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**НА ЗАПАД?
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EDITORIAL

The contemporary world order has assumed arguably the most malleable version of itself in recent times. The slightest change in global power dynamics has the potential to cause a ripple effect that could bring about untold levels of destruction worldwide. Russia has quite rightly perceived NATO's advances towards Ukraine as a threat to her own sovereignty and interests, fortifying her border with the former Soviet satellite using state-of-the-art weaponry. In doing so, Russia has sent a clear message to US-led NATO regarding its intent to maintain the status quo by not allowing Ukraine to come into the latter's fold. The United States and its NATO allies have been demanded to halt their eastward expansion and refrain from diluting Ukraine's role as a "buffer- state" between the two rivals. Whilst diplomats scramble to find a peaceful resolution, tensions have already escalated to such an extent that Ukrainian officials have tipped a Russian invasion to be imminent as early as this month. Direct talks between US President Joe Biden and Russian premier Vladimir Putin have failed to deliver a solution thus far.

Domestically, electoral politics threatens to ostracise minority communities thereby further derailing the spirit of communal harmony which once used to be the hallmark of our democracy. A 'Dharma Sansad' or 'Religious Parliament' was organised and attended solely by certain self-professed proponents of Hindutva, who made provocative remarks against Indian Muslims and Christians which also accompanied calls to "pick up arms" to defend their religion. The attendees of this event quite evidently subscribe to the school of thought which considers Mahatma Gandhi's ideals incompatible with their vision of establishing a theocracy, for every attempt was made to tarnish his name and hail that of his murderer. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was issued life threats, with one of the speakers openly stating that he should be shot. Over a period of 3 days, the holy city of Haridwar was exposed to a level of hate which it had never witnessed before. Communal tendencies are at the verge of being stoked yet again.

As we head into the new year, it is prudent to be cautiously optimistic about the state of affairs both domestically and abroad. The balance of our world is delicately poised, and we must strive to keep it intact. As tensions escalate internationally and election season approaches in India, the spread of misinformation shall be an unfortunate recurring theme. The key to identify false news and avoid it altogether is to always use credible sources and not be overwhelmed by immediate panic. We must never lose sight of the fact that social media is not a gospel of truth.

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The Electoral Reforms Bill: An Obstacle to Indian Democracy?

Poorna Samant, F.Y.B.A.

In light of the approaching elections, the Indian government has considered a proposal to link electoral Voter Identity Cards to each individual's Aadhaar number. This move is mostly to prevent the same person from being enrolled in multiple constituencies. The plan requires changes to India's existing electoral laws. According to the Election Commission of India, this will prevent duplicate entries in the electoral rolls and purify it in a sense.

This linkage, according to the Indian government, the ECI, and the UIDAI, will assist to improve the precision of the rolls by preventing cloning and eliminating duplication. It is said to introduce advanced voting techniques, such as internet-based voting, into the electoral rolls. In response to the foregoing, the government passed a bill amending the existing law. Both houses of Parliament, the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, have approved the bill. The bill proposes to amend the 1950 and 1951 Representation of People Acts. By replacing the word 'wife' with 'spouse,' the new provisions in the bill have been very inclusive of gender-neutral expressions.

Opposition parties have expressed concerns about the bill's breach of citizens' privacy and liberties. A member of parliament, Asaduddin Owaisi, has made compelling arguments against the bill. He has criticized the Indian government for proposing to attack the basic foundation of a citizen's right to privacy in the country. As a result, the proposal has been alleged to be in violation of the Fundamental Rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. The idea, according to the opposition parties and Owaisi, is unconstitutional. Many of them are fearful that the government will use it for 'voter suppression'. The bill itself questions the independence assured by the constitution for the Electoral processes in India. The government's discretion in clarifying why such a large amount of data is required has been concerning. Apart from the argument of administrative assistance, the government has been completely unresponsive about the potential of this bill to intrude upon citizens' privacy.

The proposal has raised serious concerns about India's democracy. The amendments have made significant progress in promoting gender-neutrality in India. On the contrary, it has been asserted that the legislation violates citizens' fundamental right to privacy.

India's Viraasat and Vikaasat – Kashi Corridor

Poorna Samant, F.Y.B.A.

The exquisite Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi has been in the spotlight for quite some time, and it is also said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ideal project is the Kashi Vishwanath corridor. The project would link the iconic temple to the ghats along the Ganga's banks. On December 13, Prime Minister Modi launched the first phase of the Kashi Corridor project. Around 23 new structures have been launched as part of the project, including a tourist facilitation centre, a Vedic *kendra*, a city museum, and a viewing gallery. PM Modi has been portrayed as "the greatest Hindu Leader" by the BJP for renovating temples and making an effort to develop the surrounding environment. They also claim that Narendra Modi is the only leader in this generation who has come close to matching the achievements of Maratha Queen Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore.

The project entails providing pilgrims with a smooth 400-meter walk with escalators and ramps that will make it easier for them to commute from the ghat to the historic temple. The project's foundation was laid in the year 2019. With greater amenities and cleaner roads, the Kashi Corridor project is expected to enhance tourism. The first phase, which is stretched across an area of around 5 lakh sq feet, cost 339 crores. The project is estimated to cost around 800 crores, with approximately 300 properties acquired for its implementation. According to Narendra Modi, the project is a "symbol of India's Sanatan Culture."

The Prime Minister used the terms 'Viraasat' and 'Vikaas' to encourage the country's citizens to work together to maintain India's culture and legacy in a constructive way. The BJP maintains that PM Narendra Modi has worked diligently to preserve India's culture and heritage, from the Somnath temple to Kedarnath, and from the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya to the Vishwanath temple in Varanasi and has assisted India in enhancing its beauty to the world.

Hate speech : A Mainstream Notion in India

Payal Ghogre, F.Y.B.A.

Incidents of hate speech have become frequent occurrences throughout the nation. One such incident took place in Haridwar wherein a three-day 'Dharma Sansad', also referred to as a religious parliament was held from 17th to 19th December. During the course of this period, abundant and blatant hate speech was witnessed on stage. There was shameless "Muslim-baiting" and incitement of Hindus to violence and genocide to propagate and achieve the venomous vision of a "Hindu Rashtra". Footage of the incident also showed some Hindutva leaders threatening the audience about the consequences of celebrating Christmas and Eid. This vile discourse took place in a secular country and in the presence of Ashwini Upadhyay (BJP leader). No actions have been taken against the inflammatory speech.

It is not the first time that people close to the ruling party have been seen openly spreading hate. The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, has been seen multiple times spreading hate against Muslims. In another instance of hate speech at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, many right wing groups gathered to influence people for the establishment of a Hindu Rashtra. They also spoke about how they should unite and take steps to create terror against the Muslims. These leaders roam freely in a diversified country like India after making such incendiary remarks, while many youth political leaders in our country are still behind bars for crimes they did not commit.

It's time that the people of India take a stand for our preamble, the opening line of which says "WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC".

Rape is Not a Joke

Payal Ghogre, F.Y.B.A.

On 16th December 2021, it had been nine years since the Nirbhaya incident, yet hardly any quick resolutions are taken in rape cases. The women in our society still do not get the life they deserve. Even though the government has provided them with laws and rights, the proper implementation of these has been a challenge owing to a patriarchal society. On the 9th anniversary of the Nirbhaya case, MLA Ramesh made a rape joke on the floor of the Karnataka legislative assembly. He stated that when rape is inevitable, one should lie down and enjoy it. This was followed by the other ministers laughing at this audacious statement, showing how obsolete the mentality of our society is. This is not a joke, but a matter of serious concern needing to be dealt with. This is not the first time an Indian minister has made comments on this subject that are uncalled for. The former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav infamously remarked "Boys will be boys, they commit mistakes." He has also been seen promoting victim blaming. A minister has even said that rape doesn't even exist in Indian culture. When several women MLAs raised the issue as soon as the Karnataka Assembly convened, the speaker asked them not to take the issue further! The whole nation can recall how it united for Asifa's fight for justice. On December 21, the bench of Justices ordered the suspension and granted bail of Anand Dutta; one of the accused in the case related to not only rape but also murder of a minor girl in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district. The eight year old girl was raped and murdered in a temple by a priest; she is not in the world anymore but her accused are 'granted' bails!

The Indian government is a system of checks and balances. The judiciary has the right to interpret the constitution and provide justice to the citizens; if however it fails to do so, where should our expectations lie then?

Promotion of Parental Abuse by Smriti Irani

Payal Ghogre, F.Y.B.A.

According to the World Health Organization, about 3 out of 4 children face physical, sexual or emotional violence from their parents or guardians. Abuse of a child can come in numerous forms and can lead to a variety of consequences. Most of the time the gateway for children's trauma has been parental abuse. On 21st December, Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani took to Instagram to joke about how she was disciplined during her childhood. In her post, she stated, "When I was a kid, they didn't take me to a psychologist... My mom was able to open my chakra, stabilise my karma and clean my aura with one single slap." Many netizens hit out at her for endorsing and normalising child abuse being the Union Minister for Women and Child Development, whilst also disregarding the importance of mental health in a country that already considers it a taboo. The minister posted her so-called joke as she laughed at it in the caption, also asking others if they had gone through the same experiences. Many rebuked in an instant calling her out for encouraging parental abuse. People took to different social media platforms like Twitter to call this "shameful", asking if she was advocating corporal punishment, and even as far as calling the country a circus.

India, a country with the third highest number of people living with mental illness, has been criticised for its treatment of those with mental health issues. Such issues are common, and even seen as a part of life. Smriti Irani is a prominent leader in the country, and such tone-deaf remarks are sure to have a bad influence on the masses by normalising child abuse. She also promotes abuse while cracking her joke, neglecting the amount of trauma it causes people. A study on child abuse done in 2007, conducted by the same Ministry of Women and Child Development revealed that across different kinds of abuse, it is young children in the 5-12 year group that are most at risk of abuse and exploitation. This involves physical, sexual as well as emotional abuse. Two out of every three children were physically abused.

Hence, the ministry itself knows very well how child abuse is prevalent in India but still chooses to ignore it.



Monetary Policy Report

Aditi Prasad, F.Y.B.A.

The Reserve Bank of India has released the Monetary Policy Report for the month of December 2021. This report is published by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of RBI, which is a statutory and institutionalised framework under the RBI Act 1934, for maintaining price stability while keeping in mind the objective of growth. The statement of the Governor highlighted the current scenario of the economy as well as he projected many plans to modify the economy towards growth. On the basis of an assessment of this current and evolving macroeconomic situation, the MPC has decided to keep the policy rate unchanged for the 9th time in a row to maintain an accommodative stance. The unchanged policy rates are as following: **1. Repo Rate-** it has been decided to keep the policy repo rate under the Liquidity Assessment Facility (LAF) unchanged at 4.0%. **2. Reverse Repo Rate-** it remains unchanged at 3.5% **3. Marginal Stability Facility-** it remains unchanged at 4.25% **4. Bank Rate-** it remains unchanged at 4.25%.

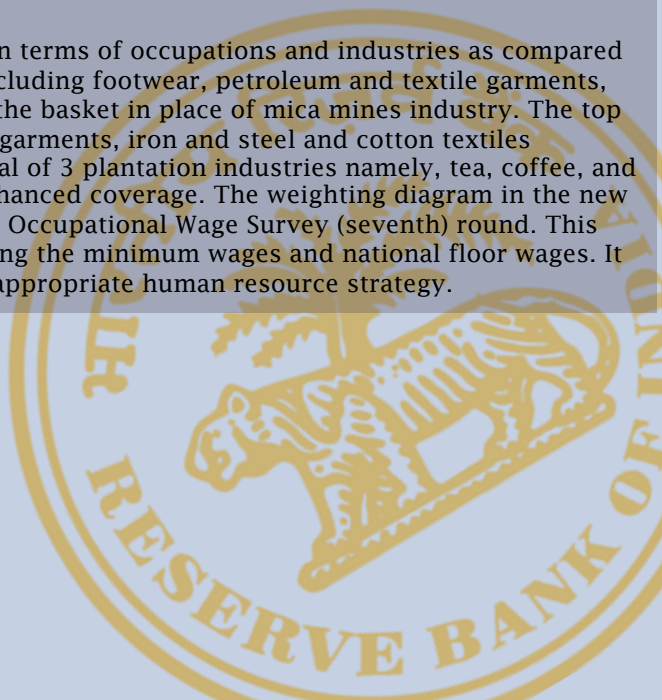
The MPC has also decided to revive and sustain growth on a durable basis and to mitigate the effect of COVID-19 on the economy with the continuation of accommodative stance, while ensuring that inflation remains within the target. For a reference, accommodative stance means that the MPC is willing to either lower its rates or to keep them unchanged. This stance allows the fiscal reserves to increase in relation to national income and also it encourages more spending from consumers and businesses by making money less expensive to borrow. The RBI has allowed the banks to infuse capital in their overseas branches as well as to free them with the approval of the RBI to meet regulatory capital requirements. According to the report, the recovery in domestic economic activity is increasing with the expansion in vaccination coverage, slump in COVID-19 cases and normalisation of mobility. With the assumption of no resurgence in COVID-19 cases in India, the projection for real GDP growth is retained at 9.5% in 2021-22 consisting of 6.6 percent in Q3; 6.0% in Q4:2021-22. Real GDP growth is projected at 17.2% for Q1:2022-23 and at 7.8% for Q2.

Wage Rate Index

Aditi Prasad, F.Y.B.A.

The Labour and Employment Ministry has released the new series of Wage Rate Index (WRI) with the base year being 2016. It is based on the recommendations of the International Labour Organisation and the National Statistical Commission. The government intermittently revises the base year of WRI to provide a better picture of economic changes and record the wage pattern of the workers, to be compiled and maintained by the Labour Bureau. The new series of WRI with base 2016=100 will replace the old series with base 1963-65. The WRI is the number that measures the relative changes in wage rates over a period of time. On the other hand, base year is the first year in the series of the years, generally set to an arbitrary level of 100. This time, this new series has been compiled on a half-year basis which will be on the first of January and July every year as against the annual in the existing series.

The new WRI has enhanced the scope and coverage in terms of occupations and industries as compared to old series. In the new series, 16 new industries including footwear, petroleum and textile garments, whereas oil mining industry has been introduced in the basket in place of mica mines industry. The top five industries of motor vehicles, coal mines, textile garments, iron and steel and cotton textiles together account for 46% of the total weight. The total of 3 plantation industries namely, tea, coffee, and rubber have been retained in the WRI basket with enhanced coverage. The weighting diagram in the new WRI series has been prepared from the results of the Occupational Wage Survey (seventh) round. This revised base will play an important role in determining the minimum wages and national floor wages. It will also provide useful tips to employers to decide appropriate human resource strategy.



SEBI Bans Derivative Trade in Agriculture Commodities

Aditi Prasad, F.Y.B.A.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has banned the derivative trade of 7 agricultural commodities on the future's platform of National Commodities and Derivatives (NCDEX) for a year. It has banned derivative contracts of trade for chana, wheat, paddy, soyabean, mustard seeds, crude palm oil and moong for a year. The commodity derivatives market has been prone to such suspensions of trading in agriculture items ever since it was introduced under the former Forward Markets Commission (FMC). For the reference, derivatives are the instruments that include security derived from a debt insurance share, loan, risk instrument, or contract for differences of any other form of security or contract that derives its value from the index of prices of underlying securities. These are financial contracts to obligate the contracts' buyers to purchase an asset at a pre-agreed price on a specified future date. These contracts are generally used for hedging risks, to determine the price of an underlying asset.

Derivatives also increase the efficiency of financial markets. There are certain reasons that has led to the suspension of these seven commodities. One important reason is to decrease the rising food inflation as the primary factor behind India's retail inflation is the food inflation only. There has been a rise in food inflation from 0.85% to 1.87% over this period. Also, the Wholesale Price Index-based inflation has remained in double digits mainly because of surging prices of food items, so suspension of these commodities will somehow halt the inflation. Another reason is to insulate future price shock as Rabi output might be affected because of fertiliser shortage. With the suspension of such commodities for trade, there will be certain impact on the economy. For example, traders will be clueless on future sentiment with the suspension of rabi crops which are sown during winter; traders will rush to square off open positions on derivatives. The high volatilities of derivatives expose them to huge losses.



India's Central Asia Push

Vishesh Singh, S.Y.B.A.

India is inviting Kazakhstan's Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Uzbekistan's Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Tajikistan's Emomali Rahmon, Turkmenistan's Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow and Kyrgyzstan's Sadyr Japarov as the chief guests at the Republic Day parade. According to previous reports, the government was considering to invite the heads of the BIMSTEC countries, which include Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal, and Bhutan. However, when that plan failed, the government decided to extend an invitation to the Central Asian Republics. This will be the first time that the heads of all the Central Asian Republics will participate as chief guests on Republic Day.

Due to the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, the current situation in Central Asia has become critical. Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan are three of the five countries that share a border with Afghanistan. India has previously engaged with these countries in an effort to bring peace to the region following the Taliban's takeover of Kabul and the collapse of the Ashraf Ghani government, citing the security risks that the region poses to India as a result of rising radicalism and terrorism.

The National Security Advisors of the five Central Asian countries recently met in Delhi for NSA Ajit Doval's regional security dialogue on Afghanistan. All of them had expressed their concern at the current situation in Afghanistan. The Central Asia region is also rich in uranium deposits and various other resources which can serve India's growing energy needs. Moreover, according to various geopolitical analysts 'anything that spills over into Central Asia has the potential to progress towards Russia and China'. The invitation to the five heads also demonstrates India's focus on creating a multi-polar world order and also in establishing itself as a world power.

Russia-NATO Conflict

Swaraj Verma, F.Y.B.A.

The tensions between Russia and the West over Ukraine are highest since Euromaidan and the annexation of Crimea by Russian forces in 2014.

According to the satellite photos captured by Western intelligence agencies it has been alleged that Russian hardware including self-propelled guns, battle tanks and infantry vehicles were on the move near a training ground roughly 300 km from the Russian- Ukrainian border. According to them, the Russian forces amount up to 100,000 while Kyiv believes the force boasts an even greater strength.

The Kremlin has repeatedly denied any plans to invade Ukraine, maintaining that Russia does not pose a threat to anyone while American intelligence reports state that a Russian invasion of Ukraine is possible as early as next month. Since 2014, the United States has committed more than \$2.5 billion in military aid to Ukraine. Moscow views NATO's increasing weaponry, training, and personnel support for Ukraine as a challenge to its own security. It has also accused Ukraine of increasing its own troop strength in preparation for an attempt to take control of the Donbas region, a claim which Ukraine refuses to accept.

Ukraine serves as an imperative buffer between Russia and the West for the United States and the European Union, and with tensions with Russia on the rise, the West is becoming increasingly determined to keep Ukraine out of Russian control. Russia is moving a huge number of troops along the border in the hopes of receiving assurances that Ukraine will not be inducted to NATO, but US President Joe Biden is not willing to provide any such assurances. With the threat of an invasion looming large, frantic diplomatic efforts are being taken on the behalf of the West to avoid any military action.

Vladimir Putin's visit to India

Vishesh Singh, S.Y.B.A.

Putin travelled to India with Russia's defence minister Sergey Shoygu and foreign minister Sergey Lavrov in a visit that saw the two countries reinforce an energy in their ties with a military and technical cooperation agreement until 2031 and a pledge to boost annual trade to \$30 billion by 2025 which as of now stands at 8 billion USD. The Russian president is visiting India amid strained relations between Russia and the United States, which is also a significant Indian ally and has expressed reservations about the two countries' increased military cooperation (due to the NATO-Russia confrontation).

A joint statement published after the talks said Russia and India had "reiterated their intention to strengthen defence cooperation, including in the joint development of production of military equipment." In addition a deal was signed wherein India will produce 6 lakh AK-203 assault rifles in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh. Russia said it will continue to provide S-400 air defence missile systems. India's Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said the two countries had signed 28 investment pacts, including deals on steel, shipbuilding, coal and energy, finance and agriculture sector. He also stated that a 2018 contract for the S-400 missile systems was currently being implemented. "Supplies have begun this month, and will continue to happen," he said, referring to the S-400. The deal with Moscow puts India at risk of sanctions from the United States due to countering America's adversaries through a sanctions act which is aimed at deterring countries from buying Russian military hardware. Russian oil company Rosneft signed a contract with Indian Oil to supply up to 2 million tonnes of oil to India by the end of 2022.

Among other agreements, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding under which Russia will export an uninterrupted supply of coal to assist India's steel production.. President Putin and PM Modi also discussed the situation in Afghanistan, and gave their commitment to ensure that the country will never become a safe haven for international terrorism and radicalisation.

Pakistan boycotts Democracy Summit

Vishesh Singh, S.Y.B.A.

Despite being one of the invited countries, Pakistan has declined to attend US President Joe Biden's Democracy Summit. This comes as Islamabad remains bothered by US President Joe Biden's failure to call Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan even once since taking office. The Pakistani government has opted to skip the United States' Democracy Summit, despite the fact that Islamabad expressed gratitude to the Biden administration for inviting it. The summit is being held for the first time on 8th, 9th and 10th December, with countries participating virtually. According to some experts, Islamabad is upset that Beijing, its all-weather friend, has been excluded from the summit, which is perceived as an intent to create an agenda for democratic renewal and a collective action to tackle the greatest risks to democracies today.

According to Michael Kugelman, deputy director and senior associate for South Asia at The Wilson Center, a Washington-based think tank, Islamabad wanted to send a "strong message" to the White House as it is upset with the level of engagement between the two countries. "My sense is that one or two factors, or perhaps a combination of the two, explains Islamabad's decision. One is that the Pakistani government simply decided that it wasn't worth attending the summit, given how controversial it has become," he said. He further stated, "The other is that Islamabad wanted to send a strong message to the White House about its unhappiness with the lack of high-level engagement with Pakistan coming from the Biden White House. The non-call between Joe Biden and Imran Khan shouldn't be overlooked. It's something that has rankled officials in Islamabad." He added, "There's also a domestic political angle here. The Pakistani public has no love for US democracy promotion, so backing out of the summit will play well at home and bring Islamabad a political boost. And that's just what the doctor ordered for a beleaguered government struggling to fend off sky-high inflation." However, Kugelman believes that China is not really the factor. "Had it wanted to help China out, it could have attended the summit to push back against the inevitable criticism that will be made about Beijing," he said.

Russian Customs and Traditions

Tanushree Menon, F.Y.B.A.

Russian traditional customs and traditions were suppressed during the Soviet era, the state closely supervised and regulated life via its vast intelligence network. After the Gorbachev reforms in the 1980s, common traditions, folkways, and open practice of religion reemerged. Russians are known for being unique people, who tend to preserve not only the Orthodox faith but also tradition rooted in paganism along with their highly developed modern culture. Some Russian traditions and superstitions are surprising and unique, many of which are deeply rooted in Slavic mythology. One of these is a common practice in Russia where, when one person steps on the foot of another, the person who was stepped on lightly steps on the foot of the person who stepped first in an attempt to avoid a future conflict. Matryoshka, Khokhloma, and Gzhel ceramics are some traditional Russian souvenirs.

Russian festivities generally include street carnivals that feature entertainers and children in traditional Russian dress. Girls wear a three-piece ensemble consisting of a red or green sarafan (jumper), a long-sleeved peasant blouse, and an ornate kokoshnik (headdress) and the boys wear a long-sleeved red or blue shirt with a round, embroidered collar.

Maslenitsa (Shrovetide), the oldest Russian folk holiday, marks the end of winter; it originated during pagan times. It is also known as the Pancake Festival, pancakes—symbolizing the sun—are served with caviar, various fish, nuts, honey pies, and other garnishes and side dishes. Historically, Maslenitsa was a commemoration of the dead, so to burn the statue of Maslenitsa was a funeral for her. There are different rituals the entire week, culminating on Clean Monday- the first day of Lent.

Ivan Kupala: Another name of Ivan Kupala is the Troitsa (Pentecost). The night of 23 June is a jolly holiday full of songs, various kinds of fortune-telling, legends, ritual acts and beliefs. The day is named after the pagan deity Kupalo, the God of summer fertility. Kupala got the name Ivan [John] after Russia was baptized. This ritual has become an annual celebration combining pagan and Christian traditions. People believed that herbs and flowers get miraculous and healing power during Ivan Kupala night and, therefore, the village healers collected medicinal roots and herbs during this night, mothers also used to burn the shirts of their sick children in the bonfires hoping to get rid of the awful diseases.

Russians also celebrate festivals such as the Reindeer Herder's Festival, Orthodox Christmas, Moscow Golden Mask Festival, etc.



Russian Sports

Hamsika Jaiswal, F.Y.B.A.

According to Yandex, a multinational corporation primarily for Russian and Russian-language users, Football is the most popular sport in Russia. Football, followed by Ice Hockey, Handball, Basketball, Boxing, Auto racing, Volleyball, Tennis are the top 10 favourites of the Russian crowd. Other popular sports in Russian include Bandy, weightlifting, gymnastics, wrestling, and skiing.

The USSR competed for the first time in the 1952 Summer Olympics. The Russian athletes never finished below fourth place in the number of gold and total medals in the Summer Olympics. Russia also has the most medals stripped for doping violations (51), the most for any country, four times the number of the runner-up, and nearly a third of the global total.

BANDY -Bandy, informally called "Russian hockey" is Russia's national sport, and is one of the biggest spectator's sports. Most of the contemporary guidelines were written in England by Charles Goodman Tebbutt, but the Russians claimed to be the creators of the game. As a matter of fact, there were bandy-like games played in Russia before the modern rules were standardized. The Federation of International Bandy that was founded in 1955, by the Soviet Union and three Nordic countries came up with a common set of rules, that everybody agreed upon.

The Soviet national team won all the Bandy World Championships from the years 1957 - 1979. The national team for women won the silver medals in the first six World Championships, and in the 2014 World Championship, they won the very first Gold medal.

The only sport that enjoys the support of the Russian Orthodox Church is Bandy since they are interested in the solidification of their traditions.

Bandy is a winter sport, played on a rectangle frame of ice, the same proportion as a football field. Each team has 11 players, one of whom is a netkeeper. A typical bandy match involves 2 halves of 45 minutes each. The rules of bandy are similar to those of football.

Russian Literature

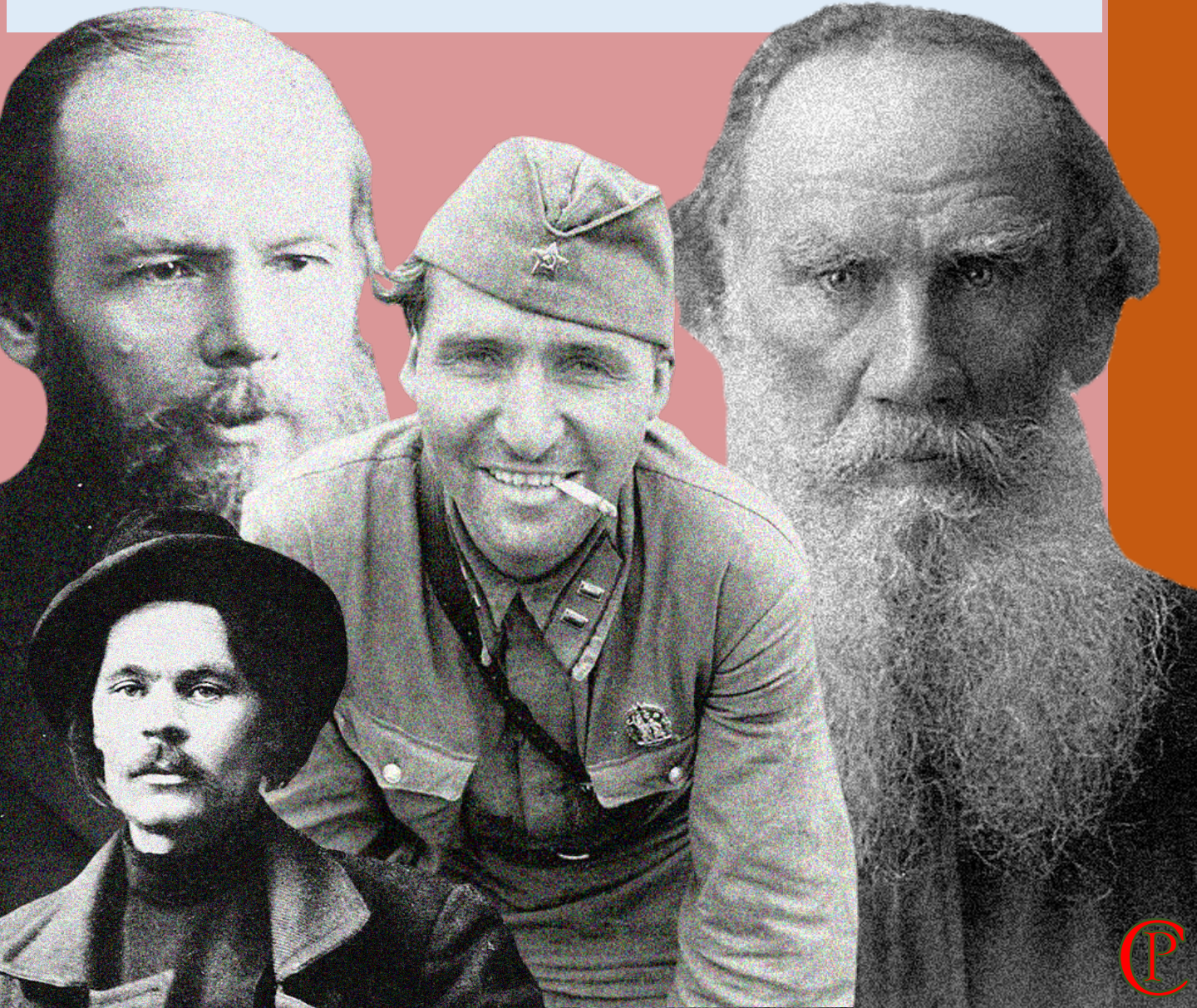
Hamsika Jaswal, F.Y.B.A.

The roots of Russian Literature are drawn way back to the Middle Ages when classics and archives in Old East Slavic were composed. By the age of enlightenment, literature had grown a lot in importance. Russian literature experienced an astonishing golden age in poetry, prose, and drama. Romanticism permitted a bloom of poetic talent. Vasily Zhukovsky and later his apprentice Alexander Pushkin came forward. The prose was flourishing a lot as well. One of the most important poets and novelists was Lermontov. Nikolai Gogol was the First Great Russian Novelist, followed by Ivan Turgenev. He had mastered both short stories and novels. Soon enough, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy became internationally renowned.

In the second half of the century, Anton Chekhov became the leading dramatist. The 20th-century positions itself as the Silver Age of Russian Poetry. The poets related to this age are Konstantin Balmont, Valery Bryusov, Alexander Blok, Anna Akhmatova, Nikolay Gumilyov, Sergei Yesenin, Vladimir Mayakovsky, and Marina Tsvetaeva. Ivan Bunin, Leonid Andreyev, Fyodor Sologub, Yevgeny Zamyatin, Alexander Belyaev, Andrei Bely, and Maxim Gorky, are all Nobel prize winners.

Russian Literature split into two; Soviet and White Émigré, after the 1917 Revolution. The end of the 20th century was hard for the Russian Literary arts, with only a few distinct voices. By the 21st century, there was a new generation of authors. Russian authors have majorly contributed to many literary genres. They have five Nobel Prize in Literature laureates. A 2014 learning found that Russia was the fourth largest book producer in the world, in terms of issued titles.

A popular folk saying asserts that Russians are “the world’s most well-read nation.”



Are food aggregators a necessity or do they make us more tech-dependent?

Avanti Kashikar, F.Y.B.A.

COVID-19 and the resulting lockdown have kept us glued to our screens most of the time. As a result, when any task is to be done, we turn to our phones for a simple and quick solution. One such task is our hunger and our varied demands are fulfilled by top food aggregators like Swiggy and Zomato. These food delivery platforms have tremendously developed in the past year owing to the increasing demands of consumers due to restrictions for walk-in restaurants. The attractive offers, their marketing strategies, social media engagement and quality service are the reasons for their success in the food market. Though these apps have made it much easier for us to get food on our plates within minutes of thinking about the same, they have made us lazy and inclined to avoid cooking. As a result, our lives have become more dependent on technology.

Food is a basic necessity and obtaining it should not be a difficult task with adequate finance. But this simple task could be a difficult one in the future if the trend of ordering as per your wish or sometimes taking suggestions that the applications show. The bad part of this is that our food taste, ordering habit and our diet will be controlled by technology in future making us its slaves. Thus, these apps act as a curse instead of an advantage. Ordering food online is also a disguised increased expense that we have to incur.

Is 'Divide and rule' on its verge again?

Sadiya Shaikh, F.Y.B.A.

Islamophobia in India essentially works to enable violence, subjugate and intimidate Muslims as a threat to the nation, in several different registers — Indian Muslims as 'suspect citizens', Kashmiri Muslims as 'terrorist Muslims', and Muslim refugees such as Rohingyas as 'invasive pests'. Ironically, even secular-minded people diminish the seriousness of this by asking Muslims to ignore the hate campaigns and focus on the "real issues". This explains the nature of the Muslim response on religious discrimination in central and western India. It seems that Muslims, especially in these regions, do not think that communal slurs like 'miya', 'Jihadi', and 'Pakistani' can also be seen as "religious discrimination".

Hindutva organizations exhort Hindu women to have more babies so that the allegedly overpopulating Muslims do not take over the country. There are campaigns such as "Bahu Lao, Beti Bachao" (bring a daughter-in-law, save a daughter) that work towards ensuring Hindu women do not marry Muslim men. Muslim hawkers and workers have come under increasing pressure from Hindu supremacist groups calling for a boycott of Muslim businesses. Sometimes the provocation is directly aimed at Muslims. The Chief Minister of India's biggest and politically most important state, Uttar Pradesh recently blamed Muslims for cornering government-subsidized food. Uttar Pradesh, along with Assam, has introduced a two-child policy blaming Muslims for a supposed runaway population growth that officials say accounts for the backwardness of these states.

Muslims in India are faced with a rhetoric linked to the global war on terror as demonstrated in the trope that "Muslims are a problem wherever they are". Every action of Muslims is interpreted within the Islamophobic context — in 2020, the term 'Corona Jihad' surfaced. We only identify Muslims by common terms like love-jihad, land-jihad, population-jihad, economic-jihad, history-jihad, and even corona-jihad.

In the anti-CAA protests, we have young women, men, journalists as student youth activists who are tirelessly trying to bring the scourge of Islamophobia to the notice of the world, constantly challenging the executive, legislature, and the judiciary that they still have a constitution to follow. Let us not bring the religious divide again.

"Stop spreading hate in the name of religion".

Tax cut on Petrol: A Political Stunt or Good Governance

Pamit Nagaria, S.Y.J.C.

The Indian government on the 3rd of November 2021 announced a reduction of excise duty worth Rs.5 and Rs.10 on petrol and diesel respectively. It was termed as a “Diwali gift” to India. Officials claimed it as a massive step by the government to counter the problem of inflation. But how far are the claims true? In India, the Central government’s levy on petrol is ₹33 and the State government’s levy is ₹30 (in Maharashtra) which means that more than 50% of retail fuel prices consists of taxes. In 2018 the price of crude oil was the same as it is now and the price of petrol and diesel was ₹63 and ₹69 respectively in India. This means that retail fuel prices rose by ₹30 during the past 3 years despite the nationwide lockdown. If the government was really citizen centric then this could have been avoided.

If the government increases the price by Rs.20 and then reduces it by Rs.5 then I don’t see it as a citizen centric move but just a political stunt for the forthcoming elections in the largest state and the wheat capital of India. No major developmental project has been accomplished in Uttar Pradesh over the last five years so such steps seem to be common by New Delhi to favour the ruling party. Punjab is an agrarian state and the farmers there are agitated over the current government’s lack of implementation of the recommendations of the Swaminathan committee and not giving a loan waiver. My intention is not to defame any political party but just to make people aware of the tactics of the politicians. Citizens should develop critical thinking skills and should try to identify the right candidate who deserve their vote and they must definitely question the government.

TWO STEPS FORWARD



ONE STEP

BACK

