



CityMatters

CUTS International 

On crimes and crimes



www.google.com

When I last wrote in this column, it was about the uncertainty of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, and many including me had to eat crow because the people proved us wrong. They voted overwhelmingly for Narendra Modi and he came back into his second term in an unprecedented manner. As he said most remarkably, there are only two castes in India: the poor and the other who are working to eradicate poverty. We are the other caste and assure NaMo of working hard to better the ecosystem to raise living standards of all people.

I have long argued that growth can also come through conservation and not necessarily through production. For example, road accidents in India cost the gross domestic product three percent or US\$8bn annually, resulting from 1.5 lakh deaths and 3.0 lakh injuries. We are the worst country in the world in terms of road safety. This is another area of our work since inception in 1983. I have also served as a Member of a Ministerial Committee to draft a National Road Safety Policy in late 1980s which was refined later. This lead to an overhauled Motor Vehicles Act which will enhance road safety hugely and will be enacted this year.

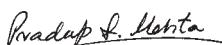
At CUTS, we work on policy issues based upon solid evidence and field work. In terms of road safety in cities, we implemented a project in Jaipur with the support of Lund University in Sweden which identified 14 critical accident spots. I must have met at least six Jaipur Development Commissioners to implement the findings but the engineering staff did not move their butts. This is in spite of written orders of the then and also current Urban Development and Housing Minister Shanti Lal Dhariwal. It was also planned that this project could become a pilot for being copied in other cities. If only that had happened, hundreds of lives would have been saved, and an informed policy would be adopted by the government.

In recent times, two serious accidents under the nose of the Jaipur Development Authority in July have rekindled the debate and we hope that the powers will heed our advice and do the needful.

Another crime which had shaken the city recently was the rape of infants in Shastri Nagar. This led people to march on streets in protest....and the area and internet was shut down to quell the protests. Fortunately, the accused, Sikandar was held and he turned out to be a serial offender. He was on parole from a life sentence. Hope he receives exemplary punishment, which is death penalty.

My heart cries on infantile rape, not that any type of sexual assault on others is pardonable. But the invasion of a child whose understanding is so limited and who, if she survives, will live with a nightmare and stigma for her whole life.

Newspapers report that child rapes are a rising tide. Every two hours 11 kids are victimised. Annually, around 35,000 cases of child sex abuse are brought to light, with nearly 1.35 lakh cases of child rape being registered in the four-year period of 2014-17. Till 2016, only 10 percent of trials were completed with a conviction in only 30 percent of cases. We definitely need better enforcement and conviction otherwise the perpetrators will get away and like Sikandar, commit the crime again, and again.



Pradeep S. Mehta, Secretary General

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P.S. Our gratitude to esteemed subscribers.

Miscellany

Green-powered Town

Hungary is planning to create a green-powered town with jobs and housing for thousands on a barren strip of Danube flood plain.



The •Ibn Hegyeshalom-Bezenye project in northwest Hungary will be the size of about 500 soccer pitches and have full amenities, such as schools and shopping facilities.

The carbon-neutral town will draw mainly on solar and biogas power and create as many as 5,000 permanent jobs in the greenhouse venture.

(HT, 30.05.19)

France sued over ill health

A Paris court began hearing a case brought by a mother and daughter who, in a legal first in France, are suing the state for damages over ill health caused by air pollution.

The mother and the daughter are asking for •160,000 in damages from the state at the administrative court of Montreuil in the east of Paris.

They argue the authorities did not take effective measures against atmospheric pollution, in particular during the very high pollution that Paris endured in December 2016.

(Tol, 29.05.19)

1st Indian to cross Atlantic

Mumbai Pilot Aarohi Pandit became the world's first woman to cross the Atlantic Ocean in a Light Sports Aircraft on May 14, 2019. The 23-year-old, who was participating in the Women Empower Expedition, was flying solo when she landed her aircraft at Iqaluit Airport in Canada.

The pilot had to fly for 3,000 km with brief stopovers in Greenland and Iceland to achieve this feat. The expedition is being organised by Social Access, a not-for-profit communications firm.

Dead to outnumber living on FB

A new study by the University of Oxford's Internet Institute predicts that the dead will outnumber the living on Facebook by 2070.



The study's authors say the growing number of dead people's profiles on Facebook and other social media platforms raises questions about how such data should be dealt with after we die.

The authors believe that it is important Facebook gives historians, archivists, archaeologists, and ethicists access to this data so that future generations "can use our digital heritage to understand their history."

(PTI, 28.04.19)

Electric 'flying taxi' unveiled

A flying taxi that can be ordered through an app? This German company plans to make it a reality in the next six years.

Munich-based startup Lilium unveiled its five-seater electric air taxi prototype. The Lilium Jet is part of an app-based flying taxi service that the company expects will be 'fully-operational in various cities around the world by 2025.'

The battery-powered jet is capable of traveling 300 kms in 60 minutes on a single charge, and will connect cities through a network of landing pads.

(Mint, 17.05.19)



Time to act on climate change

Greta Thunberg, a Swedish activist who, at age 15 started a protest against climate change outside the Swedish Parliament in August 2018. Now, her initiative is a movement, with thousands as participants.

Thunberg who has turned into one of the most compelling voices on the issue of climate change has made sure the message is driven across boundaries.



Millions of students globally took part in her 'Fridays for the Future' movement calling for global awareness on the issue.

(Tol, 12.05.19)

Actress urges sex strike

Actress Alyssa Milano ignited social media with a tweet where she called for women to join her in a sex strike to protest strict abortion laws passed by certain states recently.

Her tweet came days after Georgia became the fourth state in the US in 2019 to ban abortions once a foetal heartbeat is detected, which can be as early as six weeks, before many women know they are pregnant.

She said "We need to understand how dire the situation is across the country. It is reminding people that we have control over our own bodies and how we use them".

(Tol, 13.05.19)

Same-sex marriage legalised

Taiwan has legalised same-sex marriage, the first of any Asian state, with the passage of legislation giving gay couples the right to marry.

Lawmakers comfortably passed part of a bill that would allow gay couples to enter into 'exclusive permanent unions' and apply for marriage registration with government agencies.

Taiwan's President, Tsai Ing-wen, said: "We took a big step towards true equality, and made Taiwan a better country."

(NYT, 24.05.19)

The power of a good story

As the first Omani woman and Arab writer to co-win the £50,000 (around 44 lakh) prize, which has only been given to a book in translation since



2016, Alharthi has, understandably, created a surge of interest.

But this 41-year-old Assistant Professor at the College of Arts and Social Sciences in Muscat's Sultan Qaboos University is reluctant to be pigeonholed.

Her novel, set around the lives of three sisters, speaks of predicaments that are felt universally. It bristles with love, loss, heartbreak, resilience—emotions that have been grist to the mill of fiction since the time people started telling and writing stories.

(Mint, 25.05.19)

Hangover meets desi medicines

Health-conscious millennials are going traditional to combat modern-day maladies, such as hangovers after a night of binge drinking, with quite a few brands including Shunya, The Auric, Akiva and Dotshot catering to the growing demand.



No longer are millennials popping Aspirins for a hangover. They are taking a 'shot' of haldi (turmeric) or reaching into a 'party pack' of ayurvedic anti-hangover capsules.

And, if they are on a diet but want to avoid problems that come with artificial sweeteners, an ashwagandha-infused, stevia-sweetened fizzy drink is preferred.

(ET, 18.05.19)

Stresses of Flying

Flying has increasingly become a world of the haves and have-nots, starting with purchasing a ticket and continuing as passengers are sorted by status to board.

Once on the plane, passengers can see where they fit in the hierarchy, with the seats getting smaller and thinner and legroom tighter. Then, there is the scramble to secure space in the overhead bins.

Some researchers argue that the stresses of flying contribute to an increase in unruly behaviour on planes.

(Tol, 29.05.19)

Italian speaks 'shuddh' Hindi

Aap kya lengi? That question in shuddh Hindi from a bearded 'firangi' in



Venice makes one wonder. This is a rare encounter with a Hindi-speaking Italian who rattles off words like 'sandarbh' and 'vyakaran' with total ease, and a Banarasi accent.

The beard and the Banarasi aside, Marco Zolli's fascination for India was sparked off by a Hindi course he did in a Venetian university. Now, he is a consultant who helps Italian firms understand the cultural nuances of doing business in India. He also runs a Hindi school in Varanasi. (Tol, 18.05.19)

Turn your phone into a robot

Researchers have developed a smartphone application that allows a user to easily programme any robot to perform a task, significantly bringing down the costs of building and programming mobile robots.

The researchers demonstrated this app with robots watering a plant, vacuuming and transporting objects. A study on the embedded app, called VRa, was presented at DIS 2019 in San Diego.

The Study's lead author Karthik Ramani said that smaller companies cannot afford software programmers or expensive mobile robots. (Tol, 29.06.19)

Swiss women strike for equality

Purple-clad protesters blowing whistles, banging pots and pans and brandishing feminist slogans filled the

streets of Swiss towns and cities, as women across the country went on strike for equal pay.

"I love badass women" and "Eliminate the patriarchy" figured among the messages on posters and banners, as thousands of women poured into the streets to vent their frustration with persistent gender discrimination and wage gaps in the wealthy nation.

The strike comes nearly three decades after women held the country's first nationwide strike for equal pay.

(Tol, 15.06.19)

Nepal collects 3,000-kg garbage

A total of 3,000 kg of solid waste has been collected from Mt Everest since April 14, 2019 when Nepal launched an ambitious clean-up campaign aimed at bringing back tonnes of trash from the world's highest peak, which has lately turned into a 'garbage dump.'



The 45-day 'Everest Cleaning Campaign', led by Solukhumbu district's Khumbu Pasanglhamu Rural Municipality began on April 14, 2019 with the Nepali new year and aims to collect nearly 10,000 kg of garbage from Mt Everest.

(BL, 29.04.19)

E-tailer Wayfair under scanner

American e-tailer Wayfair has come under fire for selling bath mats depicting Hindu Gods, after Amazon was slammed for selling similar items.



The Boston-based Wayfair that sells home goods, has been stocking bath mats with not just Lord Ganesha figurines but also with Lord Shiva's imprints on it.

The mats, sold on the website for US\$38 and more, are described as 'Yoga Asian Lord with Third Eye Bath Rug by East Urban Home', and 'Asian Face of Elephant Lord Bath Rug.'

(ET, 20.05.19)

City Briefs

Portals for public convenience

In view of the National Statistics Day, Rajasthan government has launched two portals for the convenience of the public.

One is 'NICCI chatbot', a portal through which anybody can seek information with regard to their status of birth, death and marriage registrations; and the other is 'SAAR', a data-based portal, through which people can get any statistics-related information.

The online portal helps easy dissemination of information. Also, there will be informed decision making when more data is disseminated online.

(Tol, 30.06.19)

Dairy booths to be painted pink

Dairy booths in the city will be given a new look soon. Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) passed an order to change the colour of dairy booths from light blue to pink, based on the Smart City theme.

At present, there are about 900 registered dairy booths in the city. It will cost around ₹7,000 to ₹10,000 to repaint one booth and the work will be completed soon to compliment the Smart City.

(www.globeinxpress.com, 26.06.19)

R'bore welcomes three cubs

There is good news for tiger lovers. Tigress T-73 was recently spotted with three cubs at the Ranthambore National Park (RNP). Trap cameras installed in the non-tourist zone managed to capture the photo of the cubs with their mother.



This is the second time that T-73 has given birth. T-73 belongs to famous Machhli's family. She is the daughter of Machhli's daughter, Sundari.

According to the data, the tiger population in the state includes 71 tigers in RNP. It includes both adults and cubs. In Sariska Tiger Reserve, the population is 16 and four is in Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve which also includes both adults and cubs.

(DNA, 25.06.19)

Fines for littering in public places



To improve the degrading cleanliness condition of the city, Jaipur Mayor Vishnu Lahta ordered to fine residents who are littering in public places.

Though the JMC is making plans to fine the common residents but the situation of garbage is not proper because of which residents have been complaining every day.

Earlier the garbage depots were all cleared from the city but slowly they have now mushrooming everywhere.

(Tol, 01.06.19)

250 med teaching staff hired

Medical Education Department will soon start recruitment of 269 faculty members for its medical colleges along with the recruitment of paramedical staff for 428 posts and 746 nursing posts.

Apart from filling vacant posts of teaching staff in medical colleges, the Medical Education Department is all set to boost research in state colleges. For the purpose, multi-disciplinary research units have already been established in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Udaipur.

(Tol, 11.06.19)

Eco-friendly buses to hit roads

Public transport in Jaipur could do with a bit of an overhaul. Buses do not ply on a few major routes and most of all, these buses are old, dilapidated, and it would be wise to replace most of them.



The Jaipur City Transport Services LTD (JCTSL) plans to purchase a total of 600 buses to be added to the existing fleet, 300 of which will be state of the art, electric buses.

The other 300 non electric buses will also be more fuel-efficient than the current ones. They too will have facilities of electric buses. (Tol, 27.05.19)

Health Sector



Govt. set to ban e-cigarettes

The Rajasthan government has decided to ban production, distribution, advertisement and sale of e-cigarette in the State.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said that the decision, which comes a day before the World No Tobacco Day, will be an important step to curb addiction among youths.



Health Minister Raghu Sharma said the youths are being misled by advertisements of e-cigarettes as a better alternative.

(BS, 30.05.19)

Patients to get medicines on bed

Sawai Man Singh Hospital of Jaipur, competing with private and corporate hospitals, has started providing medicines to patients on their beds.

Attendants of the patients will not have to arrange medicines, which now be provided by the nurses and other healthcare staff posted at the day care ward.

The facility has been initiated to benefit all patients but it will help those patients immensely who come for treatment without any attendant. Most of the patients are underprivileged and those also who are disowned by their families.

(Tol, 11.06.19)

City Briefs

Disbursement of loans online

In a bid to go paperless, the state's co-operative sector would disburse short-term loans to farmers through online registration (online portal). In the first phase, loans would be disbursed to 25 lakh farmers, who pay up their loans regularly, through biometric verification.

The forms will be available at *Gram Seva Sahkari Samiti*. Farmers can get themselves registered on cooperative crop loan portal at any *samiti* or e-Mitra centre after filling the required information. (Tol, 01.06.19)

Night flights to be operational

The flights have started operating at Jaipur airport at night. The taxi track will save landing and take-off



time. When a flight is landing, another flight will be able to use the taxi track to reach the runway. It will save at least 3-4 minutes in landings and take-offs, the officials added.

The flight operation will not be allowed for two hours from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm (except on Sundays), but it would not have any affect because no flights are currently operating during this period. This schedule is in effect from June 01, 2019 and will continue till October 26, 2019.

(www.pinkypost. 19.05.19)

Jaipur to get additional water



Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has, in principle, approved the Bisalpur Jaipur stage 2 project which will enable the city to receive 170 MLD additional water.

The Bisalpur-Jaipur stage 2 project will cost ₹288 crore. It will be able to provide water to close to 8 lakh people living in Prithviraj Nagar, Kho Nagoriyan and Jamdoli.

Additional ₹564 crore has been allocated for developing a network of pipelines in Prithviraj Nagar benefiting close to 3.5 lakh people. (Tol, 12.05.19)

Providing guidance to students

To help students for better understanding of their career options after school, Rajasthan Education Department has decided to open a counselling centre 'Student Advisory and Guidance Bureau' at Shiksha Sankul, Jaipur.

The purpose is to provide better guidance to students about courses available in various educational institutions in the country as well as in foreign universities.

The counsellors will help students to opt for viable career options for them, preparation of various exam conducted in many government and private universities. (Tol, 29.05.19)

NWR to miss deadline

The North Western Railways (NWR) is once again going to miss the deadline for completion of electrification projects on Jaipur-Delhi and Jaipur-Sawai Madhopur rail routes.

Earlier, the authorities had claimed that Jaipur-Delhi electrification would be completed by June 2019 while Jaipur-Sawai Madhopur section would be completed by March 2019. Now, the authorities hope to finish the project by September 2019. (Tol, 12.06.19)

Funds to 30 startups

The Rajasthan government has disbursed funding to over 30 startups ranging from ₹1.20 lakh to ₹20 lakh as a part of the i-Start Rajasthan programme.



Through this initiative, various financial incentives are being provided to startup companies including subsistence allowance, initial financial cost, marketing assistance and techno funds so that they can establish a new position by creating their innovation and entrepreneurship in professional competition.

The state already has the largest government-run incubation network in the country. (Tol, 12.05.19)



Metro Updates

Phase 1B of Jaipur Metro

Shanti Lal Dhariwal, Urban Development and Housing (UDH) Minister along with UDH officials thoroughly explored the site of Jaipur Metro and declared that entire work of phase 1B will be completed by October 2019.

Experts opine that metro line will start in 2020. After completing the metro line, a team of experts from Mumbai will be called for inspection, which will take around six months to get the green signal. (Tol, 12.06.19)



Metro fare rises by ₹1

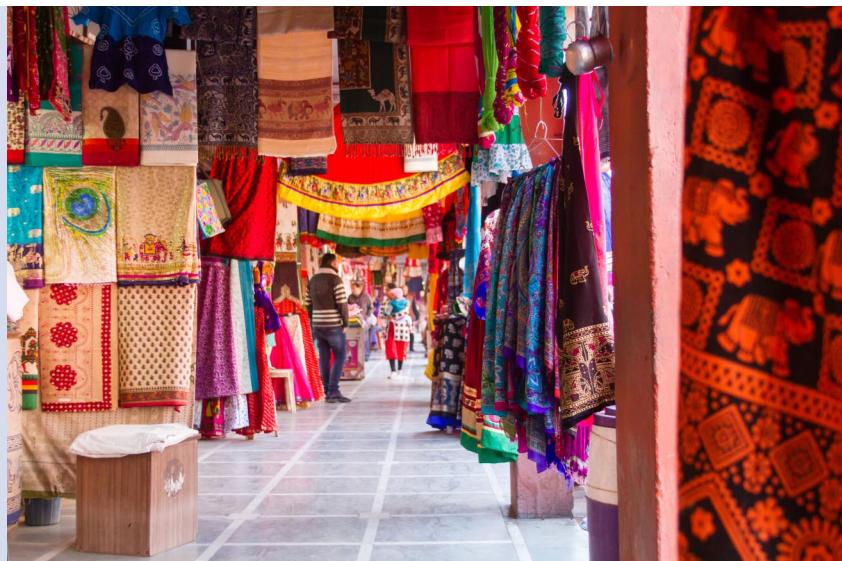
Jaipur Metro Rail Corporation (JMRC) has increased the fare by one rupee starting from June 01, 2019 to March 31, 2021.

The fare has been increased by one rupee of the higher slab, i.e. ₹11 and ₹17 that are increased to ₹12 and ₹18. However, lower slab of fare (₹6) will remain the same.

At present, Metro trains make 170 trips between Mansarovar to Chandpol every day. Trains arrive within an interval of 15 minutes from morning 6.25 am to 8 am and after 8 am trains arrive within 10 minutes. To increase the cashless transaction, there is a relief to the people who are using metro card as they will have to pay 10 percent less fare. (Tol, 30.05.19)

New MSMEs in Rajasthan now require no approvals, no inspections for first 3 years

The Rajasthan government also launched the Raj Udyog Mitra portal to help MSMEs set up new industries in the State easily.



In a bid to encourage entrepreneurship in the State, the Rajasthan government has said youth setting up new micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) will not require any approvals for the first three years. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot also launched the Raj Udyog Mitra portal to help MSMEs set up new industries in the state easily.

Further, these entrepreneurs will be exempted from inspections by government departments during this period.

“Our decision will encourage youths to start their units and they will be able to set up their business with a free mind. They can get approvals anytime in three years. We want to give a suitable environment for business in the state,” said Ashok Gehlot.

In March 2019, the state government had notified MSME facilitation of establishments and operation ordinance, but its execution was delayed due to the model code of conduct for the Lok Sabha elections.

A bill to replace the ordinance will be introduced in the upcoming assembly session, Gehlot said. For availing this benefit, the entrepreneurs will have to register on the web portal <https://rajudyogmitra.rajasthan.gov.in>. It will issue an acknowledgement certificate upon registration.

“Rajasthan is the first state in the country to take such a revolutionary step for facilitating entrepreneurs. Youths will be encouraged and they will need no approvals and inspections by government departments for three years,” Gehlot said after launching the portal at his office.

Gehlot added that the country is going through a phase of economic slowdown and there is a need to address the challenge of unemployment and growth. He also said that the state government will introduce a new industry policy very soon.

In 2018, the state’s industries department proposed a series of measures to ensure development of new clusters proposed under a Centre-aided scheme. According to department officials, there are nearly 10 such probable sites for cluster development in Rajasthan.

The news item appeared in www.yourstory.com on June 13, 2019

Sources: BL: The Hindu Business Line; BS: Business Standard; DNA: Daily News and Analysis; ET: The Economic Times; HT: Hindustan Times; PTI: Press Trust of India; NYT: New York Times; Tol: Times of India

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