South Asia, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University, Germany



BOOKS: REVIEW

Tracing journey of Article 370 from cradle to grave

A new book on Article 370 chronicles its journey from the cradle to the grave through a contested birth, lawyerly machinations in its early years, endemic political skulduggery, episodic displays of judicial statesmanship, and a sudden and swift demise.

"Hamin Ast: A Biography of Article 370" by Arghya Sengupta, Jinaly Dani, Kevin James and Pranay Modi tells the story of how Jammu and Kashmir became part of India in 1947, achieved special status in 1950, shared a fractious relationship with New Delhi for the next seven decades, only to be reduced to a Union territory on August 5, 2019.

According to authors, the nullification of Article 370, like its genesis and much of its operation,

was vexed.

"Its formulation was an afterthought to capture the temporary compromise between Srinagar and New Delhi. As relations between the two soured, it became a source of deep mistrust for political forces in Kashmir," the book says.

"The twists and turns of Jammu and Kashmir politics, however, meant that after a tumultuous first decade, Article 370 surprisingly became the mainstay of constitutional relations between India and Jammu and Kashmir; over the next few decades, it was a vehicle of greater integration.

"In the words of (the then) home minister Gulzarilal Nanda, it was 'a tunnel (through which) a good deal of traffic has already passed and more will'. This long journey

'In the words of (the then) home minister Gulzarilal Nanda, it was 'a tunnel (through which) a good deal of traffic has already passed and more will'

of seven decades came to an abrupt halt when the tunnel was razed in 2019," it says.

Historical events and political actors are covered in this book only to the extent that they have a bearing on the drafting, interpretation, operation, and nullification of Article 370.

The authors argue that the emphasis of Article 370 has always been on collective decision-making by



Hamin Ast: A Biography of Article 370
By Arghya Sengupta, Jinaly Dani, Kevin James and Pranay Modi
Navi Books

the representatives of Jammu and Kashmir on the one hand, and the Indian government on the other hand.

The fundamentality of this mutually cooperative decision-making was the cornerstone of the early stages of drafting Article 370, and had remained a central feature of the text of the Article in subsequent iterations of the draft. Ironically, even the erosion of the special status of the state was facilitated by such cooperation, they say.

"In the actions of August 2019, the absolute negation of any participation from Jammu and Kashmir is

squarely antithetical to the original constitutional compact. While that compact, like every other constitutional article, can change, it can change only in the manner that is envisaged. Literal gymnastics may go some way in sidestepping legal difficulties, but if allowed to carry the day, will only do so by extinguishing the spirit of that agreement," they write.

They are of the view that while the nullification of Article 370 was indeed the culmination of a long-standing party-political promise, the nature of a constitutional democracy is such that it requires that party-political promises must also be fulfilled in a constitutional manner.

"Laxity on this front — allowing the adoption of unconstitutional means to fulfil political promises — puts the polity on a slippery slope, where all constitutional norms are destined to become dispensable. This usually does not bode well for the long-term health of democracy and democratic norms of governance," they say.

INTERNATIONAL

US, Australia, Japan urge China to immediately cease military exercises

United States, Australia and Japan have urged China to immediately cease its military exercises and reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. They appreciated ASEAN's statement about the importance of deescalating tension in the Taiwan Strait, according to the statement.

A joint statement was issued by US Secretary of State Tony Blinken, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, and Japanese Foreign Minister Hayashi Yoshimasa after their in-person meeting in Phnom Penh on the margins of the 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

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Sharing the region's desire for diplomacy to avoid the risks of miscalculation, the secretary of state and foreign ministers expressed their concern about the People's Republic of China's (PRC) recent actions that gravely affect international peace and stability, including the use of large-scale military exercises.

They condemned the PRC's



launch of ballistic missiles, five of which the Japanese government reported landed in its exclusive economic zones, raising tension and destabilising the region. The Secretary and the Foreign Ministers urged the PRC to immediately cease the military exercises,

and territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of disputes without resorting to threat or use of force, and freedom of navigation and overflight.

The secretary and the foreign ministers reaffirmed their resolve in supporting ASEAN centrality, and the importance of the Pacific Islands countries as partners in the region, said the statement. Maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is vital, not just for Taiwan but for the Philippines and many other countries, Blinken told reporters during a joint press availability with Philippine Sec-

retary of Foreign Affairs Enrique Manalo. What happens in the Taiwan Strait affects the entire region. In many ways, it affects the entire world because the strait, like the South China Sea, is a critical waterway. Almost half the global container fleet, nearly 90 per cent of the world's largest ships, pass through the Taiwan Strait this year, he said.

Since their missile launches, Beijing has taken an irresponsible step of a different kind: They've shut down eight different areas where our two countries have been able to work together, Blinken said.

Former President Donald Trump will be questioned under oath on Wednesday in the New York attorney general's long-running civil investigation into his dealings as a real estate mogul, he confirmed in a post on his Truth Social account.

Trump's testimony comes amid a flurry of legal activity surrounding him, taking place just days after FBI agents searched his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida as part of an unrelated federal probe into whether he took classified records when he left the White House.

The New York civil investigation, led by Attorney General Letitia James, involves allegations that Trump's company, the Trump Organisation, mis-stated the value of prized assets like golf courses and skyscrapers, misleading lenders and tax authorities.

In New York City tonight. Seeing racist NYS Attorney General tomorrow, for a continuation of the greatest Witch Hunt in US history! Trump wrote on Truth Social, invoking his oft-repeated claims about James, who is Black, and the investigation.

My great country, and myself, are being attacked from all sides," Trump added. "Banana Republic! Messages seeking comment were left with James' office and with Trump's lawyer.

Trump says he's testifying on Wednesday in New York investigation



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Ukraine says 9 Russian warplanes destroyed in Crimea blasts



Ukraine has said that nine Russian warplanes were destroyed in a deadly string of explosions at an air base in Crimea that appeared to be the result of a Ukrainian attack, which would represent a significant escalation in the war.

Russia on Wednesday denied any aircraft were damaged in Tuesday's blasts or that any attack took place. But satellite photos clearly showed at least seven fighter planes at the base had been blown up and others probably damaged.

Ukrainian officials stopped short of publicly claiming responsibility for the explosions, while mocking Russia's explanation that a careless smoker might have caused ammunition at the Saki air base to catch fire and blow up. Analysts also said that explanation doesn't make sense and that the Ukrainians could have used anti-ship missiles to strike the base.

I would rather lose than win on a false promise: Rishi Sunak

Britain's prime ministerial candidate Rishi Sunak has insisted that he would rather lose the Conservative Party leadership race to replace Boris Johnson than win on a false promise on how he plans to tackle the economic crisis.

In an interview with the BBC, the British Indian former Chancellor said he was committed to helping the most vulnerable families with the cost-of-living crisis and felt a "moral responsibility to go further" and provide "extra help" over the winter.

The issue has become the key dividing line between him and his rival, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, who has pledged tax cuts which the former finance minister insists will benefit wealthier households rather than those who need it most.



I would rather lose than win on a false promise, Sunak, 42, said. "What I'm determined to do is help people across this country through what will be a very difficult winter. My first preference is always not to take money off people in the first place," he said. As the candidates continue to be grilled by Conservative Party members who will be voting in the election in hustings up and down the UK, the issue of soaring inflation and prices has dominated the agenda.

"People can judge me on my record, reiterated Sunak in his

BBC interview on Wednesday night, referring to his work as Chancellor through the COVID lockdown. "People can judge me on their record - when bills were going up by around 1,200 pounds earlier this year, I made sure the most vulnerable received around 1,200 pounds," he pointed out. Sunak also promised to "go further" than what he has already announced if elected Prime Minister.

I know millions of people are worried about inflation, particularly the cost of their energy bills. What I've said if I'm Prime Minister I will go further in supporting those families who most need support because the situation is worse than when I announced those measures earlier this year," he said.

Large explosions rock Russian military air base in Crimea



Powerful explosions rocked a Russian air base in Crimea and sent towering clouds of smoke over the landscape Tuesday in what may mark an escalation of the war in Ukraine.

At least one person was killed and several others were wounded, authorities said. Russia's Defense Ministry denied the Saki base on the Black Sea had been shelled and said instead that munitions had blown up there. But Ukrainian social networks were abuzz with speculation that it was hit by Ukrainian-fired long-range missiles.

Videos posted on social networks showed sunbathers on nearby beaches fleeing as huge flames and pillars of smoke rose over the horizon from multiple points, accompanied by loud booms. Crimea Today News said on Telegram that witnesses reported fire on a runway and damage to nearby homes as a result of what it said were dozens of blasts. Russia's state news agency Tass quoted an unidentified ministry source as saying the explosions' primary cause appeared to be a violation of fire safety requirements.

The ministry said no warplanes were damaged. Ukraine's Defense Ministry said sarcastically on Facebook: The Ministry of Defense of Ukraine cannot establish the cause of the fire, but

Dutch man accused in online harassment case found guilty

A Canadian jury found a Dutch man guilty of extortion, harassment and other charges related to a case of a Canadian teenager who was blackmailed to expose herself in front of a webcam.

The 15-year-old later committed suicide after detailing her harassment in a YouTube video watched by millions around the world. The jury in the British Columbia Supreme Court trial of Aydin Coban has found him guilty on all charges he faced, including sexual communication with a young person to commit a sexual offence and possession and distribution of child pornography in relation to the Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, teen Amanda Todd. She was 15 years old when she died by suicide in 2012 after posting a video that described being tormented by an online harasser. The jury's unanimous verdict comes a day after deliberations got underway. Coban was extradited from the Netherlands to Canada in 2020 after being convicted in Amsterdam of similar charges involving dozens of young girls and gay men. Amanda Todd brought the problem of cyber bullying to mainstream attention in Canada after she posted the video on YouTube in which she told her story with handwritten signs, describing how she was lured by a stranger to expose her breasts on a webcam.

Cabinet approves signing of Audio Visual Co-Production Treaty between India, Australia

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the signing of an 'Audio Visual Co-Production Treaty' between India and Australia.

The treaty is a landmark agreement that will facilitate co-production of films between the two countries. Such agreements are enabling documents which facilitate co-production of films between two countries. Such agreements are Umbrella Agreements under which private, quasi-government or governmental agencies enter into contracts to produce films together. India has, so far, signed 15 Audio Visual Co-Production Treaties with foreign countries. Australia has emerged as a preferred destination for shooting Indian films.

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind condemns Israeli barbarism in Gaza

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) President, Syed Sadatullah Husaini has condemned the latest Israeli attack on Gaza. In a statement to the media, the JIH President said: "We condemn the latest Israeli barbarism in Gaza. Taking the excuse of carrying out a targeted killing, the Israeli Defence Forces attacked Gaza's Rafah refugee camp in which 43 civilians were killed including 15 children and four women. More than 300 Palestinians have been wounded. We endorse the statement of the UN Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories who said that: 'Israel cannot claim that it's defending itself in this conflict. Israel's air raids



in Gaza are not only illegal but irresponsible." In fact, we feel that these attacks on innocent civilians amount to war crimes, and Israel must be held accountable and punished by the international community for

this unforgivable brutality." Husaini averred: "Is it not hypocrisy and professing double standards for Western nations to condone the latest Israeli barbarism and stark abuse of human rights by saying that 'they stand by Israel and its right to defend itself'. This not only exposes the complete bias of the West in the Israel-Palestine conflict but also puts a question mark on the integrity and sincerity of the West in desiring an early resolution to the Palestinian problem. Jamaat-e-Islami Hind appeals to the international community as well as the Government of India to pressurize Israel to desist from such open aggression on Palestinians and spare the world of further conflict and violence."

New Survey Elevates Site Reliability Engineering as the force Multiplier for Digital Experiences

Sumo Logic the SaaS analytics platform to enable reliable and secure cloud-native applications, today unveiled the results of the Global SRE Pulse 2022, a survey of insights from the global IT community, which highlights the growing adoption of SRE as a central operating model to deliver digital services and applications. The survey was conducted by DevOps Institute to establish a baseline on the current state of SRE in practice. "With the explosion of digital services, SRE has rapidly evolved to become an essential collaboration center across development and operations teams to deliver digital experiences," said Bruno Kurtic, Founding VP of Product & Strategy, Sumo Logic.

Summit 2022 and Leadership Conference: Special Emphasis on Africa, Asia Pacific Region & Reconciliation between North and South Korea

The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) is hosting "Summit 2022 and Leadership Conference," a five-day international summit with related peace events at the Jamsil Lotte Hotel in Seoul, South Korea, beginning this week.

World leaders from dozens of countries are gathering from August 11-15, 2022, to address paths to global peace, with a special emphasis on Africa, the Asia Pacific Region and reconciliation between North and South Korea.

A highlight of the August 12 opening ceremony is a presentation of a resolution to propose the development of a Peace Charter, which follows on the foundation of the Seoul Resolution signed at World Summit 2022 (February 2022) in Seoul

by former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Prominent international speakers will include: Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, Canadian Prime Minister (2006-2015); Hon. Newt Gingrich, US House Speaker (1995-1999); Hon. Mike Pompeo, US Secretary of State (2018-2021); Hon. Dan Burton, US Congressman (1983-2013); and H.E. Brigi Rafini, Executive General, Community of Sahel-Saharan States and Prime Minister (2011-2021), Niger.

Japan PM names new Cabinet, shifting some over church ties

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida reshuffled his Cabinet on Wednesday in an apparent bid to distance his administration from the conservative Unification Church, whose ties to the assassinated leader Shinzo Abe and senior ruling party leadership caused a major drop in approval ratings. The Cabinet renewal was the second in just 10 months since Kishida took office following the July election victory that had been expected to ensure long-term stability until 2025. But Abe's shocking assassination on July 8 and its impact on politics increased uncertainty as public

In race to win, UK Conservatives accused of ignoring crises

As Britain swelters through a roaring summer, and braces for a cold financial reckoning in the fall, calls for the Conservative government to act are getting louder.

But the Conservatives are busy choosing a new leader, through a prolonged party election whose priorities often seem remote from the country's growing turmoil.

Britons' energy bills have soared and further hikes are coming as the war in Ukraine squeezes global oil and gas supplies. The Bank of England is predicting a long, deep recession later this year alongside 13% inflation. Meanwhile, temperatures in Britain hit 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) in July for the first time ever, and millions are facing limits on water use as England's green and pleasant land dries to a desiccated brown.

There is little sense of crisis among Conservatives as Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and former Treasury chief Rishi Sunak

Lowering taxes, and will offer unspecified help to people struggling to pay their bills.

Critics say neither candidate is grasping the scale of the crisis. Millions of households face a financial squeeze in October, when a cap on household energy bills tied to wholesale prices is next raised. Consulting firm Cornwall Insight forecasts the average household will then be paying over 3,500 pounds (4,200) a year for gas and electricity, more than double the amount a year earlier with a further hike due in the new year.

Martin Lewis, a consumer champion who runs the popular Money Saving Expert website, has warned that we are facing a potential national financial cataclysm, with millions unable to heat their homes this winter.

Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who led the UK during the global financial crisis of 2008, called for Johnson, Truss and Sunak to get together and draw up an emergency budget in preparation for a financial

Israel airstrike kills 2nd top Islamic Jihad commander

An Israeli airstrike killed a senior commander in the Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad, the fighters said on Sunday, their second leader to be slain amid an escalating cross-border conflict.

The killing late Saturday of Khaled Mansour, who led the Iran-backed Islamic Jihad's operations in the southern Gaza Strip, came a day after another Israeli strike killed the militant's commander in the north. Already, the fighting has killed at least 29 Palestinians and seen rockets fired toward Israel in the worst violence between Israel and Palestinian militants since

Summit 2022 and Leadership Conference: Special Emphasis on Africa, Asia Pacific Region & Reconciliation between North and South Korea



the end of an 11-day war in 2021. Meanwhile, tensions could escalate as Jews mark a holy day that will see ultra-nationalist Israeli lawmakers visit a sensitive holy site in Jerusalem, known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary. Such visits can be a frequent flashpoint for violence between Israel and the Palestinians. The Al-Quds Brigades of Islamic Jihad confirmed on Sunday that the airstrike in the southern Gaza city of Rafah killed Mansour and two fellow militants. The militants said the strike also killed civilians as it flattened several homes.

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'LAAL SINGH CHADDHA' wins hearts of most Tamil film celebrities



CHENNAI: Several celebrities from the Tamil film industry have praised director Advait Chandra's 'Laal Singh Chaddha', a remake of the Hollywood superhit 'Forest Gump', saying the film was nothing short of brilliant. The stars, who watched the film at a special show organised for them a couple of days ago, shared their thoughts on the film soon after watching it. National Award winning

director and actor Parthiban said, «Aamir Khan is a great human in the first place. Even if we make a 100 films to spread love, we cannot produce an effect like this. Throughout the film, you are unsure if you should shed tears of joy or whether you should shed tears because of the joy you experience as a result of the excessive love you sense. «I believe at this time and juncture that such a film is necessary for life. This film is necessary not only for the film industry but for society. I haven't watched a film that can equal it in recent times. More than an actor, Aamir is just a great human who is spreading love through this film.»

Actress Khushbu, who is also a politician belonging to the BJP, took to social media to share her thoughts. She said, «Thank you so much for such a fab evening, Aamir Khan. Always a pleasure to meet you and share thoughts. Must say 'Laal Singh Chaddha' is such a heart-warming, soul-stirring film. And you are simply brilliant. Congratulations to the entire team.»

Later, in a byte, the actress said, «The film, right from its first frame till its last, brought a smile on my face without even me realising it. It gives you a sense of satisfaction.»

'If you make a good movie, trolls can't stop people from seeing it': Milind Soman

The Aamir Khan-starrer 'Laal Singh Chaddha' hit the theatres on Thursday. And the movie is evoking mixed reviews from the critics as well the audience.

Even before the release of the film, it faced a lot of 'hate' from netizens as the call for 'Boycott Laal Singh Chaddha' was trending on social media ever since the poster of the movie was made public. Several Bollywood stars came out in support of Aamir and even the actor himself requested people to watch the movie before making any decision. To this, supermodel and actor Milind Soman, too shared his views. Speaking exclusively to media, he said "trolls can't stop a good film".



POTPOURRI



Farmers shout slogans as they carry an effigy of India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a protest against the Electricity Amendment Bill 2020 and the move to privatise the power distribution in the Union Territories, in Amritsar. PHOTO-PRABHJOT GILL

Raju Srivastava 'critical and on ventilator' following heart attack

Popular comedian-actor Raju Srivastava is "critical and on ventilator" in the intensive care unit (ICU) of the AIIMS, said hospital sources on Thursday. Following a heart attack on Wednesday, the 58-year-old stand-up comic was admitted to the hospital where he underwent angioplasty. "He is critical and on ventilator in the ICU," the source told.

Srivastava's cousin Ashok Srivastava had on Wednesday evening said the comic suffered a heart attack while exercising. "He was doing his routine exercise and while he was on the treadmill, he suddenly



fell down. He suffered a heart attack and was immediately taken to the AIIMS hospital," he had told to media, adding that the actor-comedian's wife Shikha Srivastava had reached Delhi.

Taapsee reveals reason behind not appearing on 'Koffee With Karan'

MUMBAI: Bollywood actress Taapsee Pannu, who is currently gearing up for the release of her upcoming film 'Dobaaraa', shared why she hasn't been on the Karan Johar-hosted popular chat show 'Koffee With Karan'.

During a promotional event, while Taapsee Pannu and Anurag Kashyap were promoting their film 'Dobaaraa', Karan Johar was in the adjacent room promoting his chat show. Taking note of that, the media probed Taapsee about the reason why she hasn't been invited to Karan's show. Answering the question, the



actress said in jest that her sex life is not interesting enough to be invited on 'Koffee With Karan'. Taapsee is known for her quick-wit responses and this one seems to be an on-point remark as the latest season of 'Koffee With Karan' has so far been circling sex talks of all topics discussed during the episodes. Talking

Ishwak Singh wraps shoot of movie 'Bas Karo Aunty!'

Actor Ishwak Singh on Monday completed shoot of his upcoming feature film 'Bas Karo Aunty!'.

Backed by filmmaker couple Nitesh Tiwari and Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari, the young-adult comedy drama is directed by debutant filmmaker Abhishek Sinha. Singh, best known for starring in shows such as "Pataal Lok" and "Rocket Boys", shared the news in a post on Instagram along with a short video clip from the sets. "Thank you all for letting me tap dance the happy feet way! he wrote in the caption. Also starring Mahima Makwana of Antim: The Final Truth fame, the movie is based on Varun Agarwal's bestselling book How I Braved Anu Aunty and Co-Founded a Million Dollar Company.



Girls tie sacred threads or 'rakhi' onto the wrists of Border Security Force (BSF) personnel during a ceremony observing the festival of Raksha Bandhan at the India-Pakistan Attari-Wagah Border Post about 35kms from Amritsar on Thursday. PHOTOS-PRABHJOT GILL



Prime Video announces season 2 of 'Mind the Malhotras'

Streaming platform Prime Video on Wednesday announced that comedy-drama "Mind the Malhotras", starring Mini Mathur and Cyrus Sahukar, is set to return for a second run.

Prime members in India and across 240 countries and territories worldwide can stream the series starting August 12, according to a release. Directed by Sahil Sangha and Sangha and Karan Sharma, "Mind the Malhotras" is the Indian adaptation of the Israeli show "La Famiglia" distributed by Armoza formats.

The first season gave viewers a peep into Rishabh (Sahukar) and Shefali's (Mathur) midlife marital issues, which will continue in season two with more drama, fun and entertainment quotient as they prioritise individual professional goals. Playing Shefali Malhotra, said Mathur, has given her enormous love, appreciation, and admiration from the audience. I'm super-excited to get into the skin of my character again, give her some more shades and grow as an actor. I hope that Rishabh and Shefali's not-so-perfect life tugs at the heartstrings of viewers just like the previous season. Without divulging more, I can safely say that 'Mind the Malhotras' Season 2 will be messier, crazier, funnier, and a lot more relatable, the actor said in a statement.

Anshuman Jha, Sierra Winters to tie the knot in October

Actor Anshuman Jha on Wednesday said he is set to get married to his partner Sierra Winters in October in the US.

Jha, best known for featuring in Dibakar Banerjee's acclaimed film 'Love Sex Aur Dhokha', shared the news in a media statement.

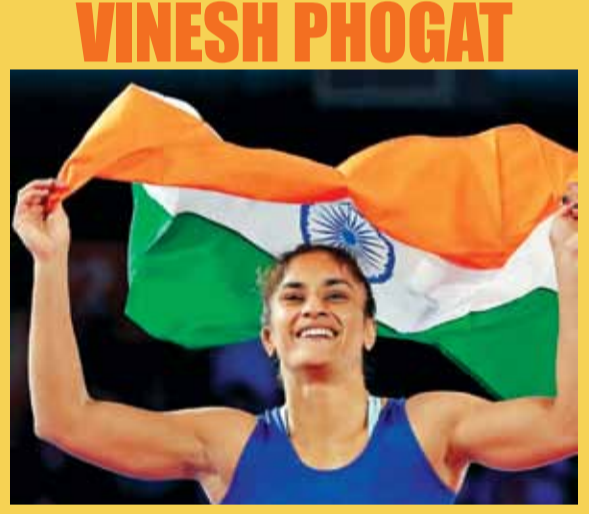
The actor said the pair will exchange vows in twin ceremonies, one in the US in October, followed by traditional Hindu nuptials in March 2023. "I feel like she is my mom's blessing to me. We are excited to have our first ceremony in America, followed by the Indian leg.

"Sierra always wanted to have an Indian ceremony & Ma would have wanted that too. It will be a private affair at both the places because that's what we both believe in," Jha said in the statement.

The couple got engaged in 2020. On the work front, Jha will begin shooting for Harish Vyas' film 'Hari-Om' in September.



If I am training right I become my own psychologist: VINESH PHOGAT



A drastic change in training regimen and the extra push that her family gave enabled Vinesh Phogat to turn the tide after a forgettable last 12 months during which she "hit rock bottom mentally".

A premature exit from the Tokyo Olympics, where she went in as the top seed, injury issues and run-ins with the wrestling federation pushed her into an abyss. The 27-year-old's existing training methods were not yielding results. She had to go back to the drawing board.

After undergoing an elbow surgery in September, Vinesh only wanted to get her training right. "If my training is going right, I feel fine mentally as well," she said after easing to a 53kg gold at the Commonwealth Games here on Saturday. "Only I know what I have done to win this medal. It feels a lot more special considering what I have gone through over the past 12 months," said Vinesh who is now a three-time CWG gold medalist.

Vinesh, who had to really dig deep to win the trials to make the CWG squad, was struggling for sparring partners in her category. The women were not strong enough so she decided to train with the U-15 boys.

"She was not getting the required training earlier, now she is. That is the difference according to me," said national coach Jitender Yadav on Vinesh's victorious comeback. The star wrestler herself got emotional while talking about her struggles since the Tokyo Olympics.

"I had lost my confidence, I feel I have found it now. It happens with all the athletes at some point. Only I know what pains I have taken to be here. I had hit rock bottom mentally, I was not able to digest what was going wrong with me."

Forward Rahim Ali extends stay at Chennaiyin FC



Indian team forward Rahim Ali has extended his stay at Chennaiyin FC till 2024, the two-time ISL champions announced on Tuesday. Ali is among the handful of members of the Chennaiyin squad that reached the ISL final in the 2019-20 season. He has made 40 appearances for the club spanning over three years. "I'm very happy to sign a new contract with Chennaiyin FC. There was never a doubt in my mind. I'm not going anywhere," Ali was quoted as saying in a release. The 22-year-old is also a current member of the national team, having made six appearances since his debut in September last year.

Virat Kohli has all tools to come out of batting slump: Jayawardene



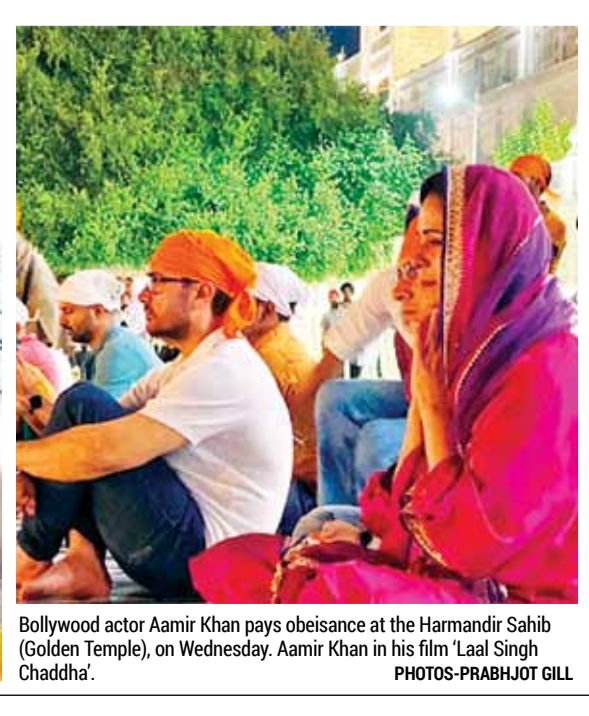
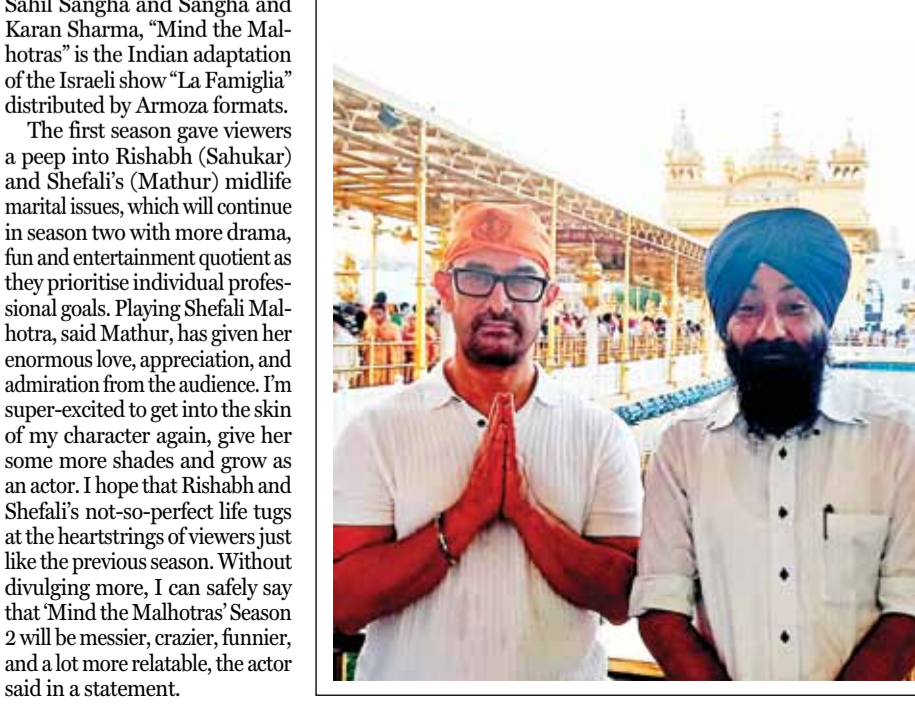
Star India batter Virat Kohli is a quality player and has all the tools needed to come out of his prolonged dip in form, said former Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene.

Kohli and a fit-again KL Rahul on Monday returned to a 15-member Indian squad for the Asia Cup scheduled to be held in Dubai and Sharjah from August 27 to September 11.

Kohli is enduring his worst slump in form and has not scored a century in international cricket since November 2019. His last assignment was the England tour where he could manage just 76 runs from six innings across formats, which included the rescheduled fifth Test, two ODIs and as many T20s in July. The former skipper was rested for limited over West Indies tour and the upcoming ODIs against Zimbabwe.

"It is unfortunate what Virat is going through right now at the moment, but he is a quality player," said Jayawardene in the latest episode of The ICC Review show. "I believe Virat has the tools to come out of it (the form slump). He has done that in the past as well and I'm sure he'll come through this. Class is permanent and form is temporary."

Rahul, who did not feature in the T20 series against the West Indies due to COVID-19 and then underwent a sports hernia surgery, will be back as vice-captain during the Asia Cup. Jayawardene feels lack of game time could be a problem for Rahul as he gears up for the tournament.



Bollywood actor Aamir Khan pays obeisance at the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple), on Wednesday. Aamir Khan in his film 'Laal Singh Chaddha'. PHOTOS-PRABHJOT GILL

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