

CHALLENGES BEFORE  
HOSPITALITY SECTOR

WORKING FOR THE CAUSE OF  
GREEN EARTH

THE NEW NORMAL  
POST COVID-19

# Corporate Tycoons

The Complete Business and Travel Magazine

▶ Vol No. 8 ▶ Issue No. 8 ▶ November 2020 ▶ ₹100

# Al Adil

trading co. LLC (PVT)

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## THE MAN WHO ADDS SPICE TO PEOPLE'S LIVES

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OLE WHEAT  
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Dhananjay Datar  
MD, Al Adil Trading Company




# THE BIG THINKERS MAGAZINE

**Corporate Tycoons**

The Complete Business and Travel Magazine

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# Corporate Tycoons

The Complete Business and Travel Magazine

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## Printed, Published and Owned by

Chandran Mahadevan Iyer. Printed at Amol Associates, S No 2/1, Shashitara Estate, Sai Nagar, Hingne Khurd, Off Sinhagad Road, Pune-411051 and Published at S-6, I04, Sun Paradise-2, Anand Nagar, Dist. Pune-411051, Maharashtra

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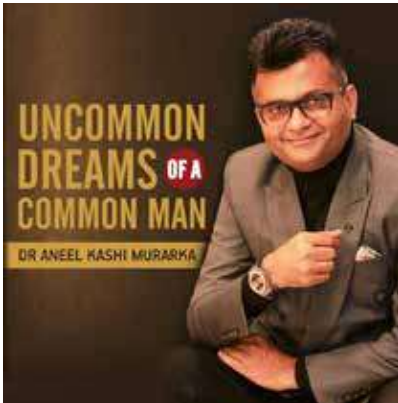


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# A Man of Great Taste

**D**hananjay Datar is a man who adds spice to the lives of people. And by doing so, he has expanded his business in the Gulf. Today, the group has 39 outlets in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia and India, as well as a manufacturing unit in the Al Quoz industrial area of Dubai where it produces masalas, spices, pickles, flours, pulses and other Indian foodstuff under the Peacock brand name. Its Indian arm, Masala King Exports in Mumbai, is one of the leading exporters of quality branded Indian pulses, spices and other grocery items as well as non-food items with a focus on the sub-continent. Consulting Editor Sekhar Seshan talks to Datar to find out the “masala” of his success.

In the travelogue, Sekhar also travels to Assam, the largest tea producing area in India, and visits Kaziranga National Park in the Golahat, Karbi Anglong and Nagaon district of Assam on the trail of the rhino. The Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve – to give it its full name – has pride of place among India’s national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, and is known as the place to go if you want to see the animal. Sadly, the Indian rhino is now listed as ‘vulnerable’ on the Red list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with its population fragmented and restricted to an area measuring less than 20,000 square kilometres, which is only a little more than the size of Gujarat. Sekhar narrates some freaky potty habits of the one-horned rhino.

In the story headlined “Working for the Cause of the Green Earth” veteran journalist Sri Krishna meets Vihar Pancholi who in 2005 set up his company Maverik Inc and has been revolutionizing multi-utility solution to these pressing issues. The innovative solution addresses the problem of waste disposal and energy crisis across geographies and at a wide range of capacities.

Vihar has been instrumental in bridging the gap between traditional perspectives and newer global approaches. He has championed voluntary carbon credit accreditation for more than 50 projects and has spent more than 16 years in waste management.

In the story The New Normal Post COVID-19, Executive Editor T N Ashok explains the devastating changes that the pandemic has ushered into the lives of the people disrupting normal lives. In this article he gives a birds-eye view of what the new norm is going to be post COVID -19. He says the New Norm is going to accelerate digitization all over the world, the way we deal with our purchases and sales, and manage our family and even company budgets. Digital acceleration, Work from Home (WFH) is going to be implemented across industries post the COVID-19 era globally. This could lead to joblessness and questions over whether WFH actually increases productivity as the official office atmosphere would be lacking in a WFH situation, where recreation is also thrown in good and bad for productivity, as it will act in different ways on different sets of minds of human beings.

Masala King Exports in Mumbai, is one of the leading exporters of quality branded Indian pulses, spices and other grocery items as well as non-food items with a focus on the sub-continent. Consulting Editor Sekhar Seshan talks to Datar to find out the “masala” of his success.

**CHANDRAN IYER**  
Editor

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# The Seven Golden Steps

- ▶ **FIRST**, to take special care of the elderly, especially those who have chronic disease.
- ▶ **SECOND** to completely adhere to the 'Lakshman Rekha' of Lockdown and Social Distancing; use homemade face-covers and masks without fail.
- ▶ **THIRD** to follow the instructions issued by AYUSH ministry to enhance immunity.
- ▶ **FOURTH** to download the Arogya Setu Mobile App to help prevent the spread of corona infection. Inspire others to download the app as well.
- ▶ **FIFTH** to take care of poor families; to fulfil their food requirements.
- ▶ **SIXTH** to be compassionate towards the people who work in every individual business or industry. Do not deprive them of their livelihood.
- ▶ **SEVENTH** to pay utmost respect to our nation's Corona Warriors – our doctors and nurses, sanitation workers and police force.





# Khapli Wheat Atta

(M...li wheat from Maharashtra)

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Dhananjay Datar  
MD, AI Adil Trading Company



# The Man Who Adds Spice to People's Lives

Having left India when he was 20 to work in a Dubai store, Dhananjay Datar has become the undisputed 'masala king' of the Gulf in the past three-and-a-half decades.

- By Sekhar Seshan

**H**e first came to wide public notice in the country of his birth and upbringing when he took a group of journalists from Mumbai and Pune to visit his facilities and held a mid-air press conference on board his Boeing-737 business jet to celebrate the silver jubilee of his business in 2009.

Talking about his Peacock brand of Indian spices, masalas and grocery products, he said: "It has been a long and colourful journey these past 25 years, from the small shop my father and I set up in the crowded alleys of Bur Dubai." That shop had already grown into the Al Adil Trading group of six retail stores in the emirates of Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi, with a manufacturing arm in Dubai and an Indian arm, Tulaja Exports.

Today, the group has 39 outlets in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia and India, as well as a manufacturing unit in the Al Quoz industrial area of Dubai where it produces masalas, spices, pickles, flours, pulses and other Indian foodstuff items under the Peacock brand name. Its Indian arm, Masala King Exports in Mumbai, is one of the leading exporters of quality branded Indian pulses, spices and other grocery items as well as non-food items with a focus on the sub-continent.

Explaining why he had decided to celebrate the occasion on an aircraft, he pointed out that Al Adil's major customer was the flight kitchen which even then supplied in-flight meals for some 14,000 air passengers who flew out of Dubai on 120 flights a day.

A bigger surprise was waiting when the flight landed: a customised Rolls Royce



Phantom, one of only 18 in the world and the first in the Gulf kingdom, which he had ordered at Rs.8 crore for his wife Vandana's birthday.

All that was, by any reckoning, not bad going for a man who, as a teenager, had walked barefoot to his school in Amravati, Maharashtra, with a safety-pin in place of two buttons that had fallen off his uniform. Recalling those days, Datar today says: "That pin had another use, too: I needed it to remove the thorns that stuck in my feet every day."

The boy - whose father, Mahadev Datar, was a sergeant in the Indian Air Force and subject to transfers - was sent to stay with his maternal grandmother in Amravati. She rejected her son-in-law's offer to pay for young Dhananjay's

expenses, so he had to go to a small school, wearing the single uniform which she washed and ironed every evening so that he could wear it again the next day. She could not afford to buy him a raincoat, so he used a jute bag for protection from the rain.

Breakfast was only a light tea; lunch comprised two rotis made of bhakri (a grain used by poor people in India) which he carried to school; and dinner back at home was the same, with the addition of some dal and a little yoghurt. The dal, he remembers, didn't have any spices because his grandmother couldn't afford to buy them. Unconsciously, maybe, this was why he decided to get into trading in, then manufacturing, spices – with a determination and devotion that has earned him the title of 'Masala King', conferred by the rulers of the UAE.

Four years of this routine later, his father retired and settled in Mumbai. But that was a short-lived decision: he decided to

go to Dubai to get a job which would support his air force pension. He got a job as the manager of a store and worked there for almost seven years, then ventured out to set up a tiny grocery business and called his son to join him.

The young man had started selling products like phenyl, instant mixes and ice-cream mixes from door to door in suburbs like Mulund, Thane and Kalyan after his college hours. He jumped at the chance to work with his father. His mother stayed back to look after his younger brother, managing the home on his father's pension.

The first four years in Dubai were tough - the business lost so much money that his mother had to sell all her jewellery, including her gold mangalsutra, as well as furniture and even kitchen equipment to raise money for them. His father also borrowed from his trader friends. They lived a frugal lifestyle till, at last, the business became profitable.





***“It has been a long and colourful journey these past 25 years, from the small shop my father and I set up in the crowded alleys of Bur Dubai.” That shop had already grown into the Al Adil Trading group of six retail stores in the emirates of Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi, with a manufacturing arm in Dubai and an Indian arm, Tulaja Exports.***

But that was the time when the emirate was moving into the fast track of development, with its Asian expatriate community growing by leaps and bounds. Almost everyone who went to work in the Gulf called his relatives and friends, to be part of the ‘gold rush’; many of them then brought their families over to join them. Away from home, these people longed for the taste of home-cooked food, creating a healthy demand for Indian spices, condiments, pulses and other foodstuff – an opportunity that the Datars seized with both hands.



The following three years saw an increase in volumes, and they managed to stock up groceries in bulk to meet the panic demand during the Gulf war. They were making so much profit that they managed to invest in a couple of rented warehouses to store these commodities. That was the turning point. Young Datar, who hadn't gone back to Mumbai all that time because he didn't want to see his mother without her mangalsutra, managed to go home and reclaim all her jewellery.

The fact that both Mahadev and Dhananjay Datar went into business was something that was virtually unheard-of for traditional Maharashtrian Brahmins, who are known to be cautious and prefer secure jobs. Datar admits that the mentality was prevalent in his family too. There had been an uproar even when his father had decided to join the Indian Air Force and everyone tried to persuade him to take up a clerical job instead. He feels that the military training he underwent in the IAF might have made him adventurous enough to venture into an unknown field at the age when he should have retired.

"In my own case, there was no choice. I was so average in everything - including study - that my parents were expecting me to become a fitter or an electrician," he grins. He himself was not interested in a white-collar job, and dreamt of going to Dubai to make a fortune as a salesman - something at which he was good. "Still, starting a business hadn't been on my agenda - but business itself accidentally entered my life and led me to become an entrepreneur," he says.

The local partner he was required by law to do business in the UAE did not play any role in the business besides signing the partnership agreement, so he alone led the Al-Adil group. Now formally Dr Dhananjay M. Datar, he remains an Indian at heart despite his long stay abroad. During the Covid-19 pandemic that stranded thousands of Indian tourists and those who had lost their jobs in the Gulf, he spent more than a million dirhams to repatriate over 3,800 of them. He also helped them personally, organising their travel and paying at least 1,000 people for their food, tickets and COVID tests as well as providing them with food kits and making free quarantine arrangements.



## Up-in-the-air Upanayanam

**A** cool Sunday morning, December 21, 2008. A chartered Ajet took off from the domestic terminal at Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport in Mumbai. On board was 10-year-old Rohit Datar, accompanied by his parents, elder brother Hrishikesh and some 150 family members and guests, all dressed in traditional Maharashtrian attire.

Another 40 guests were given helicopter rides in two chartered choppers, which took off from Juhu airport on eight sorties.

The occasion: the thread ceremony of Dhananjay Datar's younger son, who loves flying and whose grandfather had wanted it to be performed on an aeroplane. Sadly, Mahadeo Datar himself couldn't be there - he had died a fortnight earlier.

The ceremony, held 40,000 ft. above the earth, was the first event of its kind in flight. Most of those aboard were flying for the first time in their lives. So were the priests, Vilas Parekar and Sanjay Joshi, who performed the traditional Ganesh Pooja, sanctified the thread and gave it to Rohit to wear and recite the sacred mangalastak mantras. "The sun's blessing is sought in a thread ceremony. We reached closer to the sun by performing it on the plane," Parekar said. The havan fire ceremony was, however, performed at a suburban hotel, where 300 rooms and 20 villas had been booked for two days. The event has earned the Datars places in the Limca book of Records and the Guinness World Records.

Besides his son's and father's wishes, Datar said: "I also thought it would be great to take my friends and family on an aeroplane ride while they bless Rohit." The boy himself, then a seventh-standard student at Dubai's Wellington International School, said he felt 'like a king' and told all his friends abroad about it.



Many had no money for air tickets back to India. Some were sick. A group of 50-odd labourers from Telangana had no money even to eat. The most needy among them found a saviour in Datar. "This is a personal initiative from my side to help those who are unable to meet the expenses of travelling to their homeland," he says. Appreciating the Indian government's massive repatriation efforts to help those stranded due to the pandemic, he says, "It is the duty of all of us to help our brethren in distress in whatever way we can."

Most of them had been thrown out of their rented homes and even forced to spend nights on the roads. Those stranded included many pregnant women, children, tourists and others on short-term visas. One Indian woman was 32 weeks pregnant; she and her husband wanted the child to be born in India, and were among the lucky ones selected by Datar.

More recently, he committed financial aid of Rs.20 lakh to the families of those who died in the Kozhikode Air India Express crash on 07 August. "The commander of the flight was an ex-IAF officer like my father, and I have a strong affinity with the Air Force," he explains. "When I heard the news, I immediately felt the urge to do something for the victims. This is a small gesture from my side."

Datar welcomes the recent announcement that Dubai has set up an agricultural trading platform, Agriota – which it has developed with India's CropData Technology - to connect

*"In my own case, there was no choice. I was so average in everything - including study - that my parents were expecting me to become a fitter or an electrician," he grins. He himself was not interested in a white-collar job, and dreamt of going to Dubai to make a fortune as a salesman – something at which he was good. "Still, starting a business hadn't been on my agenda - but business itself accidentally entered my life and led me to become an entrepreneur," he says.*

companies in the UAE with Indian farmers to improve its food security amid disruption of supply chains caused by the coronavirus. "It will help," he says.

It is, however, 'very sad', he feels, that a major corporation like Arabtec Holding, the largest construction company in the Gulf region which built the iconic Burj Khalifa - the world's tallest building – has formally announced that it is going into liquidation because of an 'untenable' financial situation.



A slowdown in construction activity in the area is bound to have repercussions in other sectors of the economy.


Datar's Al Adil Trading, meanwhile, continues to flourish as its deep knowledge of expatriate Indians and a finger that is always on their and has mastered the art of sourcing the right products – from a favourite brand of pickle or papad, or a rare herb or spice - at the right time. "So much so that the market wisdom is that at Al Adil you will always get what you want!" its website says, reminiscent of the famous London superstore Harrods' motto Omnia Omnibus Ubique, which translates from Latin to 'All Things For All People, Everywhere'.

Al Adil's range of grocery and household items include not just Indian spices and masalas but also pulses, rice and flour, oils and ghee, pickles and chutneys, tea and coffee, canned and instant foods, ayurvedic medicines and herbs, cosmetics, dry fruits, mouth fresheners and savouries, confectionery items and sweetmeats - more than 4,500 items, which it sources from all over the world.

With its founder's stress on innovation

***A group of 50-odd labourers from Telangana had no money even to eat. The most needy among them found a saviour in Datar. "This is a personal initiative from my side to help those who are unable to meet the expenses of travelling to their homeland," he says. Appreciating the Indian government's massive repatriation efforts to help those stranded due to the pandemic.***

and quality, the Group has moved over the years in tandem with the UAE's progress, exceeding the expectations of its customers as well as stakeholders. The history of Al Adil Trading Co LLC, dotted as it is with tremendous success and excellence, is truly reminiscent of the tales of the spice traders of yore who left India's shores for the distant markets of the Gulf, the US, Canada and Europe.

Its wide product range, bolstered by a strict quality policy that endeavours to eliminate all possible risks with regard to food safety and also to guarantee the highest standards of food safety, public health and product quality, has won it a loyal customer base that includes prestigious five star hotels, reputed catering companies and some of the most recognised names in Dubai. Add to this its heavy investment in an integral supply chain, its hygienic packaging and competitive pricing, and the consumers can only keep growing. 

# The New Normal Post COVID-19 Situation

Change in Lifestyles, Workplaces, Travel and Shopping Experiences.

- By TN Ashok



**T**he near 14 month long COVID 19 pandemic situation has not only dealt a deathly blow to human lives across the globe, but substantially devastated the economies of many western and Asian economies across the world shrinking by large numbers the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) numbers, an index by which the economic strength of a country is often measured.

At the last count, the world recorded 47.56 million cases of coronavirus infected and 1.21 million deaths and India alone accounted for a whopping 8.31 million cases, albeit incidence of fresh cases of infections showing a steady decline and number of recoveries rising, and the total number of deaths by infections being 1.23 lakhs. The capital New Delhi alone recorded 403,096 infections and 6,652 deaths.

When one compares these India figures with countries in the west, particularly the United States, we are far below the average in proportion to our population and our early shutdowns has yielded results. Though leaving questions on whether the Modi government kept the lockdowns for too long – but for Modi it was the

biggest Hamletian dilemma, to close or not to close, because the question was, which is more important Lives or Livelihood. Modi chose rightly Lives over Livelihood, as the latter could be dealt with savior economic packages, which is exactly what the government did with its rescue plans of over Rs one lakh crores under the euphemistic name of Stimulus Packages for the economy.

US President Donald Trump chose livelihood over lives, which cost him dearly with the country recording the highest number of infections in the world and maximum number of deaths. In the US polls there is a backlash on this issue. So, all this brings us to the question of what's going to be the new norm in the post pandemic situation. Though the incidence of infection may decline, COVID 19 is here to stay, its not going away, we have to learn to live with it. So, this brings us to the issue of new norms at work places, public domain, home space and employers' mindsets, automation over human labor, social distancing and use of PPE kits for long years to come, perhaps well into 2023-24. A good two to three years from now on.

Experts claim that the New Norm is going to accelerate digitization all over the world, the way we deal with our purchases, sales and manage our family and even company budgets. Digital acceleration, Work from Home (WHM) is going to be implemented across industries post the covid-19 era globally. This could lead to joblessness and questions over whether WFM actually increases productivity as the official office atmosphere would be lacking in a WFM situation, where recreation is also thrown in,





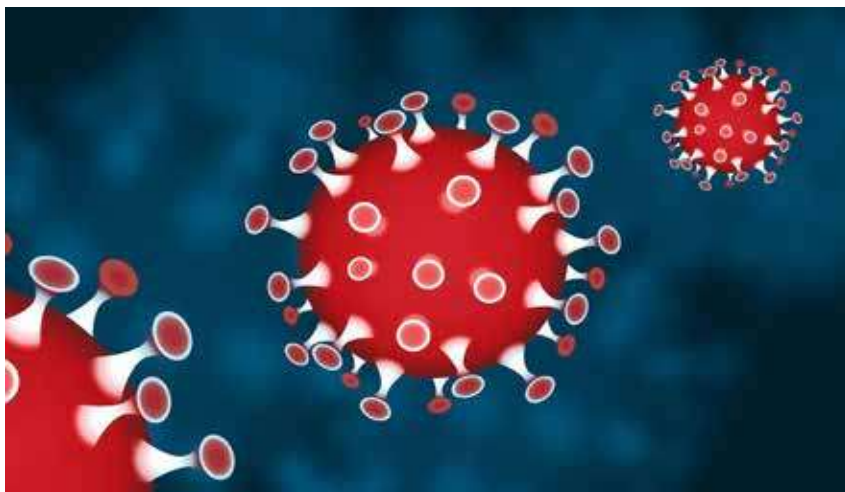
good and bad for productivity, as it will act in different ways on different sets of minds of human beings.

Every business will now see the need to build a robust digital-driven delivery-capability, claim the post COVID 19 experts and strategists working with the government and industry. Even if the lockdowns are lifted in many cities, these experts say that they don't think many of us are going to board a flight anytime soon for a business deal or a meeting and or for that purpose venturing into a mall or theatre. So, what will the "new normal" be like, for all of us, in the near future?

**Here is a projected scenario of how the New Norm will play out in a Post COVID ERA**

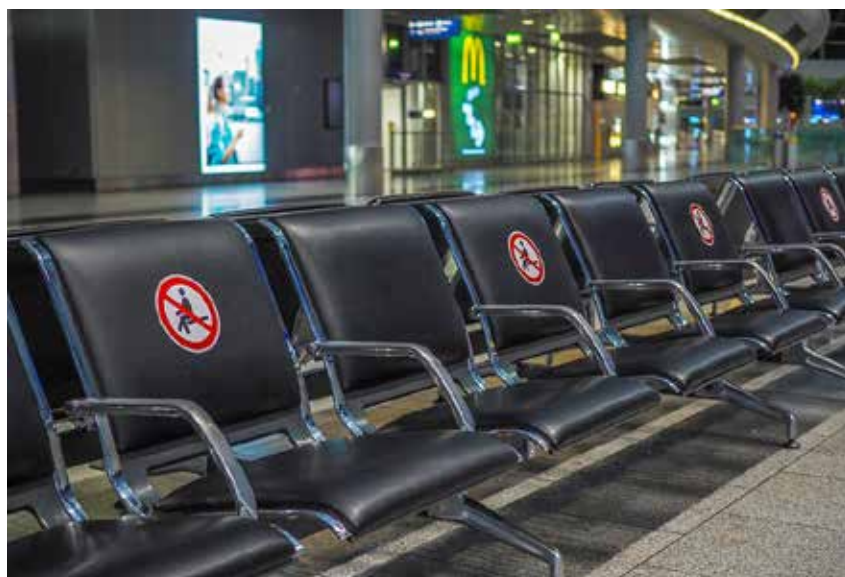
**Lower Consumption:** COVID 19 has taught us that we can live off a suitcase with three pairs of jeans and six T-shirts. So, the question that confronts us is that "Do we need a full wardrobe full of clothes if one can manage life with much lesser." Overall consumerism will decrease. Consequently, demands for goods and services is going to go down, which means consumerism shrinks and consequently disrupting the demand supply management cycle considerably affecting productivity and manufacturers holding back and the problem of dealing with piled up inventories of goods already produced. How to dispose them off? Distress sales? The realty market is a classic example, where massive structures are standing unfinished. Its like a ghost town. Producers of electronic entertainment and white goods are having a tough time as the obsolescence rate is very high in this software driven industry. Automobiles are taking a big hit. TV sets are selling dirty cheap. Time to buy and not to sell.

**Home Schooling:** Home Schooling was a thing of the elite particularly in England when the aristocracy and the race conscious whites preferred home schooling to public schooling so as not to allow their white children mix with colored classes of the Londonderry full of cockneys. But this is



going to be the compulsive nature of the post pandemic situation. Education across all levels is going to be imparted online and homeschooling will be the new norm. Children will go to schools only once a while, for group activities or for building social skills. Knowledge gets transferred via Zoom videos. A zoom culture is in the offing not for just school education but for business meetings and deals restricting outdoor travel and flights across the globe that would hit adversely the hospitality sector ( hotels reporting lesser occupancy ) and aviation sector ( fewer people hopping on a flight overseas to conclude a business deal)

**Work From Home:** Says Hareesh Tibrewala, a strategist on work norms, Service industries that don't require physical touch with goods or people, will start moving to a WFH model. Saves office rent and associated costs. And for the employee reduces commute time and associated hassles. What we need to note is that many IT companies such as IBM had already introduced the WFH and concept and drop into the office once a week for strategy meetings much earlier than the pandemic break out in a major effort to shrink office space and save on rentals, which had shown a sudden surge. Germany and Australia are classic examples of countries that initiated WFH concept. Saving on transportation costs, reducing pollution levels, carbon emissions and overheads of the companies. This is fast catching up





in India. The negative effect has been firing of employees or layoffs of a large number of peripheral staff in an office no longer required to an unprecedented joblessness situation. This overhang has to be addressed properly by government and industries.

**WFH Benefits Rural India:** It might be recalled that around 20 years ago, the US initiated an outsourcing program to cut down on labor costs that were high and work went to Asia particularly India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Philippines for not just IT work, that brought a rash of immigrants to USA but also rendering fairly a large number of workforce in the garment industry in the US, as that work went to East, South East Asia. Outsourcing work to India came at a considerable cost and benefit, cost to US in terms of loss of jobs and benefit in saving costs to companies and revenues in dollars to the outsourced countries. Now,

**HEALTH CHECKS, Malls and hotels will start using temperature scanners. And travel may require a certificate of vaccination. Hand sanitizers containing isopropylene, a form of alcohol derivative, temperature checks by infrared thermometer hand guns and certificates of -ve covid certificates might be necessary for international or even domestic travel.**

Mumbai-Delhi-Bengaluru will start outsourcing work to the rest of India to get the same cost benefit. If I can run a business on a WFH model, why do I need to hire someone in Mumbai, if I can find the same talent at half the cost, say in Bhavnagar or in Trivandrum, says Tibrewala.

**Commercial Real Estate Collapse:** The Realty market virtually collapsed with the advent of the anti-corruption drive launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who assumed office on this promise in the 2014 elections and started restructuring the business models and work culture based on transparency and principled guidelines for work norms. Residential real estate market was already under pressure. Now, on account of WFH, we will see commercial businesses reduce their office size requirements. This will put further pressure on the



commercial real estate market. It is said that the real estate market was booming towards the end of the UPA regime in 2014, and in anticipation the balloon ballooning further, industry invested an enormous sum of Rs 30,000 crores in the least real estate.

The balloon burst as the realty sector is largely driven by black money, hawala money, round tripping money and the like. As the realty market went for a toss, investors were in a tailspin, with their valuations being wiped out, the global meltdown, demonetization, GST, and covid lock downs has wrecked the investors from various spheres. This will compel investors to resort to new work norms to cut down on costs. A parallel paradoxically was feeding the main economy as a backup, but with that finished almost, the country has slowed down to grinding halt in commerce and trade.

**Digital Transformation to Kick in:**

According to Tibrewala, Every business will now see the need to build a robust digital-driven delivery-capability. This will accelerate digital transformation. Every CEO will now see merit in making these investments. What this means that cash transactions will go down and plastic money and digital transactions such as cheques and internet banking are going to be the order of the day restricting on the use of cash transactions calling for a new mindset of people to use digital money to lead their ordinary lives. Paytm's, VISA/Mastercard's become the order of the day. You will be surprised to find your neighborhood grocery store owner refusing cash and wanting to swipe your ATM card to receive money or use the bar code of Paytm to sell your every day needs.

**Health and Security Checks:** Health care becomes paramount while on travel and the strictest health security checks will become the order of the day in the post COVID era.

**Security check is mandatory while boarding a flight or while going to a hotel or a mall. We will now see one additional layer of checks:** health checks, Malls and



hotels will start using temperature scanners. And travel may require a certificate of vaccination. Hand sanitizers containing isopropylene, a form of alcohol derivative, temperature checks by infrared thermometer hand guns and certificates of -ve covid certificates might be necessary for international or even domestic travel. Parliament in India has made it mandatory for every MP, hangers on and correspondents to undergo mandatory covid tests, and if found positive, barred entry.

**Stronger is the New Norm:** The current economic disruption will make those with a strong balance sheet, stronger, says Tibrewala. They will be able to manage cash flows in this situation, and then procure resources at a lower cost. Correspondingly, and in line with Darwinian theory of evolution, the weak will need to exit or reorganize their business model. This means a complete change of mindsets on how to manage inventories, cash flows, digitize transactions and cut down on labor at workplace.

**Sports on TV:** IPL in UAE has shown the way sports events are going to be played in a post covid situation. The strictest of tests and monitoring for players and their coaches and managers will be new norm. Empty stadium without fans,





*Though the incidence of infection may decline, COVID 19 is here to stay, its not going away, we have to learn to live with it. So, this brings us to the issue of new norms at work places, public domain, home space and employers' mindsets, automation over human labor, social distancing and use of PPE kits for long years to come, perhaps well into 2023-24. A good two to three years from now on.*

cheer leaders, and the roar of the crowd would be largely missing removing the zing out of sports events such as the largely followed game of cricket globally in commonwealth countries. Canned roars on TV is added to heighten the viewer experience. Getting into a stadium to watch a live sport (or any such event), is still a long way off. But we will see players getting onto the field to play a competitive sport and same is broadcast on TV and digital.

In any case the big bucks were coming from TV. Same will happen for other events. Only the participants will gather. The audience will watch it remotely. We have to reconcile being at home and watching sports on TV.

**Era of Personalized Marketing:** We will see a new era of personalized marketing. What used to happen door-to-door once upon a time, will now happen on scale. Right product, right time, right context. No-wastage-media will be the new mantra, says Tibrewala. What he means is that online shopping will grow with the usage of Paytm, internet banking, debit and credit cards being used extensively for payments. Contactless shopping and contactless deliveries of products is the new norm.

**Leisure Travel to Go for A Toss:** Every leisure traveler thinks twice about going on a vacation or visiting relatives overseas or domestically. Considerable research and home work would go into identifying safe places and whether it's a containment zone or a free zone to travel to. So, long distance travel will be limited to only the must-travel situations or business needs. General purpose leisure travel will be restricted to local geographic. Both the hospitality sector and aviation spheres already under pressured from global meltdown and slowdown of economies from GST and demonetization will bear the brunt of attack needing a better cash management plan. Customers may enjoy discounted rates.

**Govt Turns E-Commerce:** Governments will start initiating delivery of all its services using online channels. Everyone already has an Aadhar card or PAN card that uniquely identifies a person. Whether it be a visa interview or a court case,

everything happens online, and Prime Minister Modi has already initiated a Digital India soon after demonetization and it has proved quite successful with even the coconut seller using Paytm. Its easier to do large volumes of transactions through the E commerce way.

Government transactions are all high value running into billions. This also means shrinking work fore in governments which are often running on an overloaded bureaucracy of huge peripheral staff.

**Automated Production Acceleration:**

There will be a faster shift to automation in the manufacturing sector. If humans are home, the machines can keep running our supply chain, says Tibrewala, the joint CEO of Mirrum India. The automobile industry is already on automated model with robots doing the assembly of all automobiles. Cash transactions are out and only digital payments are on.

**World Tilts Towards China - India:**

Irrespective of the negative sentiment that is being drummed up against China, once the dust settles on Covid-19, the center of economic power will shift towards China and India. US and Europe are going to be taking a far bigger battering in this economic downcycle. Post COVID-19 pandemic: Hybrid-work model in the new-normal. " We discuss the digital divide, but the new-normal induced by COVID-19 should make us discuss the living divide as well, " says Tibrewala.

The post pandemic situation thus represents a New Norm full of Ifs and Butts, WFH scenario, Digitization of monetary transactions, kickoff to E- Commerce, Cashless Transactions, Contactless deliveries, Increased automation, increased joblessness, layoffs, a mixed bag of fortunes and miseries. Governments and industry have to find a fine balance and a viable solution to keep their businesses up and running and at the same time not hurt too much their loyal work force that have delivered their deliverables on time for long years.

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# BMW X3 M Launched

First ever high-performance model introduced in the mid-size Sports Activity Vehicle (SAV) segment.

- By A Correspondent

**B**MW India has introduced the first-ever M car in its high-performance model line-up in the mid-size Sports Activity Vehicle (SAV) segment with the launch of BMW X3 M recently in Gurugram. The first-ever BMW X3 M is designed to offer standout performance characteristics, personified with squarely geared features to meet the functional requirements of a high-performance car.

The first-ever BMW X3 M is now available across BMW dealerships in the country as a completely built-up unit (CBU).

Mr. Vikram Pawah, President, BMW Group India said, "BMW's Sports Activity Vehicle (SAV) segment is a testament to a remarkable success story. The introduction of a high-performance mid-size SAV will further strengthen our presence in the segment & entice new driving experiences. Uniqueness of the first-ever BMW X3 M lies in a newly developed powerful engine & sophisticated chassis technology. This vehicle, to the very last detail, offers a unique combination of luxury & sporting dynamics, providing an exciting, safe & novel driving experience to our customers. The new SAV is equipped with world-class features, evidently distinguishing it from others in the segment."


The first-ever BMW X3 M embodies high performance driving dynamics on one hand & everyday qualities on the other, unleashing outstanding driving potential in the segment. The interior-exterior design along with M specific features lend a true motor sport personality to the car. The ex-showroom price of the first-ever BMW X3 M is INR 99,90,000.

The first-ever BMW X3 M is available in Donington Grey, Toronto Red, Phytonic Blue, Sophisto Grey, Black Sapphire & Alpine White. The upholstery is available in Leather 'Vernasca' Design in Black & Oyster.



All online bookings done for the first-ever BMW X3 M before 31 December 2020 at [shop.bmw.in](http://shop.bmw.in) will enjoy a special benefit - an exclusive hospitality experience designed by BMW Excellence Club in collaboration with Isprava luxury villas.

By visiting [shop.bmw.in](http://shop.bmw.in), customers can explore a 360° view of vehicle exterior & interior along-with all features & personalization options at the click of a button. All queries on product, service packages & finance options can be addressed by interacting with a dealer representative online. In addition, payments can be made online in a secure way.

Customers of the first-ever BMW X3 M will gain membership to the exclusive BMW Excellence Club. A member's only collective, BMW Excellence Club caters to the discerning taste of BMW customers by curating unmatched luxury experiences from around the world. The program features four main categories: Bespoke Travel, The High Life, Grandstand & BMW Privileges. 



# Challenges Before Hospitality Sector Post COVID-19

Learn how, the Pride Group of Hotels devised innovative revenue streams to tide over the crisis.

- By A Correspondent



Satyen Jain, CEO, The Pride Group of Hotels

One cannot change the directions of the wind, but one can certainly adjust the sails. This is exactly what the Pride Group of Hotels did when the COVID-19 pandemic devastated the tourism industry worldwide.

The Pride Group of Hotels which is an eminent Indian hospitality brand with a presence in major cities across the country, took a strategic decision to adapt to the changing times and come out with an innovative revenue model and turned the crisis into an opportunity. The Pride Hotels is a major player in the hospitality industry in India operating 20 hotels.

This was revealed by Mr Satyen Jain, the CEO of the Pride Group of Hotels at a webinar organized by the Corporate Tycoons magazine in association with Business Value India (BVI) on November 7. The theme of the webinar was the Challenges of Reviving the Hospitality Sector Post COVID 19 wherein stalwarts from the tourism sector discussed the challenges and strategies. The speakers included Mr Satyen Jain, CEO of Pride Group, Mr Yuvraj Padole, the Deputy Director of Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, Mr Anil K Rajput, the Joint Secretary of Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India and David Whipple, the author of the book The 14 Immutable Laws of Business Value. David participated in the webinar from USA.

Mr Jain said COVID 19 had disrupted the entire tourism sector worldwide and thereby devastating the hospitality sector. This sector had also faced bad times during the 9/11 terror attack, few years ago. But it was localized to a certain region. But this pandemic has affected the whole world, he added. "We knew this was a big challenge. But we used it as an opportunity to grow instead of viewing it as a calamity" added Mr Jain.'

Elaborating on the strategies Mr Jain said "initially when the government had announced a lockdown and most hotels had shut down, we opened our hotels to accommodate some quarantine patients who had come from travel and also some doctors".

Jain said "we had to take this decision as we understood that new travellers will not come and therefore we have to adopt to this new change. We took the quarantine guests by taking adequate safety precaution.

Hence the Pride Group adopted the "Pride Safety Assurance" initiative by adopting technological measures like contactless check-in & check-out services, contactless billing facility, touchless dispensing centre for the sanitizers and mobile-friendly dining menu. Other safety measures that were taken included the usage of biodegradable trays for the in-room dining, marking the floors in the lobby area for people so they maintain social distancing at all times and all the key touch-points area in the hotel are sanitized in every half an hour.

Another revenue stream generated by The Pride Group of Hotels was Co-Working and Corporate Spaces desks, the alternate office space for working professionals. The service

**“Initially when the government had announced a lockdown and most hotels had shut down, we opened our hotels to accommodate some quarantine patients who had come from travel and also some doctors”. said Mr Jain**



featured individual workspace, co-working spaces, corporate space, meeting suites and studio office. It was designed specifically to cater to the needs of an organization or an individual, who wants to kick-start their businesses in a safe and reliable environment.

Jain said "every industry does not have the luxury of working from home. It is okay for the Information Technology companies, but not for the manufacturing and pharma companies which involved travelling. Hence we created the co-working and corporate spaces desks.

This business centre facility from Pride Hotels provided its guests with move-in ready to use workspaces with workstations,

private desk, conference rooms and the amenities of a traditional office. These spaces were tailored for individual's small teams, startups, SMEs & corporates and could be booked by the guests according to their desired work time period. All the arrangements were done keeping in mind the needs of the guest and thus creating an office environment where they can work without any hindrance.

Mr Yuvraj Padole, Deputy Director Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board gave a broad outline of the work that the Board had done to provide support and succour to the stake holders.

He said Madhya Pradesh Tourism had 67 chain of hotels under its wings and it was the responsibility of the Board to promote tourism in the state. "After the pandemic, we spoke to our stake-holders which included travel agents, tour operators and hotel owners and tried to get first-hand information about their problems. The biggest problem was everything was shut down and no revenue was flowing in even though everyone had to shelve out the cost of rents, electricity charges, salaries etc".



**Yuvraj Padole**, Deputy Director Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board

“ *Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board (MPTB) also ran the "Intezaar Aapka" campaign on its social media handles to attract tourists; both national and international. This campaign was aimed at empathizing with the current situation of travellers who preferred to be in their homes fearing the pandemic. –said Mr Yuvraj*



He said the MPTB suggested to the government for hand-holding the stake-holders. He said the wildlife resorts were opened on June 8 phase-wise. “People were keen to come to the resorts, but there was palpable fear among them. The challenge before us was to address their health concerns”.

Yuvraj said the MPTB prepared a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) after receiving guidelines from the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Health and then the same was sent to different hotels including government and private ones for imparting training to them to welcome guests maintaining proper social distance.

Yuvraj said Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board (MPTB) also ran the “Intazaar Aapka” campaign on its social media handles to attract tourists; both national and international. This campaign was aimed at empathizing with the current situation of travellers who preferred to be in their homes fearing the pandemic.

The campaign is running successfully on the Board’s Facebook, Twitter and Instagram handle. It has already covered famous tourist spots like Ujjain, Panchmari, Amarkantak, Bandhavgarh, Kanha and Mandu among others, and is also providing links to book a visit to the place on the social media pages.

“This campaign evoked positive response from the tourists as it helped in allaying the fears to some extent” Yuvraj added. He said Madhya Pradesh is also known as the Tiger state and the number one tourism product is wildlife.

The Joint Secretary of Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) Mr Anil Rajput said he had spent 40 years in the tourism sector and had seen many changes happening in the tourism industry. But what happened in the wake of COVID 19 was unprecedented. “It has affected the whole world. Everyone in the world is experiencing what you and me are experiencing” added Mr Rajput.

**“I have seen many changes happening in the tourism sector, but none can match this one. Earlier India was visited over 10 million foreign visitors last year and 26 million travelled overseas. All these travels were handled by 53,000 travel agents, over one lac tour operators, thousands of hospitality companies and estimated around 38 million employees all over India and a large number of people from the unorganized sector.**

Mr Rajput who is also the Chairman Committee Research and Development of New Destinations in India said the pandemic had altered the lives of people and that the travel industry like other business entities have to adapt themselves to the life altering changes.

He said “I have seen many changes happening in the tourism sector, but none can match this one. Earlier India was visited over 10 million foreign visitors last year and 26 million travelled overseas. All these travels were handled by 53,000 travel agents, over one lac tour operators, thousands of hospitality companies and estimated around 38 million employees all over India and a large number of people from the unorganized sector. All these people are affected by the impact of the pandemic.

He described the impact of COVID-19 world over as something which was described by Alvin Toffler in his book Future Shock. The shortest definition for the term in the book is a personal perception of “too much change in too short a period of time”.





**Anil Rajput, The Joint Secretary of Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India ( ADTOI)**

The book written about 50 years ago describes what happens to the people who experience rapid change in too much short time.

According to Rajput, Tourism is the first one to be affected all over the world and it will be the last one to revive. "Tourism will not stop. But the module will definitely change. Many factors are going to affect tourism. This includes safety, hygiene and money spending behaviour. Government will come out with mandatory checks. But the tourists will have their own safety protocols and guidelines and it is upto the tourism industry to adapt to their needs", he added.

He said " "people will go for brands where quality checks are stringently followed and maintained. People in this situation will prefer to save rather than spend too much money. This is because people are losing jobs and business are suffering setbacks.


Besides people would prefer to travel short distance with their families in their own car and avoid group travels".

According to Rajput, the pandemic will drastically minimise the dependency of the people on online portals, websites or travel agents. They will prefer new places, new resorts, which are within driving distance of five to six hours.

Niche tourism will get a push. Health and Wellness tourism will be more on demand as people will become more and more health conscious. They would like to go to those places where there are wellness centres.

David Whipple, the author of 14 Immutable Laws of Business Value said the pandemic had drastically changed the world and people had become fearful of travel. He said there was a need for building business value using the law of attraction and said there was a need to build value pillars and drivers.

Mr Rajendra Deshpande, Director of Business Value India spoke about the role of Business Value India (BVI) .He described how BVI was imparting training and consultancy for the medium and small businesses for innovative strategic management.

Chandran Iyer , Editor and Publisher of Corporate Tycoons magazine highlighted the significance of the webinar. This was important webinar as the Tourism and Hospitality industry employs the largest number of people around the world. In India, the industry amounts to 10% of the GDP. It is seen as a catalyst for economic development. That is the magnitude of the industry. 

**“ People will go for brands where quality checks are stringently followed and maintained. People in this situation will prefer to save rather than spend too much money. This is because people are losing jobs and business are suffering setbacks. Besides people would prefer to travel short distance with their families in their own car and avoid group travels”. –Mr Rajput**



# Joe Biden – Kamala Harris Make it to The White House

Penn Clinches Prez for Biden ending a 96-hour suspense.

- By TN Ashok



**D**emocratic Nominee Joe Biden was elected as the 46th President of the United States, thus ending 96 hours of a Hitchcockian thriller in a nation divided by color, the pandemic and joblessness in 2020 with people hoping for a healing touch from the six time Delaware senator and eight year term Vice President Under Barack Obama regime of the democrats. Kamala Harris of Indian American and African origin hopes to provide much strength to an aging but agile and mentally alert 78-year-old Biden to lift the country out of the economic morass caused by the global meltdown capped by the COVID 19 that has devastated the GDP numbers and health care system.

With near 12 million infected and over one million dead, America looks towards the Biden-Harris combine hoping the democrats will deliver the much-awaited vaccine to cure the infected, restore jobs for the small and medium business devastated by shut downs, and unite the country. President Elect Joe Biden tweeted that he was honored to be chosen by the people to lead the country (in a crisis time). His statement was

significant for a country that's racially divided after the George Floyd manslaughter in Minneapolis that launched the Black Lives Matter movement as he said "I am president of the United States for all the people. Those who voted for me and those who did not. There are no red (Republican ) or blue (Democratic) states but only the United States". His mission is clear. To reunite the country.

The world was delighted at Bidens victory as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a buddy of the defeated Trump, tweeted his congratulatory message to both Joe Biden and Kamala Harris separately expressing his happiness. He joined the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and the French President Macaron among others who were the first to greet Biden even as New York, the state that went Bidens way, commercial capital of the world, erupted in extreme joy with unprecedented scenes of joi-de-vivre at the famed Times Square. Whites, Blacks, Indians and Latinos went into raptures over the election of Biden and Harris. Modi particularly reached out to Kamala saying India was immensely proud over her election as VP. He hoped the friendly ties between the two countries would be strengthened further.



Trump dubbed the election as a “ Fraud” on the electorate and accused the democrats of “ stealing votes” and said he had actually won. His claim was that the mail in ballots should not have been counted after the polls closed on November 03. But election authorities, because of the pandemic situation, had allowed mail in ballots to come in till November 06, three days after polls closed November 03, as they did not want to disenfranchise the people. Particularly the armed forces who were in far away places such as in Iraq and Afghanistan. And it took for the mails to arrive.

What went wrong for Trump? He was an absolute outsider who did “Out of the Box ” thinking and took individual decisions based on his own instincts rather on his Washington advisors, which was the traditional thing for all presidents before. He isolated a section of the republican senators who subsequently worked against him. His policy of camaraderie with North Korea, a declared rogue state, did not go down well with the Americans besides his mishandling of the COVID situation and absolute disrespect for science. His mishandling of the pandemic with not shutting down early but keeping everything open in what he believed livelihood fed the economy, but which actually killed more people that it should have, saw a strong backlash.

He was full of rhetoric but on the ground no answers for joblessness, racial strife, and a sagging economy overloaded with debts. A trillion-dollar trade deficit, China topping the list. His hostility towards China also did not go down well with policy administrators in Washington. On the contrary, Biden-Harris combine promised racial unity, lift the country out of the economic morass, restore jobs to people, and most of all pledged a life with dignity, grace and hope to the oppressed. Most of the white women who voted Trump in 2016 voted against him as they saw him as a “ Bully” and the wrong role model. ‘We don’t want our children growing up like him”, is what many mothers said before the election.

Harris in her tweet said : It was not about Joe Biden or Kamala Harris but all about the soul of America. To this Our commitment stands and we have a lot of work ahead of us. To Biden she said : you did it, we did it, you are the next president of the united states while on her early morning walk. The President Elect in his tweet said : “ America, I am honored that you have chosen me to lead our great country. The work head of us will be hard, but I promise you this: I will be a president for all Americans – whether you voted for me or not. I will keep the faith you have placed in me.”

The battleground states of Michigan and Wisconsin Biden had taken from Trump, but the war remained on the turf of Georgia, Nevada, Pennsylvania and North Carolina, but Biden needed only Georgia to win ( 264 with six electoral votes) but Pennsylvania gave him 20 electoral college votes in a dramatic surprise to take his tally to 290, well beyond 270 to win the presidency in the 538 vote electoral college, while Trump was stuck at 214.

Trump became the first president in 30 years not to win a second term but was ousted. Mishandling of pandemic and economy did him in. Most of the media outlets dumped him even as his lawyers prepared for a new battle in the courts to return him as President, chances of which however seem very bleak as the electoral process has been very transparent and played by the book entirely. So, the game is far from over, excitement and a slender uncertainty haunts the presidency in December, before Biden and Harris can walk into the White House after the inauguration on January 20, 2021.

The scenario before Bidens election was quite tense. Virtually an edge of the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi

***The world was delighted at Bidens victory as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a buddy of the defeated Trump, tweeted his congratulatory message to both Joe Biden and Kamala Harris separately expressing his happiness. He joined the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and the French President Macaron among others who were the first to greet Biden even as New York, the state that went Bidens way, commercial capital of the world, erupted in extreme joy with unprecedented scenes of joi-de-vivre at the famed Times Square.***

seat thriller, full of uncertainty and suspense as the battle of the ballot played out in a close finish, but the mail in ballots took it far ahead. Some 72 % of the people had sent in mail in ballots and avoided polling booths for fear of COVID infection. Here is how it played out. Finally, Biden took Pennsylvania and Nevada and Georgia even as he lost North Carolina, Texas to Trump.



Donald Trump

**Trump dubbed the election as a “Fraud” on the electorate and accused the democrats of “stealing votes” and said he had actually won. His claim was that the mail in ballots should not have been counted after the polls closed on November 03. But election authorities, because of the pandemic situation, had allowed mail in ballots to come in till November 06, three days after polls closed November 03, as they did not want to disenfranchise the people.**

For the first time in the history of the United States, the world’s biggest democracy, the fate of the New President hung in the balance, Democrat Joe Biden or Incumbent Republican Donald Trump, were both grid locked in battleground states. Even after a week since the polls closed and counting started, there was no clear verdict, no perfect candidate to the presidency to run the country from 2021 to 2024.

What was the reason for this close race? Why did it take so long to declare the President

elect? Let’s take the first factor – white supremacists – the southern republican states were clear that Trump ought to be reelected, but there were divisions as women split from the men in voting. The other was the Fear factor, the northern states, dominated by the colored’s the Africans, the Asians, the Latinos, after the George Floyd incident at Minneapolis in Minnesota state where he was kneeled to death by a white police officer that rocked the nation and launched the Black Lives Matter felt unsafe.

Kahani mein Twist, starts here. Biden, who had argued fiercely for segregation of the people as a senator in 1993 and even went to the extent of calling the Blacks as “ Street Predators” had angered the African American population, who didn’t live down with it and called him “ Creepy Joey”. Even his running mate Ms. Kamala Harris tore through Biden in the early primaries of the election campaign and caucus meetings for his racial bias, as she argued she had grown in a black neighborhood in Berkeley and knew what life was to be black in America. Though she was born to intellectuals, Shyamala Gopalan, a tambrahm from Chennai, was a scientist and father A Jamaican Scholar of repute, a PhD, who taught economics at an ivy league college.

Kahani mein twist was launched here. Being a shrewd politician Joe Biden seized the Black Lives Matter campaign and turned it to his advantage by choosing his critic Ms. Kamala Harris, of Indian African American Origin, as his running mate. She was the right pitch for a forceful Trump’s oratory, with her powerful rhetoric and impeccable track record as attorney general of California, before becoming the states senator fighting for human rights, equal rights for blacks and prison reforms.

It was the perfect combine. The voter base turned on its head, as American’s are often popularly heard as saying, and Biden started regaining lost ground and emerged as a front runner for the presidency even challenging Trump in battleground states – Wisconsin, Michigan, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Arizona, where he has broken into the voter base of Trump giving him a close fight. Biden had a more traditional mold to sync with the average American, He led a traumatic life as a senator from Delaware, his young wife and baby daughter died in a tragic car accident and his two infants’ sons survived. He was a single dad who later remarried but held on for a long time tending to his children, travelling as much as 150 kms from his home to Washington to work so as not to uproot his children and cause a cultural conflict in their minds. This was a far cry image of the arrogant rich brat image of Trump, who all but cared for money and his properties and expanding his business and marrying women half his age. America is a traditional country with closely held cultural values.

There was unprecedented record polling in the United States State governors extended the arrival of mail in ballots, aka called the absentee votes, to arrive even as late as November 06 to be counted. No voter should be disenfranchised during the period of COVID times was their argument. Incumbent President Donald Trump contested these saying votes coming in after November 04, a day after polls closed, should be declared null and void and not taken into account. He feared that majority of the mail in ballots or absentee votes would go in favor of Biden-Harris combine, which actually did.

There are three famous democracies that follow the presidential system of governance – USA, France and Sri Lanka. But in Sri Lanka it’s a question of proportional representation of the percentage of votes. If a state has an electoral college of say 12 votes, then say the first seven will go to the highest percentage



of popular votes polled by the presidential candidate and the remaining goes to the rivals in descending order of percentage of votes polled. But in America if a presidential candidate establishes a clear and comfortable lead in popular vote, he gets all the votes of that state in the electoral college. Winner Takes All is the principle. Only a half percent margin calls for a mandatory recount.

The US media had touted for Biden particularly the New York Times and popular cable TV CNN. Even Fox News dumped Trump. Biden's comeback was essentially fueled by Black anger in urban areas.

But it was not just Blacks, Biden's charge to the White House was also driven by a fatal mistake by Trump in Arizona, whose native son -- the late Senator John McCain -- he derided. McCain's widow Cindy McCain and a slate of Republicans abandoned Trump and backed Biden, delivering the state to Democrats.

During a White House media briefing, Trump decried the pollsters, media and big tech companies for siding with the Democrats. He accused them of suppression of voters. Further, while commenting on the performance of the Republican Party in the elections, the president said that party retained majority in the Senate and won many seats in the House of Representatives. Trump also asserted that after the elections, Republicans have emerged as a party of American workers. "We grew our party by four million voters, the greatest turnout in Republican Party history. Democrats are the party, the big donors, the big media, the big tech, it seems. Republicans have become the party of the American workers and that's what's happened," he said.

Joe Biden captured 14 states including his home state Delaware and big prize New York, plus the US capital Washington. Coming down heavily on Donald Trump on the eve of the US presidential election, Democratic vice-presidential nominee Kamala Harris said that the president has failed to lead the country and America can no longer afford four more years of him. "We've seen who we are. The country we love. And that is why I know that tomorrow we are going to elect Joe Biden to be the next President of the United States!" Kamala had said.

Trump was virtually a buddy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as evidenced by the Namaste Trump show at Motera stadium where a record one lakh supporters had gathered in Ahmedabad; Howdy Houston for Modi drew large crowds at a football stadium in Houston. But the logic was simple Indian Americans like Modi but not Trump and large numbers did not vote for him as they were 3rd generation Indian Americans who saw ground realities of the pandemic and economy and voted accordingly.

But for India, democrat or republican party, India is still a favored nation as it's the most stable democracy in the SAARC and South Asian region. United States knows clearly that it can ignore India only at its own peril. US needs India's support for fighting terrorism home grown in Pakistan, supporting a democratic led regime in Kabul against the Al-Queida. Kamala Harris will be instrumental in bring Biden closer to Modi. So, are we bracing for another spectacular welcome show for Biden-Harris Vanakkam at Cheapuk stadium? Time will tell in February next year. 🇺🇸

[feedback@ashoktnex@gmail.com](mailto:feedback@ashoktnex@gmail.com).

# Gera Developments Launches Staycation Homes

They come with a host of world-class amenities for fitness, recreation and convenience.

- By A Correspondent

**G**era Developments, pioneers of the real estate business and the award-winning creators of premium residential and commercial projects in Pune, Goa, and Bengaluru, credited with many firsts, has created yet another innovative

category in residential spaces with the launch of Staycation Homes at Gera's World of Joy, Upper Kharadi\* to suit lifestyles in the new normal.

The company's philosophy is Let's Outdo and yet again, they






have created a breakthrough in innovation with the launch of Staycation Homes on the backdrop of the hugely successful ChildCentric® Homes thereby creating a paradigm shift in real estate for both, the developer as well as the homebuyer. The company is known to establish new categories of living spaces designed keeping customer desires and lifestyle in mind. Gera's have set new benchmarks not only in understanding the pulse of the customer and quickly responding to it, but also setting new standards of service orientation in the realty sector. Staycation as a concept is of appeal to consumers looking forward to having a quick vacation within their city. That's where Gera's Staycation Homes as a concept resonates as it allows the family to not only enjoy endless staycations but also regale in the host of amenities the project offers.

Mr. Rohit Gera, Managing Director, Gera Developments

said, "Recognizing the lifestyle shift brought about by the pandemic this year, we conceptualised Staycation Homes which will appeal to our customers and also suit their buying appetite. The new era demands new thinking and innovative ideas. Real estate as an asset class has matured. Market participants need to realize this, think ahead of the curve and be game changers. We have always catered to our customers' tastes and buying preferences."

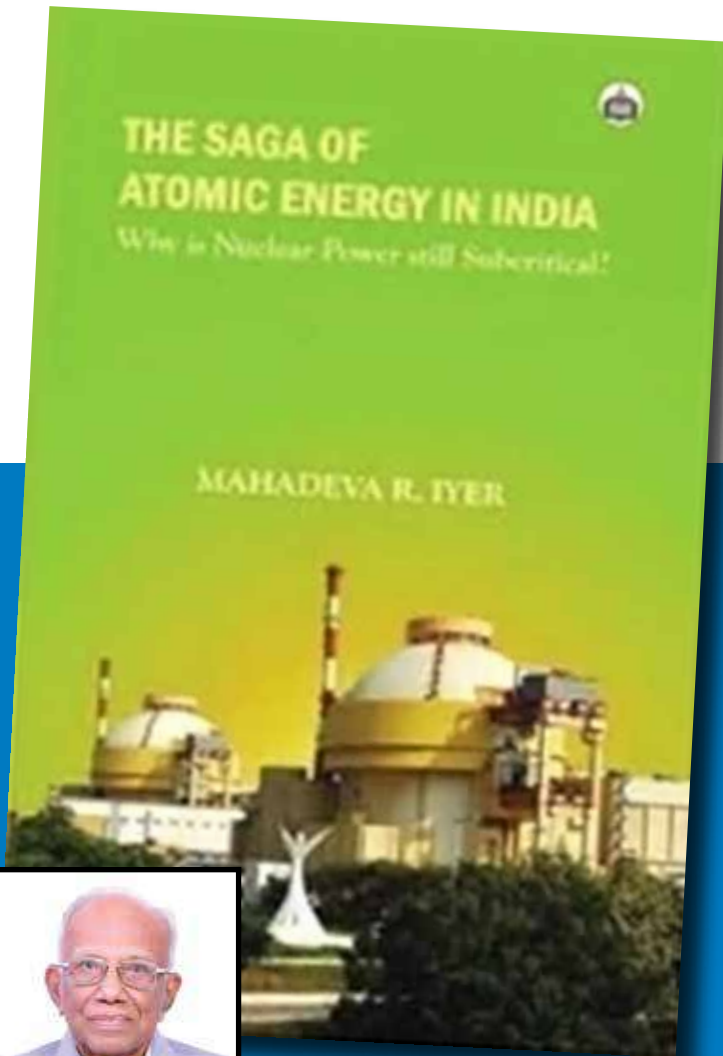
Mr. Gera further added that "Staycation Homes stem from our unwavering focus on innovating real estate and home building to meet shifting lifestyle dynamics while upholding the premium living experience. This approach previously led us to create ChildCentric® Homes focused on ensuring the safety, learning and development of children. We always assess the market situation, customer sentiment and feedback before launching our projects. This time too, we have keenly observed the current Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on consumers, their lifestyle, their need for a break, albeit in a safe environment and have responded with the unique offering of Staycation Homes."

Staycation Homes housed at Gera's World of Joy are right-sized studio apartments (carpet area 267 sq ft.) designed to suit the 'new normal' lifestyle and enjoy the world-class amenities offered by Gera's World of Joy, the Second ChildCentric® Homes Project in Pune. This premium residential project by Gera Developments has received an overwhelming response since its launch in November 2019 with Phase 1 almost completely sold out. Gera Developments is offering these unique homes starting at an all-inclusive price of Rs 32.9 lakhs at an attractive scheme under which the customer needs to pay only Rs 2.9 lakhs and government taxes at the time of booking and complete the payment on possession.

Along with superior ergonomic designing, Staycation Homes come with a host of world-class amenities for fitness, recreation and convenience, such as clubhouse, indoor climate controlled half Olympic size swimming pool, badminton courts, squash courts, gymnastics hall as well as the dance studio, art studio and gaming rooms, gymnasium, yoga and meditation area, music room, creche, kids' play area, cycling track etc. The outdoor areas house the tennis courts and other outdoor facilities. The homes are equipped with DEFT's smart home devices with Google integrated voice-controlled home automation and comprise other stand-out leisure options like a rock-climbing wall, skating rink, and a mini theatre. Thus, they are fully equipped to blend the comfort of a home with the recreative bliss of a vacation. The location of Staycation Homes at Upper Kharadi\* is spacious and peaceful yet in close proximity of schools and colleges, hospitals and retail stores and markets, and easily reachable from the railway station as well as the airport. 



# "THE SAGA OF ATOMIC ENERGY IN INDIA"



By Dr. V. Subramaniam and Prof. Kannian Gopaldaswamy

**The saga of atomic energy in India:**  
Why is nuclear power still subcritical?

**Author:**

Mahadeva R. Iyer Publisher:

**Authors Press' ISBN:**

978-93-89824-89-6

The book traces the historical evolution of the Atomic Energy program in India spanning the period from early beginning of the last century till date taking us through its evolution under the inspiring leadership of Dr Homi Bhabha whose magic wand transformed a barren stretch of land between the Arabian sea and the Trombay Hills in Mumbai into an outstanding nuclear research center in a short period of 10 years from 1956 to 1965 when numerous nuclear facilities sprang up around the nuclear reactors Apsara and CIRUS. The Center became a beehive of research making it one of the outstanding Research centers in the world, Atomic Energy Establishment Trombay (AEET) later named as Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC).

Meanwhile Tata Institute of Fundamental Research TIFR, the forerunner of the AEET, transformed itself into a world center of fundamental research churning out outstanding scientific personalities such as George Sudarsan, Govind Sarup, MGK Menon and others. Some of the stunning astrophysical research installations such as 26 Km long Giant Meter wave Telescope GMRT and 530 m wide parabolic telescope in Ooty hills were world class facilities that came out of TIFR. Iyer in his book recounts that these need to be taken as a logical continuation of such great contributions of Prof. S N Bose in enunciating Bose Einstein statistics which stood the test of time for more than 72 years and many contributions from the Calcutta University. The ensuing pages of the book present chronologically details of some of the peaks of excellence, which would otherwise go unnoticed.

1 " TIFRAC the first computer in India was not made by IBM or any foreign supplier but built in TIFR by Professor arasimhan and his Colleagues notably Dr. P.V.S. Rao in 1956."

2 . "Dr. Homi J Bhabha took the first step to indigenize electronic industry in the country. He set up a production unit called TEI (from bay Electronic Instruments) within AEET which met all the instrumentation needs of the center and even the universities and later grew into a public



sector undertaking Electronic Corporation of India. ECIL." TIFR initiated the growth of the Semiconductor electronics component development.

Iyer then delineates the initiation of the country into the nuclear power program of the country in setting up the first nuclear power reactor in Tarapur from USA which made the country the 5th in the world to start this program and even contributed 30 percent of the electricity in the Maharashtra state when the US has just stanced the program with providing 3 percent of the power. Dr Bhabha continued to induct nuclear technology in the country by selecting the heavy water reactors from Canada. It is this thoughtful plan that enabled India to become one of the foremost countries with PHWR technology matured with 18 of the reactors made indigenously.

Iyer says that India would have become one of the most successful countries with nuclear technology but for the need for it to carry out a nuclear test in 1974 to help the country with strategic capability to counter similar activities going on in the neighbourhood. And this led to unfair sanctions being imposed by the nuclear weapons states and India came under the shadow of suffocating denial regimes in nuclear material and technology import. The fast reactor program has grown aiming at utilizing the abundant thorium resources in India grew under this suffocating denial regime.

This saga of atomic energy is contained in the first 8 sections of the Part I of book and Iyer takes the reader through a graphic account of its evolution with stunning clarity and makes one "hooked to the book" as one of the stalwarts of the program put it. A graphic narration of this striking march of the country in the nuclear front with many details that are not well known to the outside world are presented.

The author further takes us to sections 9 10 and 11 analyzing the program giving a realistic projection in the next two to three decades quoting plans from governmental sources and foresees that the nuclear power may become critical by 2050 or so enabling the program to make use of the abundant supply of thorium in the country. However Iyer warns this calls for some re-orientation of the plans and policies to make it critical "earlier than later" by considering International collaborations making use of the opening up of the nuclear commerce. Various steps that are being undertaken to strive to make it critical earlier are discussed and some suggestions to make it of relevance earlier than later are discussed. No doubt Dr Srikumar Banerjee, former Chairman Atomic energy commission in his Foreword considers the book "an authentic description of the evolution of the Atomic energy program in India as captured by the author that has perhaps never been done before".

We come across an interesting observation by the author: "The Indo USA deal was a piece of shrewd diplomacy born out of the USA juggernaut! The real purpose of the treaty was

***Some of the stunning astrophysical research installations such as 26 Km long Giant Meter wave Telescope GMRT and 530 m wide parabolic telescope in Ooty hills were world class facilities that came out of TIFR. Iyer in his book recounts that these need to be taken as a logical continuation of such great contributions of Prof. S N Bose in enunciating Bose Einstein statistics which stood the test of time for more than 72 years and many contributions from the Calcutta University.***

to tackle India diplomatically in ensuring non-proliferation. However, it was made ostensibly to help India with nuclear power. US was also perhaps looking forward to exporting power reactors to India." Our policy negotiators could not have been unaware of the real intentions of the US but would have thought it to be the best bargain out of a bad situation of total isolation from the international nuclear trade. If this can lead to opening up of the nuclear industry in India internationally, why not? - a realistic give and take policy. It was perhaps a big gamble! Though it paid off in many respects particularly in importing uranium for fueling safeguarded reactors following agreements with IAEA, it does not seem to have been working out as imagined, even after fourteen years of its initiation. No import of nuclear power plants has materialized except Russian reactors which could now be installed freely. More important no technology imports have taken place. He concludes that one of the outcall of the agreements is that India is now accepted as a weapon county in the agreements with IAEA which is unique in the history of safeguard regimen of the IAEA. However the author raises the question why we are still continuing to labor under isolation following the strategy adopted by Dr. Bhabha in inducting technology and not getting into international agreements which are taking shape around world in the area of fast reactors. He hopes that the country becomes an international Centre for fast reactor development building on its clean record of operation of a fast reactor by not losing this opportunity.

Part II of the book contains reprints of the article by the author published during last 15 years which clearly catch the various moods of despair and hope in the aftermath of the Indo US agreements. These also contain many suggestions to fine tune the nuclear program of the country.

# Maharashtra Governor Releases Dr Aneel Murarka's Biography

He works on innovative social initiatives for the uplift of the underprivileged through his Social Enterprise Ample Missiion.

- By A Correspondent

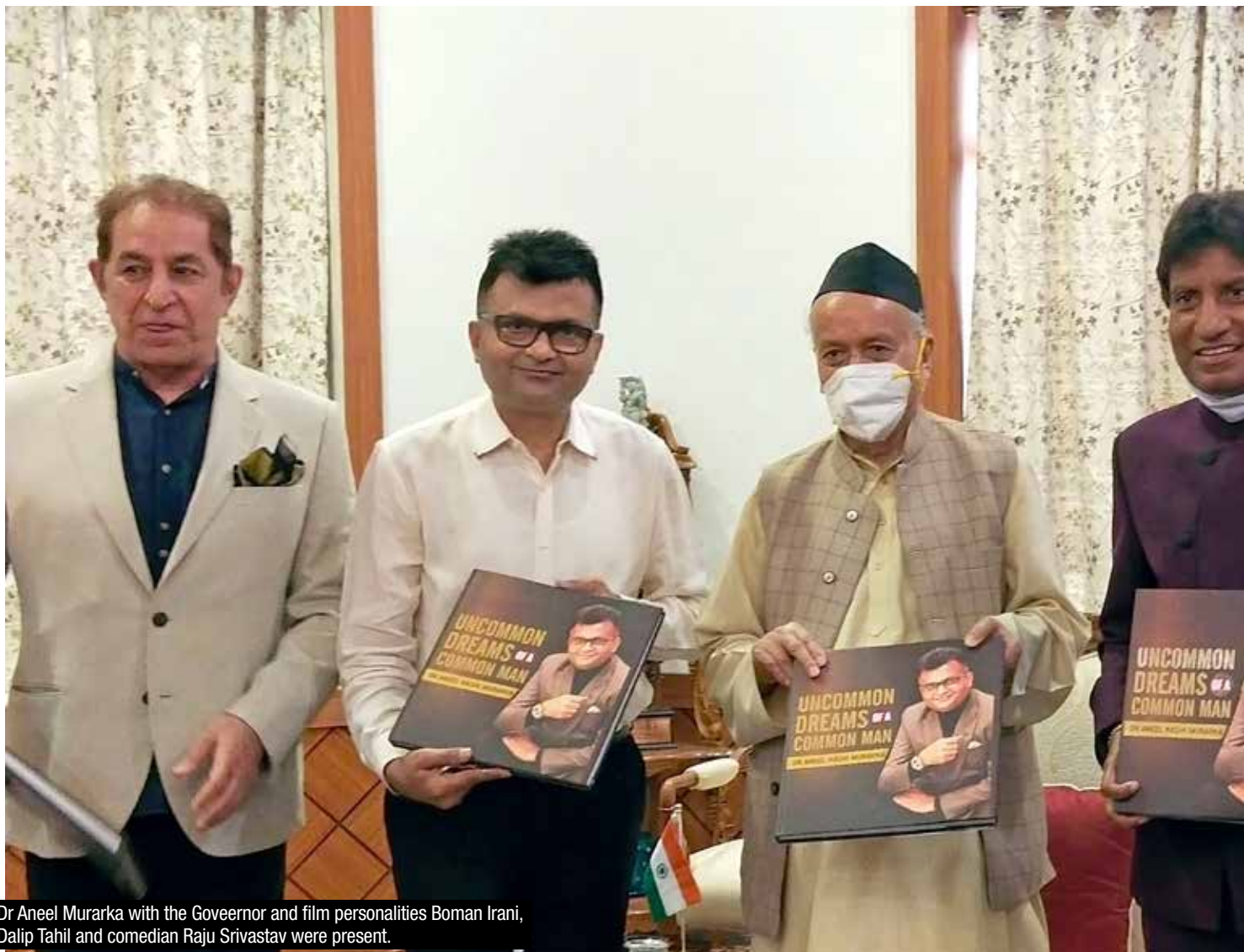
**G**overnor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari released industrialist and philanthropist Dr Aneel Kashi Murarka's biographical book '**\*Uncommon Dreams of a Common Man\***' at Raj Bhavan, Mumbai on Saturday (31st Oct). Film personalities Boman Irani, Dalip Tahil and comedian Raju Srivastav were present.

The book is a biographical account of the life and social work of Dr Aneel Kashi Murarka who also heads an

organization 'Ample Missiion'. It's published by The Times of India Publications.

## ABOUT ANEEL MURARKA

Aneel Murarka works on innovative social initiatives for the uplift of the underprivileged through his Social Enterprise Ample Missiion. Over the past three decades, he has closely associated with other NGOs as well in varied fields of human welfare.

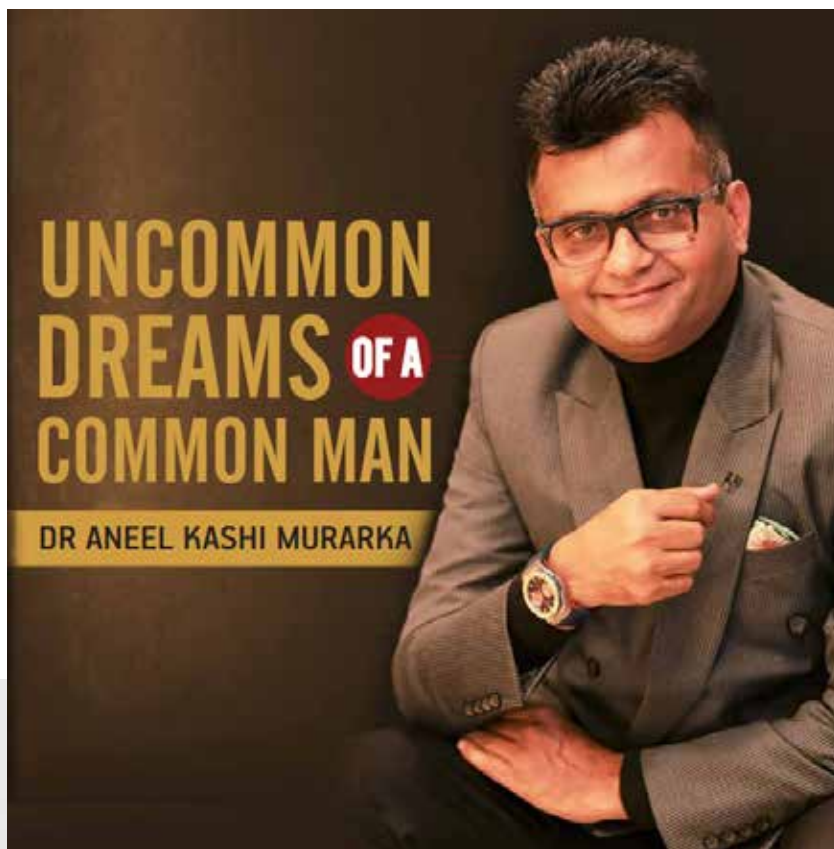


Dr Aneel Murarka with the Governor and film personalities Boman Irani, Dalip Tahil and comedian Raju Srivastav were present.



Aneel, along with his teenage son Sidhaant and energetic young team, is working on child education, providing medical care to those in need and the economically backward sections, building mega public utility facilities, giving financial support to students, orphans, cancer patients, senior citizens, and creating equal opportunities for marginalised communities like acid attack survivors, transgenders and specially-abled people. The humanitarian in Aneel is omnipresent in all these fields, making an impact on many lives.


Murarka also organises mega award shows for the 'Unsung Heroes' of society, 'Forgotten Brave Martyrs' from the Defence Force, Police and Fire Department who laid down their lives for the nation and the 'Specially-abled Heroes' (Limited Edition) who have achieved



*Aneel, along with his teenage son Sidhaant and energetic young team, is working on child education, providing medical care to those in need and the economically backward sections, building mega public utility facilities, giving financial support to students, orphans, cancer patients, senior citizens, and creating equal opportunities for marginalised communities like acid attack survivors, transgenders and specially-abled people.*



the unthinkable.

Despite being a philanthropic industrialist, he doesn't believe in doing charity just for the sake of recognition. He says, "Everyone should find a little time to help make someone else's life better. Remember, we have one life to live, let's make it worthy before we leave planet earth." 

## AirAsia India resumes In-flight Food & Beverage Service

**A**irAsia India announced the resumption of in-flight meal service, following relaxations in regulatory guidelines issued by the government. The airline has extended its in-flight dining experience options to pre-booked orders. AirAsia India's in-flight menu offers the widest range of hot meals in the sky, with nine delectable vegan, vegetarian, pescetarian, eggitarian and jain meal options for guests, in addition to sandwiches and dessert add-ons.

AirAsia India will also serve complimentary 200ml Aava disposable water bottles to guests on request. Aava is obtained directly from protected natural sources and adheres to International Quality Standards and eco-friendly practices. It is naturally pure, does not go through any chemical processes or reverse osmosis and is India's only alkaline mineral water with a pH of 8+. Aava uses recyclable PET containers which are 100% BPA free and contamination free, which can be further recycled into fabric, yarn, clothes and car components.

AirAsia India has a dedicated section of its in-flight menu, called 'Pioneer's Pick', inspired by JRD Tata's favourites, including a marinated grilled fillet of fish with lemon butter sauce, mashed potato and sautéed vegetables and a cheddar cheese omelette with parsley potato and beetroot cutlet. In addition to JRD's favourites, the meals include an innovative Vegan Moilee MasterCurry (with tofu, cherry tomatoes, and zucchini, served with raw mango and coconut rice), curated exclusively by Masterchef Kirti Bhoutika for the 2020 AirAsia India in-flight menu. During the lockdown, as part of AirAsia India's celebrations of the 116th birth anniversary of



JRD Tata, the father of Indian Civil Aviation, the airline home delivered specially curated meals inspired by JRD's favourites to customers and patrons.

Acknowledged for its premiere safety standards, AirAsia India caters its in-flight meals from the reputed SkyGourmet and TajSATS Air Catering, maintaining the highest standards of presentation, cleanliness, and hygiene with strict adherence to HACCP and FSSAI guidelines on food safety and hygiene.

## Godrej Interio Launches Essential Range Ushering Festivities in Pune

**A**s Maharashtra sets to embrace the festivities, Godrej Interio, India's leading furniture solutions brand, brings with itself incredible offer and announces the launch of its essential range of products. The newly launched products in essential range 'Bobbin range of Sofa' and 'Gradient Sofa range' are the latest addition to the brand's wide range of sofa sets, while 'Apex bedroom set' and 'Gradient bedroom set' will widen the bedroom set category. The brand also plans to launch more living room and bedroom solutions to expand its range of affordable offerings. The launch of the products has been announced to cater to high demand for furniture in Maharashtra ahead of the festivities.

These products are designed and developed to help families spend quality time with their loved ones especially as the state government has announced a series of measures to help people celebrate the festival in compliance with the COVID regulations. With design thinking being the root of every innovation, Godrej Interio is offering the essential range of products that come with good quality, functionality, design, and sustainability at an affordable price with assured warranty to the customers.

Bobbin and Gradient have been designed as affordable solutions to enhance the living space. These product ranges are available in 3-seater, 2-seater and 1-seater configurations; and offer two color shade options each. Similarly, in the bedroom set range, Apex and Gradient are designed for the people who seek to upgrade their lifestyle. Available in both king and queen sizes, the beds also



offer abundant storage space for your belongings. The contemporary designs of the sofas and beds liven up your space and ensure that you cherish moments of togetherness with your family. The 3 eater sofa sets start from as low as Rs 20,000 while king size beds start from Rs 30,000 only.

As a part of festive celebrations offers, customers will get exclusive offers in the home furniture and Kitchen furniture items like a mega discount of up to 25% and additional discounts of up to value Rs 24,000 which consumers can redeem in their subsequent purchase.

# Mahindra Launches New Treo Zor Electric 3-Wheeler Cargo

**M**ahindra Electric Mobility Ltd, part of the USD 19.4 billion Mahindra Group on October 29, announced the launch of its new electric 3-wheeler cargo model, Treo Zor, in India starting at Rs.2.73 lakh (Ex-showroom Delhi, net of FAME 2 and state subsidies). The Treo Zor is based on the proven Treo platform and will come in 3 variants – Pickup, Delivery Van and Flat Bed. Vehicles will be available at Mahindra small commercial vehicle dealerships in select cities across India starting December 2020.

Treo Zor offers an excellent value proposition to its owners. It offers higher savings of Rs.60,000+/year versus existing diesel cargo 3-wheelers\* thanks to its outstanding maintenance cost of just 40 paise/km\*. It delivers impressive performance with best-in-industry\*\*power of 8kW and best-in-class\*\*\* torque of 42 Nm. Treo Zor also comes with best-in-class\*\*\* payload of 550 kg.

Speaking at the launch, Dr Pawan Goenka, MD & CEO, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. said, "On the 75th anniversary of Mahindra, we are driven by purpose for a tomorrow that is clean, green and technologically connected. I believe that India has a huge opportunity to become the world leader in Electric Vehicles for first and last mile connectivity. Our Treo platform demonstrates



TREO ZOR

our commitment to AtmaNirbhar Bharat through latest technology and make in India. The Treo Zor will provide a clean, sustainable and affordable solution for last mile delivery."

Speaking at the launch, Mahesh Babu, MD & CEO, Mahindra Electric said, "The proven Treo electric 3-wheeler platform has already redefined last mile mobility with 5,000+ satisfied customers who have traversed 35 million kms on Indian roads. Treo Zor has been developed with cutting edge technology to deliver substantial customer value proposition and is available in 3 variants to meet every customer needs. The new Treo Zor is set to significantly enhance our customers' savings up to Rs.60,000+ /year helping them fulfil their dreams and aspirations and thereby redefine last mile delivery."

## SpiceJet's Big Push For Regional Connectivity

**I**n a move that would revolutionise the country's regional connectivity and provide a huge boost to travel and tourism, SpiceJet, India's largest regional player on October 29 announced the launch of its seaplane service between Ahmedabad (Sabarmati riverfront) and the Statue of Unity in Kevadia, Gujarat. The flights will be operated by SpiceJet's fully-owned subsidiary, Spice Shuttle.

To begin with, SpiceJet will operate two daily flights on the Ahmedabad-Kevadia route effective 31st October. The all-inclusive one-way fares will begin from as low as Rs. 1500/- under the UDAN scheme and tickets will be available on [www.spiceshuttle.com](http://www.spiceshuttle.com) from 30th October, 2020 onwards. SpiceJet will be using a 15-seater Twin Otter 300 aircraft for these flights. The launch flight is scheduled to operate on Saturday, 31st October in honour of the birth anniversary of Shri. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The aircraft will depart from the Sabarmati Riverfront, Ahmedabad at 10:15 am and will reach the Statue of Unity, Kevadia at 10:45 am.

Ajay Singh, Chairman & Managing Director, SpiceJet, said, "The launch of our first seaplane service will be remembered as one of the most notable events in the history of Indian aviation. We at SpiceJet feel proud to have played a role in fulfilling our Prime Minister's vision of connecting the remotest parts of the country by air. Our seaplane service between the Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad and Statue of Unity in Kevadia will cut down travel time to just about half an hour and will be a unique, exhilarating flying experience that would immensely boost travel and tourism. Infrastructural challenges have been a key deterrent for providing air connectivity to smaller towns and cities. With the ability to land on a small water body, seaplanes are the perfect flying machines that can effectively connect the remotest parts of India into the mainstream



aviation network without the high cost of building airports and runways."

"UDAN is one of the most remarkable schemes launched by the government that has provided unprecedented connectivity. SpiceJet has been the strongest supporter and the most enthusiastic participant in UDAN from the very beginning and was the only big private airline to participate in UDAN I. After building a network of flights across the length breadth of the nation under UDAN, SpiceJet's new seaplane service is all set to introduce a whole new chapter for the country's regional connectivity."

## Titan Company Launches First International Tanishq Boutique

Titan Company announced the launch of its first International Tanishq store in Dubai on November 2. The opening of the new store in Dubai aligns with company's plans to expand Tanishq in regions outside India. The store was inaugurated by H.E. Dr Ahmed Albanna, UAE Ambassador to India and Dr. Aman Puri, Counsel General of India to Dubai and Northern Emirates. The chief guests were hosted by Mr. Sunil Sinha, Residential Director – MENA region, Tata Sons and Mr. Aditya Singh, Head – Jewellery International Business at Titan Company Limited.

The opening of the 2000 square-foot store located in Meena Bazaar comes at an interesting time for the brand, for its ability to remain agile and active despite the lockdown. Like in India, from rolling out tech initiatives such as virtual shopping and live assisted chat making it easier and safer for consumers to shop, Tanishq has maintained 'Gold Safety Standards' in its new store in Dubai. This intent endorses Tanishq's steadfast commitment to ensuring a seamless, safe and memorable customer experience for its customers in UAE. The brand has launched an exclusive website for Dubai showcasing its collections at [www.Tanishq.ae](http://www.Tanishq.ae).

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. C K Venkataraman, Managing Director, Titan Company Ltd. said "It's a milestone for the company as we are excited to bring the iconic Tanishq brand to Dubai, our first exclusive boutique outside India. With the commencement



of our operations in Dubai, we see the brand being accessible to international customers and NRI communities."

Mr. Kuruville Markose, COO-International Business Division, Titan Company Limited said, "We are truly honoured and excited to be bringing our exclusive range of gold and diamond collections to Dubai. The COVID pandemic was unprecedented but times like this urge us to be more aware and turn crisis into opportunity. Our ability to adapt has already buoyed us in India. With our differentiated designs, unmatched customer service, gold safety standards, we are looking forward to kickstart our operations in Dubai."

## India's first Anti-Viral Frame Launched by Titan Eyeplus

Titan Eyeplus launches India's first "ANTI-VIRAL FRAMES", a new range of frames with anti-viral or anti-bacterial coating which fights germs. Safety and wellbeing has become the primary concern for all consumers today and new daily rituals now consists of sanitizing hands, products and surfaces. While this Herculean task has become a habit most consumers don't think of sanitizing their eyewear.

Titan Eyeplus addresses this challenge in front and offers a solution with these new Anti-Viral Frames. Tested at NABL (National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories) the product has been certified to kill 99.99% germs and bacterial activity on the surface.

At the heart of the solution is an anti-microbial coating which is made up of nano needles (not visible to the human eye) which punctures the membrane of the microbes which kills the bacteria. Keeping pace with customers' every need, even in confusing times like these Titan Eyeplus strives to bring eyewear solutions backed with the trust of safe products manufactured with stringent hygiene and safety standards.



Introducing the need for the new lens category Mr. Saumen Bhaumik, CEO, Eyewear Division, Titan Company Limited said, "Keeping a real-time pulse on changing customer needs, expectations & pain points and then rapidly innovating and delivering the right solution has always been another dimension of our business. With the new Anti-Viral Frames, we are presenting a solution which is not just safe but is also convenient"

# Child Of My Heart: A Guide to Adoption in India

On the occasion of World Adoption Day that is celebrated every year on November 9, Pune-based journalist and adoptive parent Kalyani Sardesai is happy to announce the launch of her book *Child Of My Heart: A comprehensive Guide to Adoption in India*. Published by Litreature Publishers, the book is slated to be a one stop guide for all questions pertaining to adoption.

"Having been through the process under the current centralized system of adoption, there were a lot of questions I had along the way," says Sardesai. "Sure, there was information available online, the availability of adoption support groups as well as hand-holding from my mentoring child care institution, but as a reporter, I thought it would be a good idea to simplify and collate the relevant information in a book with a focus on Indian references. This is because while some aspects are universal to adoption, others are specific to us."

"Given that unlike other parents, you don't have nine months on hand to prepare, it certainly helps to have some notion of what



to expect when you're adopting," says Chetaan Joshii, CEO, Litreature Publishers.

Adoption in India currently happens only under the aegis of the Centralized Adoption Resource Authority, a statutory body of the Ministry of Women and Child Development under the Government of India. Established under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, CARA is responsible for monitoring and regulating adoptions both within and outside India. This has both, pros and cons as the current system seems to have brought down the number of adoptions,

whilst simultaneously bringing in objectivity and transparency to the process. "For parents, this has assorted repercussions. Hence, the book," says Joshii.

From the paperwork and technicalities, to the rationale behind the centralized adoption process, to the questions that are seemingly unique to adoptive homes, this book hopes to go the distance in bringing greater clarity to one's understanding of the phenomenon of adoption.

## Paradise on Earth for Senior Citizens

Luxury senior living homes in India such as Gagan Nulife Resort residency which perfectly defines the 'contemporary meet fun' lifestyle for the elderly, has actually become a haven in this pandemic for the senior citizens residing there!

"In these uncertain times where seniors faced the most hardships due to coronavirus, having to adjust to a life without any house help and being restricted from moving out for daily needs and little access to immediate healthcare and companionship, a beautiful and bustling senior community at Nulife has ticked all the boxes and more throughout the lockdown", smiles Alnesh Somji, Director, Gagan Nulife. "In fact, the Navratri festival was celebrated with a lot of joy and excitement, with the seniors participating in garba dances, and relishing delightful cuisines. Their energy was highly contagious", he adds.

A paradise for a home, Gagan Nulife presents luxury retirement homes at Kamshet, Pune. Spread over 14 acres of replenishing lush flora and enclosed by the mighty mountains, an eco-friendly environment and soothing weather prevails through the year.



Nulife fills one up with merriment in the sunset years of their life. The positive and attractive environs let the residents luxuriate in freedom with self-respect and choice. The daily routine and lifestyle can be chosen by the resident himself; no compulsive routine or restrictions are to be followed thus adding more liberty and fun to the retirement years. The 1BHK and 2BHK homes or villas at Nulife have a senior-

friendly design along with assistive technology.

Nulife is a self-contained mini township for seniors having in-house services like daily housekeeping, weekly laundry, in-house nurses for each building, a multicuisine restaurant, activities and entertainment centres, shuttle services, concierge services, outdoor recreational areas as well as a functional hospital on its campus, in-house physiotherapy amongst many other services and facilities. A popular and acclaimed campus which is designed as per needs of seniors in terms of specifications has a bustling strength of 375 happy families being taken care off in all aspects. It promotes the concept of ageing gracefully amongst a like-minded community. All interested senior citizens are welcome to experience a 'stay' first.

# Time to Say Hello to the New Normal

This pandemic reveals the strengths and weaknesses of every nation from the first world to the most vulnerable ones.

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.” And what more than this current COVID situation could have been accurate. The recent Covid-19 situation has changed the lifestyle of every single individual. This pandemic reveals the strengths and weaknesses of every nation from the first world to the most vulnerable ones. But the most important thing is that it tells how a single virus can wipe out years of hard-work and place us 20 years behind. Industries and businesses worldwide have entered a perplexing situation, where they are trying to save years of efforts, and their



Gate way of India

employees, who are no less than family to them. When we talk about industries, travel & tourism is one of those that is and will be the first industry to be affected and the last industry to revive.

Travel & tourism consists 9.3% of the total Indian GDP, which is about one tenth. Not only is it an important fun and attractive factor but important for creating demand and for the growth of many other industries, directly as well as indirectly which in turn contributes to the overall development of a place worldwide. Tourism is not just about traveling to a particular place but also about nurturing and experiencing different societal, economical







**Bahuti Fall, Rewa**




*Travel & tourism consists 9.3% of the total Indian GDP, which is about one tenth. Not only is it an important fun and attractive factor but important for creating demand and for the growth of many other industries, directly as well as indirectly which in turn contributes to the overall development of a place worldwide.*



**Harmandeep Singh Anand**  
MD, Global Panorama Showcase, Nagpur

and cultural factors. Growth of the travel & tourism industry is directly proportional to the overall socio-economic growth.

From travel planning, transport & accommodation to site seeing, travel agents and tour operators prove to be a crucial backbone, putting nonstop effort day and night, to provide a quality experience, whether it be a 4 night 5day trip or exceeding a month. The recent situation has hit the travel, tourism and aviation with a solid rock. Although it has brought the industry to a standstill and coma, but rather than cribbing it is time we as an industry say hello to the new normal. This situation is a good opportunity for the government as well, to strengthen, reimagine and reorganize its role and support towards the capabilities of this sector. With national borders still under process of reopening, niche tourism will help build up consumer trust and help discover the domestic traits, which earlier were spread across the globe.

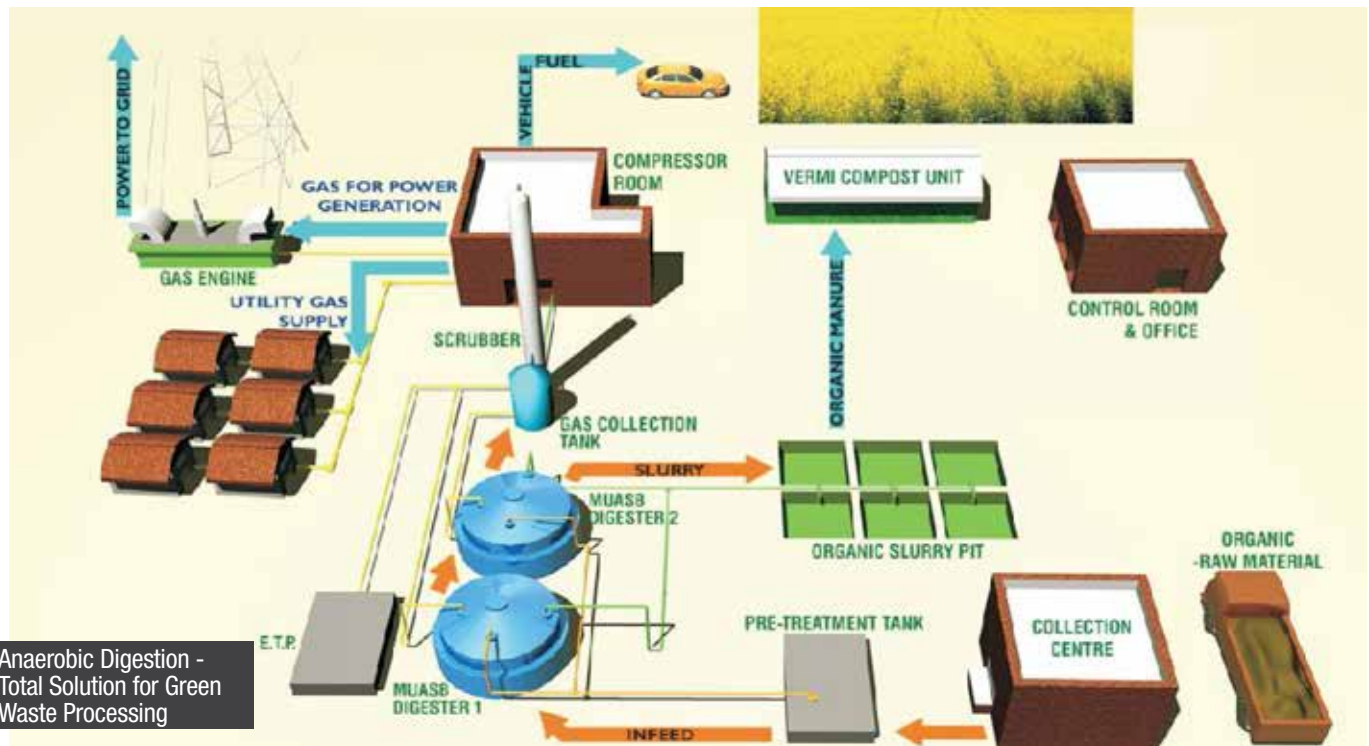
Now is the time to come forward and support each other locally and gather local consumers. Life is all about exploring, dreaming and discovering, and now our industry has that opportunity to redesign & strengthen the family by covering these areas of utmost importance. There was a world before covid-19 and there will be a world after it, but a refurbished one. 



# Working for the Cause of Green Earth

In a country like India where farmers are having scanty resources, biogas plant can be a boon for nuclear farmer families in the remote regions.

- By Sri Krishna



Anaerobic Digestion - Total Solution for Green Waste Processing

Overflowing garbage dumps, polluted water sources and environmental pollution have become aggravated over the last few years raising concerns about the environmental impact and health of the people. With 36.5 million tonnes waste getting generated annually in India, 1400 km<sup>2</sup> of landfill sites will be required by 2020. Power shortages currently cost India more than Rs 4 lakh crore of GDP.

Seeing this scenario, Vihar Pancholi who in 2005 set up his company Maverik Inc has been revolutionizing multi-utility solution to these pressing issues. The innovative solution addresses the problem of waste disposable and energy crisis across geographies and at a wide range of capacities.

Vihar who got his masters in applied chemistry and MBA from UK, has rich corporate experience in environment management and international marketing. He has been instrumental in bridging the gap between traditional perspectives and newer global approaches. He has championed voluntary carbon credit accreditation for more than 50 projects and has spent more than 16 years in waste management.

"We are a group of professionals working for the cause - that of a green Earth for us, for our elders and for the next

generation," says 41 year old Vihar who is the CEO and that, "the work is more of a responsibility and moral duty for our group, apart from being a mere source of income."

Vihar who spoke to this correspondent on the work being done by his company said Maverik Inc. provides turnkey solutions for various renewable energy technologies including, Biomass Power generation, Carbon Credit project assistance and Carbon Credit Trading Services across India and the world. Besides these operations, Maverik Inc. also works as a

***Biogas project can reduce dependency on other fuels, helps reduce the carbon foot print. It is also smokeless and clean fuel, provides village women a clean and healthy environment in the kitchen and prevents asthma and fight against hemoglobin deficiency caused due to smoke.***



management consultancy and provides all services that aid the investor in setting up the legal framework to bring in the money for executing his chosen project.

“We work as a management consultancy and afterwards, set up the project and commission it. We also manage the project on behalf of the investor, providing him with key updates on timely basis,” says Vihar explaining his business model. Maverick Inc. is the member of Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX), the number one auction platform for Carbon Credit in the world.

As he said that India consumes 1,957,546 million cubic feet (MMcf) of natural gas per year as of the year 2017 and ranks 14th in the world for natural gas consumption, accounting for about 1.5% of the world's total consumption of 132,290,211 MMcf and this was a huge drain on nation's economy. At the same time India has largest cattle population and the dung has potential to produce Natural Gas (in form of Biomethane) equivalent to US\$950 Mn per annum.

Vihar whose company has also been focussing on biogas and methane, said “If we organize this segment by roping in society and government system in a phased manner, India would not only be self sustaining Country green energy production wise, but also save FOREX for the country every year instead of importing NG.”

He said it was this renewable energy that “motivated me as a professional of renewable energy to focus more and promote the Biogas technology across industry and society.”

On the scope of biogas power projects in the country, Vihar quoting the 19th Livestock census report said that the national livestock population now stands at 512 million and “daily about 2,56,00,000 M3 raw Biogas can be synthesized, which is equivalent to 1,08,80,000 KG of NG worth about Rs 48,96,00,000/- daily revenue. The Biogas has tremendous growth potential. In my view Biogas Industry is a hybrid of latent and incipient market. There is need for cheaper, cleaner and easily available source of energy in the market. We being a developing country know the potential of biogas and its sources, which are abundantly available, almost free of cost i.e. urban and rural waste generation and its disposal in scientific eco friendly manner.”

Elaborating, Vihar said “there are many aspects responsible to make Biogas a success story. Firstly, the awareness regarding usefulness and importance of biogas not only as a green fuel option but also a Carbon Foot Print reducer needs to be imparted through systematic approach. Similar to Solar Power, Polio Eradication and Clean India Mission, the Biogas Awareness Campaign should kick start across the country. It should be made a movement and its importance and benefits should be taught from the school level.”

Vihar who has been in the business for well over 15 years feels that there are numerous benefits of biogas for “it is clean,



**Mr Vihar Pancholi**

**“We work as a management consultancy and afterwards, set up the project and commission it. We also manage the project on behalf of the investor, providing him with key updates on timely basis.”**

green and environmentally safe option of energy. In my views biogas usage has 360 degree benefits.”

He feels that Biogas project can reduce dependency on other fuels, helps reduce the carbon foot print. It is also smokeless and clean fuel, provides village women a clean and healthy environment in the kitchen and prevents asthma and fight against hemoglobin deficiency caused due to smoke.

Vihar says that use of biogas helps to restore and maintain green coverage due to lesser dependency on fire wood, which improves the local climatic conditions to a great extent in mid to long run and a biogas plant also has organic fertilizer as a parallel product, which replaces chemical fertilizers in the farms which improves soil quality and fertility thus increasing per acre yield.

In a country like India where farmers are having scanty resources, biogas plant can be a boon for nuclear farmer families in the remote regions as it improves their socio-economic condition in society where 70% economy is based on agriculture.



Organic Compost

Besides, biogas plant of medium to large scale can provide consistent employment to the local youth and can train budding entrepreneurs and the requirements for such a plant are biodegradable wastes as raw material, which would help keep the villages and cities clean. This would help to avert any unforeseen calamity and pandemic at bay and keep cities and villages healthy by maintaining hygiene.


He said the demand for biogas is increasing steadily and growing at 10-15% YoY (Year on Year). "Our company Maverik Inc. and NGO – Gram Vikas Trust, are working relentlessly to promote and set up biogas and biomethane projects in urban, RURBAN, rural and tribal regions. Besides Gujarat we have set up projects in Assam, Manipur, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, MP with the help of our associates. Many projects are coming up in Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya, and also overseas," Vihar said.

"We have taken up and successfully executed more than 4000 projects under banner of our NGO – Gram Vikas Trust in rural and tribal regions," he said.

On the impact of the pandemic on his business, he said "since there was total lock down and mobility was restricted the execution part of projects were hampered and came to stand still in many places. Now situation is getting back to normal and business activities have come back to almost pre lock down routine."

Besides the pandemic upsetting business, he said "approvals and budgetary sanction for large and mid size projects were major reasons of delay. For existing projects there were no issues as raw material supply and production of biogas are more or less autopilot mode procedures. It requires manual interventions only for logistics of raw materials and feeding into bio gas digester. In case of Methane Enrichment i.e. Biogas to Biomethane (NG) requires skilled manpower and precision in the process. "

His company has evolved a three tier plan to promote and simultaneously cap the GhG emissions by promoting Methane Harvesting Technology. First to target rural regions, where raw material is easily available due to larger bovine population, secondly by using municipality organic and biodegradable wastes at dumping sites itself to convert into Natural Gas and to replace carbon fuels. The third phase is to convert industrial wastes viz. sugar mill, starch units and dairy effluents into methane by using the Anaerobic technology to capture methane and convert it into Natural Gas.

"India is one of the largest producers of dairy products and sugar in the world. These industries have potential to capture methane in exponential quantity. The effluent water is being drained in catastrophic way at present due to rigid policies and lacuna of any strategic vision. The same effluent can be a blessing to millions of farmers and people and industries for their need for fuel and fertilizer," Vihar said. 



Hydroponics Maze & Wheat Cultivation Based on Organic Compost from Bio Gas Plant in Gujrat, India

# Corporate Tycoons and Indian Observer Post Sign MOU



**Chandran Iyer**  
Editor and Publisher,  
Corporate Tycoons



**Onkareshwar Pandey**  
Editor in Chief  
Indian Observer Post



**C**orporate Tycoons, a leading business and travel magazine which caters to the tycoons of India, Business leaders and High Net-worth Individuals has signed a MoU with Indian Observer Post to share, cooperate and support each other with relevant content, strategy and ideas.

Editor and Publisher of Corporate Tycoons Mr Chandran Iyer and Editor in Chief of Indian Observer Post Mr Onkareshwar Pandey signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to share important stories published in their respective publications for wider international reach.

"The basic aim of this Strategic Alliance is to establish a cooperation and synergy between the Digital Media portal 'Indian Observer Post Dot Com' & Digital Knowledge Network 'Indian Thought Leaders' run by Golden Signatures Research & Consulting, Delhi and The Corporate Tycoons (CT) Monthly Magazine published by our Intersteller Publications Pune, Maharashtra," said Mr Chandran Iyer, Editor and Publisher of Corporate Tycoons in a press release.

"Corporate Tycoons is a leading business and travel magazine which caters to the tycoons of India, Business leaders and High Net-worth Individuals. I am happy that they have signed a MoU with our Indian Observer Post and also with our Knowledge Networks 'Indian Thought Leaders', 'Global Thought Leaders' and 'Women Thought Leaders' to share, cooperate and support each other with relevant content, strategy and ideas," said

Mr Onkareshwar Pandey, Editor in Chief of Indian Observer Post and Founder of Leadership Networks.

Both the media companies will support each other in research, study and creation and publishing of knowledge resources, contents, reports in text, Image, video and digital formats, according to the MoU. They will also support each other in organising webinars, seminars, round tables, awards and maximising the reach of their contents through their platforms and networks.

According to MoU, Mr Onkareshwar Pandey Editor-in-Chief Indian Observer Post, New Delhi has also been appointed on the board of Corporate Tycoons magazine as Honorary Editorial Advisor and similarly Mr Chandran Iyer has been appointed as Honorary Editorial Advisor of Indian Observer Post.

The Corporate Tycoons magazine carries interviews of visionaries, first generation entrepreneurs who have made it big, women business leaders, young entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs and also grass-root innovators besides well researched articles and features on industries and government policies.

The Indian Observer Post, having a Global Team of 200 expert writers, publishes only special Articles, Reports, Analysis, Features, and Interviews etc on all Contemporary issues. IOP had recently signed MoU with DOC RI – Dialogue Of Civilization Research Institute, Germany and AASGON - Africa Asia Scholars Global Network, UK.

Shivanand Pandit



Shivanand Pandit is a tax specialist, financial adviser, guest faculty and public speaker based in Goa.

# Debatable Codes

*These codes have given massive liberty to governments to exempt industrial units from the ambit of the law and to define the boundaries within which they will perform their business activities.*

Around the world enduring business sustainability has been gravely hit by the deadly epidemic. The economic disaster shaped by the contagion has placed livelihood of billions of people in a hazardous position. Such circumstance calls for power-packed reforms from the government such as resilient employment strategies and wide-ranging social fortification schemes to safeguard the functioning of business entities and the health and welfare of every worker. For that reason, to strengthen diverse or old labor laws and reinforce reforms fall in this group the Parliament has passed the three labor codes in the pandemic forced short duration monsoon session. The Industrial Code Bill 2020, the Code on Social Security Bill 2020 and the Occupational Safety and Health and Working Conditions Code Bill 2020 are the new varieties of labor codes.

For close to thirty years, people wanting robust labor reforms have called for revolutionary changes in India's antiquated labor laws. Since 2004 UPA I and UPA II tried to execute the labor reforms but strong political opposition paralyzed its intention. Although Yashwant Sinha who was the finance minister in the Vajpayee government had proposed few modifications, extensive disparagement compelled him to retrace his moves. Even the Modi government having comfortable majority in Lok Sabha took long time to alter the nation's labor rules. After a long wait, the labor laws have ultimately been rabbited and many central laws have been chomped into new codes. Though the government intends to upsurge the domain of social security or safety by including inter-state migrant workers, it has also propositioned measures that will offer bigger suppleness to employers to hire and fire workers without obtaining government authorization.

## **New wine in the new bottle**

The Industrial Relations Code Bill contains terms to confine the rights and privileges of workers to strike. The government also recommended a rise in the limit connecting to dismissals and retrenchment in industrial firms having 300 workers from 100 workers or more at present. The Code has increased the threshold for prerequisite of a standing order containing regulations of conduct for workmen employed in industrial organizations to more than 300 workers and therefore industrial establishments with up to 300 workers will not be obliged to furnish a standing order.



In April 2020, the Standing Committee on Labor had also endorsed raising the verge to 300 workers. However, few State governments like Rajasthan had already enlarged the threshold. Accordingly, the provisions of standing order prescribed by Industrial Relations Code will be mandatory for every industrial establishment wherein three hundred or more workers are employed, or were employed on any day of the preceding twelve months. Fresh terms and conditions have also been specified for carrying out a legal strike. The time period for arbitration or negotiation actions has been incorporated as against only the time for conciliation at present. As per the Code no person employed in an industrial establishment shall go on strike without a 60 day notice and during the pendency of proceedings before a Tribunal or a National Industrial Tribunal and sixty days after the ending of such proceedings.

The Code covers all industrial institutions for the obligatory notice period and other stipulations for a legal strike. The Standing Committee on Labor had suggested against the extension of the mandatory notice period for strike beyond the public utility amenities like water, electricity, natural gas, telephone and other elemental services. Currently, a person employed in a public value service cannot go on strike without giving notice for a strike within six weeks before going on strike or within fourteen days of giving such notice. The Code has also suggested a worker re-skilling fund and mentions that



the employers' contributions towards the fund should be amounting to fifteen days wages very last drawn by the worker immediately before the retrenchment or cutback along with the contribution from such other sources.

The remaining two codes also proposed various transformations for intensifying welfare and safety of workers. The second one, Social Security Code proposed to establish National Social Security Board to advise the central government in devising apposite strategies for diverse segments of unorganized, gig and platform workers. According to the Code aggregators engaging gig workers will have to contribute 1-2 per cent of their yearly turnover for social safety. However, the total amount of contribution should not be beyond 5 per cent of the sum payable by the aggregator to gig and platform workers.

The third code, namely Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code has widened the definition of worker and included inter-state migrant workers in the definition. According to the definition the worker who has come voluntarily from one state and obtained employment in another state, having monthly earning up to rupees 18,000 termed as migrant worker. This makes a difference from the contemporary definition of only contractual employment. The Code has erased the previous provision for provisional housing facility for workers near the worksites and recommended a journey allowance and the employer should pay a lump sum amount of fare to assist the worker to travel from his or her native place to the place of his or her employment and back.

To large extent, the ratifying of labor codes viewed as a breakthrough which came after several years of deliberations between the government, industry, trade unions and other patrons. The new codes introduced may fabricate novel setting for job creation due to mass applicability of the law to approximately 580 million of workers along with other policy reforms such as Shram Suvidha Portal, Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency, Startup India, Make in India, Skill India, Digitization of labor law compliances etc. Involvement of female labor force is a mainspring for any nations' rapid growth. For a long time dwindling women's workforce contribution in India has been a matter of grave concern. By allowing the employment of women in night shifts for all nature of work the new labor law has bought major change.

The induction of new labor reforms is highly greeted by the business community and many are of the opinion that restructurings will surely enhance entrepreneurship

***For close to thirty years, people wanting robust labor reforms have called for revolutionary changes in India's antiquated labor laws. Since 2004 UPA I and UPA II tried to execute the labor reforms but strong political opposition paralyzed its intention.***



and investments which are vital for stimulating India's economy. According to Confederation of Indian Industry all three codes are reformist and aid to construct a future of work that is securer, rational, simpler and more buoyant. It has also mentioned that the reform measures deal with the fundamental needs of revival of economy and eradication of barricades of growth of business firms.

Numerous transformations introduced in the inspection rules specifically the web-based randomized electronic inspection scheme, jurisdiction-free inspections, calling of information electronically for inspection, compounding of offences, etc. are progressive. In addition, several registers, returns and forms can be filed and maintained electronically in a single template. Many corporate entities will be profited by this move.


On the other hand, the codes have dark side too. In their entirety, they have bestowed excessive autonomy to establishments relating to appointment and dismissing of employees which will adversely affect the genuine claims of trade unions. Enhancement of threshold of standing orders will dilute the labor rights for workers in minor business firms having less than 300 workers and this indicates the government is very eager to give enormous volumes of elasticity to the employers in terms of hiring and firing and employers can misuse this freedom of dismissal or retrenchment for any economic reasons. This will lead to widespread destruction of employment security and safety. Stretching the lawfully allowable time frame before the workers can go on a legal strike will make the legitimate strike practically dreadful and more challenging.

Moreover, these codes have given massive liberty to governments to exempt industrial units from the ambit of the law and to define the boundaries within which they will perform their business activities. The strong evidence for this is how Uttar Pradesh lately attempted to exempt employers from many labor reforms by a decree.

The codes do not forbid many erroneous actions like not keeping a register and allow compounding penalties to be paid instead. Expansion of the scope of codes to all segments

***The new codes introduced may fabricate novel setting for job creation due to mass applicability of the law to approximately 580 million of workers along with other policy reforms such as Shram Suvidha Portal, Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency, Startup India, Make in India, Skill India, Digitization of labor law compliances etc. Involvement of female labor force is a mainspring for any nations' rapid growth.***

of workers is also dubious and this prevents many to proclaim the new legislation. The codes are not focusing on reducing the number of operational laws recognizing ongoing actualities.

To conclude, between the years 2022 to 2032 India is protruded to have the hugest working populace in the world. About 10 million youth will enter the workforce per annum. Employment capability of the industry is indispensable to unleash the true latent of such robust workforce. Therefore, instead of beating the drums the government must introduce utilitarian labor laws to address the complexities and managerial encumbrance in the labor regime. The new amendments prescribed in the labor laws are not sufficient stipulation for accomplishing the envisioned objectives. Credible changes are necessary to lower the cost of factory land, transport, electricity for industrial consumers, streamlining of elucidation of tax and other decrees, preserving a suitable exchange value for the rupee etc. Failure to do all this will have the opposite of the anticipated outcome and workers earnings will get pressed down completely. One is not certain whether the union government has conversed national trade unions including its own sister entity Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, before introducing new labor law vicissitudes. Undoubtedly the government is taking a gigantic risk in pushing these unprecedented modifications deprived of decorous dialogue and debate. 





# Equinor Collaborates with TCS

Tata Consultancy Services Will Help Equinor Achieve Data Democratization, and Leverage Advanced Analytics to Drive Superior Outcomes in Core Operations and Sustainability.

- By A Correspondent

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), a leading global IT services, consulting and business solutions organization, has been selected as a strategic partner by Equinor, the Norway-headquartered global energy company, to accelerate its digitalization journey and help realize its vision of becoming a digital energy company.

TCS will leverage its deep domain knowledge of the energy sector, expertise and scale in digital technologies and investments in research and innovation, to achieve data democratization across Equinor's core operations and harness the power of machine learning and advanced analytics to help Equinor achieve its growth and transformation objectives.

An initial focus area will be sub-surface data and analytics, where TCS will work with Equinor's teams to make available high-quality datasets anywhere, anytime, to different stakeholders, by populating Equinor's sub-surface data lake. This will act as a single source of truth for all subsurface data within the enterprise. Insights derived using machine learning and advanced analytics will enable Equinor to accelerate a more data driven approach to key business areas such as exploration, field development, and operations, to improve hydrocarbon recovery rates and reduce extraction costs.

TCS will also help Equinor leverage data better in the area of safety, security and sustainability, to drive superior outcomes by correlating various safety reports and datasets, identifying relevant patterns and trends to predict and prevent incidents, and help improve its safety and sustainability outcomes.

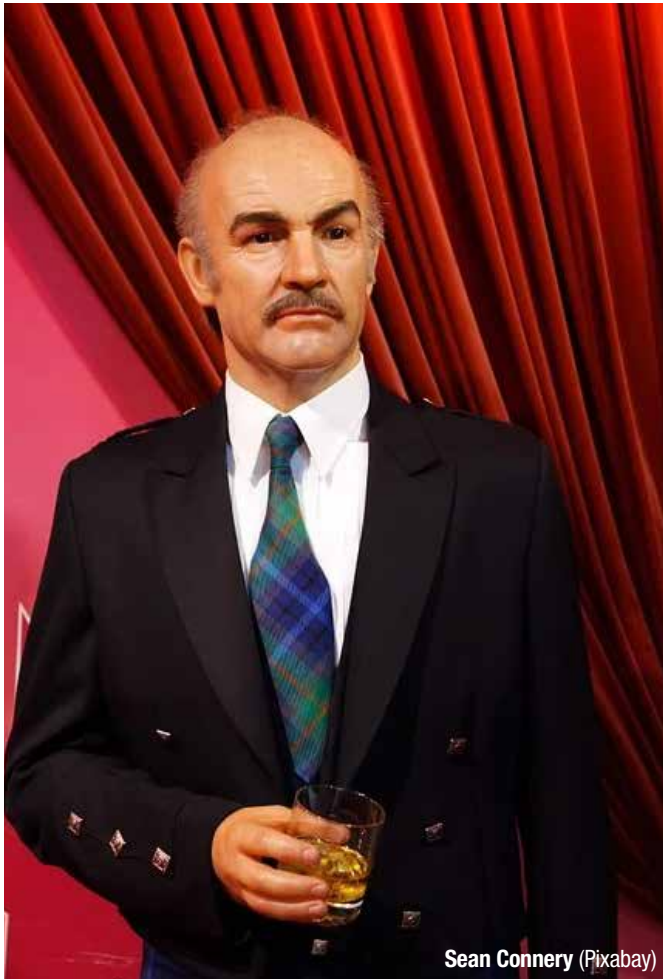


TCS will use its proprietary DATOM™ framework to assess data maturity levels, identify gaps, develop a roadmap to simplify operating models, set up data governance models, and build technology patterns and architectures to help Equinor fully leverage data and analytics to drive superior business outcomes. Additionally, TCS will use its Location Independent Agile™ model to deploy innovative ways of working that will help enhance speed to market, while helping align outcomes closely with business objectives.

“Enterprises are increasingly realizing that the first step in a successful digital transformation journey is to become a data-driven organization. Data and analytics are today central to enterprises’ ability to discover new value creation opportunities, and are becoming core to the enterprise operating model,” said Dinanath Kholkar, Global Head, Analytics and Insights, TCS. “TCS is proud to partner with Equinor to create a strong data and analytics foundation, leveraging its capabilities in advanced analytics and AI solutions, and help accelerate their insights-driven transformation journey to become a digital energy company.”

**“Enterprises are increasingly realizing that the first step in a successful digital transformation journey is to become a data-driven organization. Data and analytics are today central to enterprises’ ability to discover new value creation opportunities, and are becoming core to the enterprise operating model,”**  
**–Dinanath Kholkar,**





Sean Connery (Pixabay)

# The Man with the Licence to Thrill Bids Final Adieu Leaving the Fans ‘Shaken and Stirred’

He portrayed a quintessential alpha male who was cool, calm, confident, charming, rugged, ruthless and macho in all respects.

- By Chandran Iyer

The name is Bond, James Bond. A number of actors who have played the role of James Bond, the British Secret Service agent, created by Ian Fleming in 1953 have mouthed these words. But only few of them have been able to become the icons projecting the proverbial alpha male. One of them is the tall, handsome and muscular Scottish actor Sean Connery, whose acting career spanned seven decades and he won an Oscar in 1988 for his role in *The Untouchables*. He died at the age of 90 on October 31 after a brief illness. His death left his fans both ‘shaken’ and ‘stirred’.

The words “shaken, not stirred” is a catchphrase of Ian Fleming’s fictional British Secret Service agent James bond. It describes his preference for the preparation of his martini cocktail. Usually martini is supposed to be stirred before drinking. But Bond has his own signature preferences. He does not go by the rule book. Whether it

makes any difference to the taste of the martini is a debatable point, but it certainly added a facet to his cool image.

Connery played 007 in *Dr No*, *From Russia with Love*, *Goldfinger*, *Thunderball*, and *You Only Live Twice* the first five Bond films produced by Eon Productions. He was regarded as one of the finest actor to have played the role of Bond with aplomb. He portrayed a quintessential alpha male who was cool, calm, confident, charming, rugged, ruthless and macho in all respects. It is these qualities of him that makes the women swoon over him and are ready to jump into the bed with him in his Bond movies.



Aston Martin car in Goldfinger (Pixabay)




Daniel Craig (Pixabay)

James Bond film series is a series of spy films based on the fictional character of M16 agent James Bond 007 who originally appeared in a series of books by Ian Fleming. It is one of the longest continuously running film series in history.

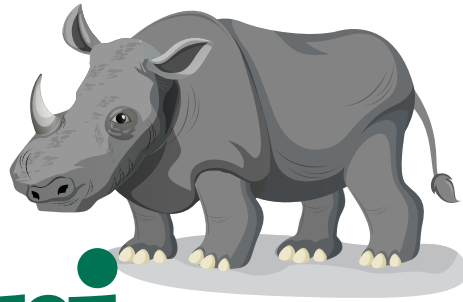
Six actors have now played Bond across 24 movies but none have been able to match the charisma of Connery. Other actors include George Lazenby, Timothy Dalton, Pierce Brosnan, Roger Moore and Daniel Craig. Roger Moore had his own style which was punctuated by eyebrow waggling, witty comments and stylish suits. He was tall, lanky and handsome but many felt that he lacked the deadly cool and ruthless image which Connery managed to project.

After Connery rejected an offer to act in the film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1969), the role was given to George Lazenby. But the Australian actor failed to exude the charisma of Bond.

Connery's wife and two sons said "he died peacefully in his sleep surrounded by family" in the Bahamas where he lived. Son Jason Connery said his father had been "unwell for some time". 



Phang Nga Bay in Thailand, the location of the James Bond film "The Man With The Golden Gun". (Pixabay)



# Hatari, Rhino!

Kaziranga is open again after a shut-down of more than seven months. The home of the one-horned rhinoceros is usually closed to tourists for five months, from June to September when Assam sees its annual floods, but was shut in March this year because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

–By Sekhar Seshan

**T**he Swahili warning for Danger! is famous among a couple of generations of movie-goers as the title of the 1962 John Wayne starrer about the screen hero's encounter with a rhinoceros. The African rhino in the movie is, however, different from its Indian cousin: it has two horns (diceros bicornis) while our rhinoceros unicornis have only one.

The Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve – to give it its full name – has pride of place among India's national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, and is known as the place to go if you want to see the animal. Sadly, the Indian rhino is now listed as 'vulnerable' on the Red list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with its population fragmented and restricted to an area measuring less than 20,000 square kilometres, which is only a little more than the size of Gujarat. This decimation to near-extinction is thanks mainly to hunting by human beings for their horns, which are reputed to have aphrodisiac qualities.

All this, however, is information you can get if you surf the internet. One of the things that omniscient resource doesn't tell you is that rhinos keep going back to the same spot every 20 or 25 days to defecate - giving a whole new meaning to the word dung-heap. Over time, this becomes virtually impossible to clear, which is a major reason why those responsible for the maintenance of the park are thankful for the annual flood: it washes it all away. As driver-cum-guide Bakul Karmakar says: "Poora flush ho jaata hai!"

Karmakar, an Adivasi who is a local in the area, drives one of the nearly 200 Maruti Gypsy vehicles - that take visitors around Kaziranga. "All the jeeps are



(Photos by Nisha Seshan)



(Photos by Nisha Seshan)



(Photos by Nisha Seshan)



(Photos by Nisha Seshan)



(Photos by Nisha Seshan)



in use during the season," he says. "Less than 100 of us are allowed in the forest area, with timings set for each zone." When he is not driving, he works on a farm and earns half of the produce as his wage.

As you enter, there is "elephant grass" as far as the eye can see. It is tall enough for the elephants to be invisible until they want to be seen. The animals also eat the grass; what is left is burnt in the beginning of every year. As he talks about them, a herd of about 18 elephants comes into view from the trees on the other side of a stretch of water: a bull, a dozen cows and half as many calves being shepherded by their mothers and 'aunts' as they come to the water to drink and graze along the shore.

Three families of turtles are basking in the sun on a log floating in the water: they need to be in the sun to digest their food, Karmakar explains. There is a water buffalo lying in the grass, with only its majestic horns and face visible, wild boar, gibbon apes, rhesus macaques, a flock of swamp deer, hog deer, sambar and an assortment of birds of every variety: kingfishers, pelicans, black cormorants, open-bill storks, pheasants, Siberian bar-headed geese, eagles and orioles. At one point, his sudden statement which sounded like "Fox hai!" had everybody peering for the animal, until it became apparent that he had meant that there was 'fog' ahead – which turned us blind when we drove into it.

And then, as the elephants drift back into the forest, is the star of the show, which gives the park its name: a rhinoceros. The rhino is, in fact, a motif everywhere, right from inside the terminal building of Guwahati airport where a lifelike, life-sized model greets visitors, to the entrance of the park itself where two more stand guard on either side of the gate, as well as wooden miniatures in the souvenir shops. These shops are, however, disappointingly unimaginative: there are no T-shirts, keychains, caps, bags or other items like picture postcards, mugs, ashtrays and a gamut of other possible items flaunting



Kaziranga is open again after a shut-down of more than seven months. The home of the one-horned rhinoceros is usually closed to tourists for five months, from June to September when Assam sees its annual floods, but was shut in March this year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Consulting Editor Sekhar Seshan was lucky enough to visit it in December.



(Photos by Nisha Seshan)

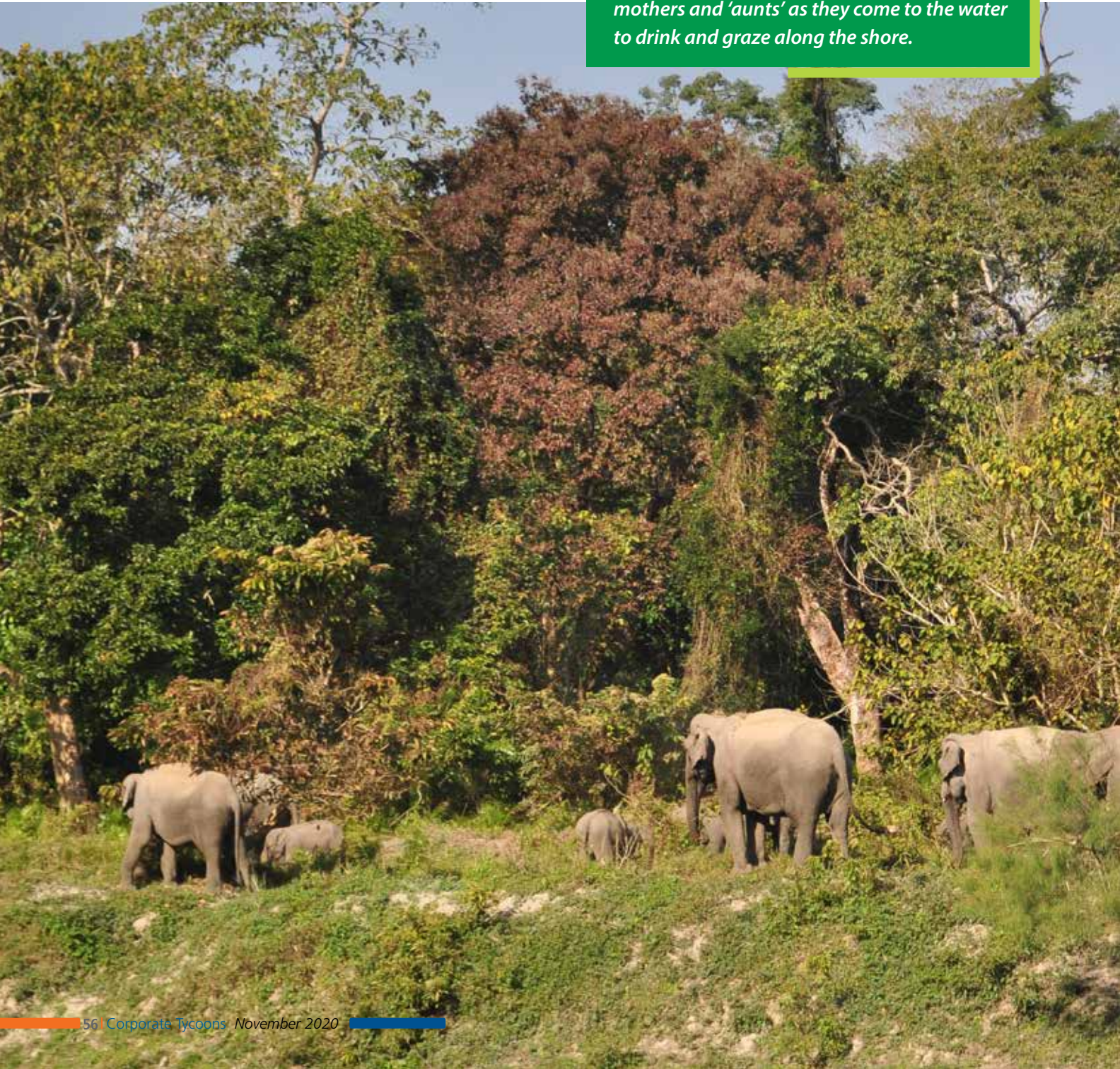


(Photos by Nisha Seshan)

rhino pictures that tourists would lap up.

The real-life rhino is standing in the place vacated by the elephants, appearing to look across the water at the jeep and its occupants – but it is, as its species is defined, extremely short-sighted and cannot possibly see so far. In compensation for this, however, its hearing is amazingly acute, and it obviously hears the engine purring. It apparently decides that this familiar noise is harmless, and stays calm while it is joined by its calf – a two-year-old, Karmakar says – and a third one, a huge male, lurks near the trees.

*Elephant grass as far as the eye can see. It is tall enough for the elephants to be invisible until they want to be seen. The animals also eat the grass; what is left is burnt in the beginning of every year. As he talks about them, a herd of about 18 elephants comes into view from the trees on the other side of a stretch of water: a bull, a dozen cows and half as many calves being shepherded by their mothers and 'aunts' as they come to the water to drink and graze along the shore.*








Over a three-day stay – the norm there, with morning and afternoon safaris in different zones of the forest – rhinos become a familiar sight. One trip had an extra passenger - a guard of the Assam Forest Protection Force (AFPF), sitting in front with a .303 rifle. As luck would have it, a bull elephant emerged from the trees lining the narrow mud track and looked set to charge. Karmakar stopped the jeep, switched off the engine and told the tourists to be quiet. The guard, Pranab Das, immediately tensed and gripped his gun tight.

The elephant too just stood there and looked at the

interlopers for what seemed a long time, but was probably only a minute or two, then turned around and crashed into the forest again. Everybody relaxed, including Das. Would he have used his gun if the elephant had actually charged? Yes, but only to shoot in the air and scare it off – firing at the animal itself was totally against the law as well as his training in the AFPF.

And so, back home. But not without an apt farewell: on the drive out of the park to the airport, two rhinos came almost to the fence as if to see us off. 



(Photos by Nisha Seshan)



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