















## FIRST COLUMN

## TRUMP 2.0: STEEP TARIFFS ON CARDS

Trump's policies are likely to create ripples across economies, including India



KUMARDEEP BANARJEE

The fireworks have started, even before people across the globe have ushered in Christmas and New Year's festivities. The Trump presidency 2.0 could be a game changer, potentially recalibrating several global geopolitical and economic partnerships. First, the Biden era days of strategic partnership with nations worldwide would be replaced with a more transactional approach which President Trump in his second stint is likely to institutionalise. Even before taking charge, President-elect Donald Trump has vociferously spelt out his tariff-based external affairs policy.

He had during campaigning talked about imposing nearly 60 per cent tariffs on China imports. Recently he has said that one of the first executive orders, he is likely to sign after assuming office on January 20, would be to impose tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China imports. Of course, the caveat is, unless, they stop sending illegal immigrants and ban drugs across to the US. Donald Trump knows his tariff-based foreign policy approach has bipartisan support among Democrats and Republicans. It feeds well into his Made in America, local job creation narrative which catapulted him back to the White House in a non-consecutive term. India is overseeing this space, as it knows very well that even though the first tariff bullets may not be fired at India, eventually many will. Mr Trump has already spoken about India's high tariffs in his election rallies and notwithstanding the amount of good, the Indian IT services sector has done for the US, he needs to send home hard messages. The only saving grace in the upcoming US-India bilateral relationship, under President Trump 2.0 would be the personal equation, the



relationship between President-elect Trump and Prime Minister Modi. Knowing each other for a long period and having observed each other's style of governing, can be an initial advantage but not a long-term solution. Key Indian trade interlocutors are in high demand, especially those who have been in government during Trump's first presidency.

At some point in time, the issue of tariffs would come up in the bilateral conversations, where hard-nosed negotiations may be required. India and US under the Biden administration managed to establish a formal institutional framework for settling trade and tariff issues in the form of a Trade Policy Forum (TPF). The TPF platform provides trade representatives from the US and India to meet regularly to discuss and find solutions to mutual areas of concern. To be sure the TPF mechanism existed even under the Trump administration, but with one meeting and a new Indian government under Prime Minister Modi (with less focus on trade and external affairs policy), it served little purpose. Chances are, given Donald Trump's style of functioning, the TPF may be relegated to the background and several transactional bilateral meetings would be formatted to, minimise the friction in the trade relations.

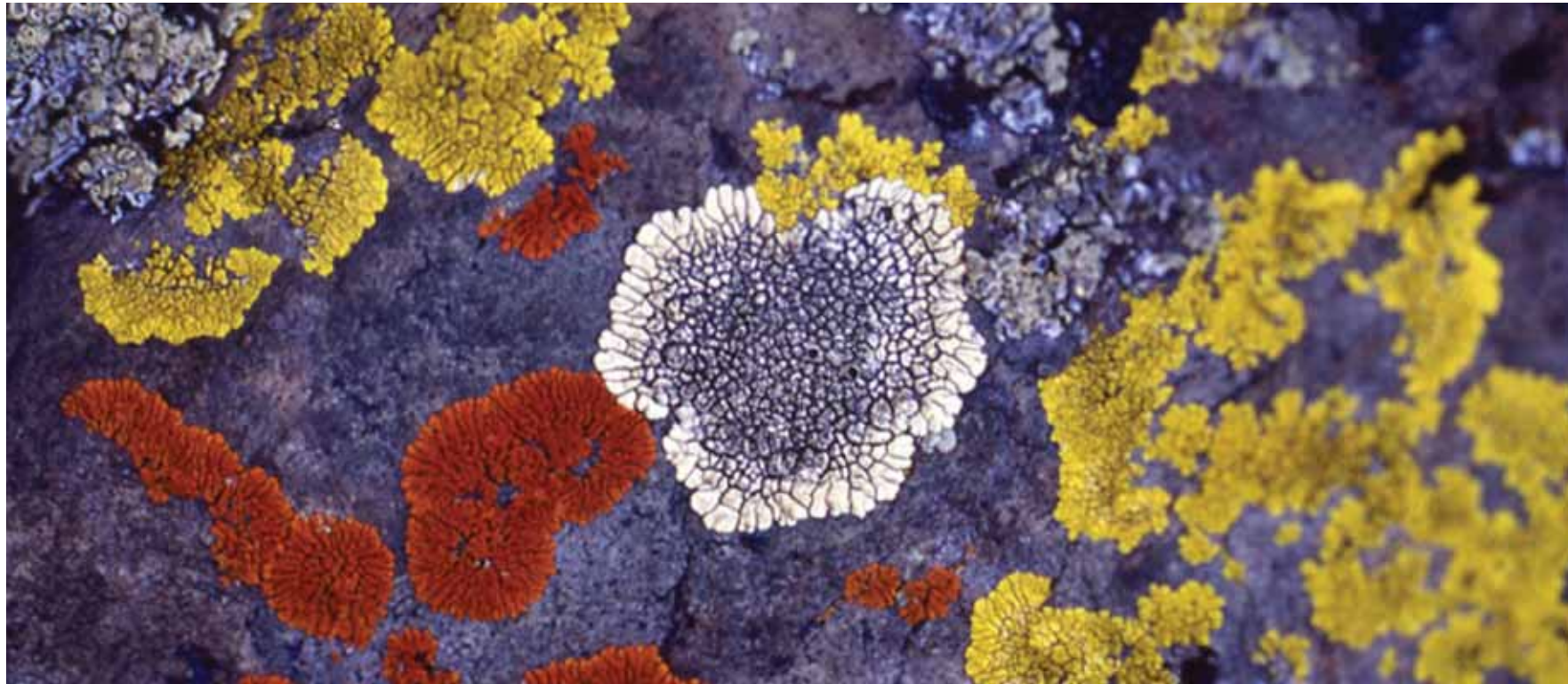
It may be worth noting that India has a trade surplus with the US, a point Mr Trump will keep in mind to extract his side of the deal. Meanwhile, the expected tightening of the trade environment between the US and China would have a significant impact on the global economy. China would have to find newer markets to push some of the goods, which could be too expensive to export to the US. India and its neighbouring nations would have to brace up. Prices of items in the US, most of which are imported from China could add an extra burden on household budgets, which in turn could push rate hikes.

These global headwinds will shape, the narratives for a long time to come. It could have an inflationary impact on global oil prices and growth of the several global economies. India's Reserve Bank has already cautioned that the slowdown in the global economy, protectionism, and tariffs are three key factors that will shape India's economy next year. It would be another tightrope with clever hands of the juggler on rope which can carry India for the next few years.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

# Climate change and Lichens: The tiny titans of nature

Lichens, the silent guardians of our ecosystem, are under threat from climate change and need to be saved, write BKP SINHA and ARVIND KUMAR JHA



Vibrant patches of colour adorning some tree trunks and rocks may draw your attention as you move in the forest. Although they appear as mere stains or growths; they are intricate organisms called lichens, a product of a mutualistic alliance between fungus and algae. Making it a unique creation of nature, the fungus absorbs water and nutrients from the air while an organic compound is generated by the photosynthetic partner. Thus while fungi build a house; its algal partner supplies food as the breadwinner. Similarly, if fungi did not provide a secure structure, the algae would die homeless in harsh places.

The absence of cuticles and roots and their direct reliance on the atmosphere for nutrients, however, makes lichens highly vulnerable to pollutants. Found in a variety of shapes and colours, ranging from delicate leafy structures to crusty patches, they thrive in diverse habitats, from rocky mountainsides to rain forests and deserts. They can grow on soil, humus, stones, rocks, bricks, plaster, leaves, tree trunks, decaying wood and even on glass. Overtly so simple and insignificant in the face of the dominant bias of human beings that often considers a forest just as an assemblage of trees and vegetation mix, lichens play an extremely vital role in ecosystems. Lichens are known to play a crucial role in soil formation, breaking down rocks through biogeochemical and biochemical weathering and creating nutrient-rich soil paving the way for other plants to grow. They produce unique compounds with potential medicinal properties, such as antibiotics and antifungals. They are used in medicine, food, fodder, perfume, spices, and dyes. Researchers are exploring these compounds to develop new drugs and sustainable materials. By understanding the adaptations and biochemical properties of lichens, one can unlock new possibilities and contribute to a more sustainable future. Lichens can survive at extreme temperatures and altitudes in which no creatures can survive. One can see more lichen on



LICHENS ARE KNOWN TO PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN SOIL FORMATION, BREAKING DOWN ROCKS THROUGH BIOGEOCHEMICAL AND BIOCHEMICAL WEATHERING AND CREATING NUTRIENT-RICH SOIL PAVING THE WAY FOR OTHER PLANTS TO GROW

the edge of the forest than deep in the forest. They will be lesser near the towns as the air quality deteriorates. Many lichens are incredibly sensitive to air pollution, particularly due to sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, as also to the level of heavy metal pollution. All lichens, however, are not equally sensitive to air pollutants. Different lichen species exhibit different sensitivity to specific air pollutants. Consequently, lichens are well-suited as biological indicators for monitoring environmental quality.

More than seventeen thousand species of lichens are reported to cover around seven per cent of the world's surface. India, a land of diverse landscapes and climatic conditions, is home to rich biodiversity and harbours about 3,000 fascinating species of lichens. Some European countries like Germany, Italy, Portugal and Slovenia; considering lichen's response to pollution; have positioned them as bio-monitors and bio-indicators and included them in their air-pollution-related policy documents. Much of India's lichen diversity, however, remains relatively unexplored as regards their ecological significance and potential applications. Yet another crucial issue in the Indian context is the undervaluation of lichens in India.

When the diversion of forest land for rainforest purposes is proposed, the net present value (NPV) of the forest is calculated and the amount is recovered from the project proponents. Calculation of NPV does not consider the aspect of the immense value that lichens have from ecological as well as economic points of view. This is evident from the fact that the per hectare NPV of forests of Eco-class-I and Eco-class-II categories that have

forests of types Tropical Wet Evergreen / Semi-Evergreen / Moist-Deciduous / Littoral and Swamp have been assigned the same value. It is essential that realistic values are assigned to the forests of different types and the monetised value of lichens and their services are duly incorporated therein. Climate change has serious implications for the lichens. Higher temperatures can disrupt the delicate balance between the fungal and algal partners. Extreme heat can lead to desiccation and reduced growth rates. Altered rainfall patterns can affect the availability of water, which is crucial for lichen growth and reproduction. Further, climate change can exacerbate air pollution, harming lichens.

A rise in pollution load in the air breaks the lichen cell resulting in bleaching of the organism, and the same is followed by its demise. Again, acid rain, caused by releasing sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, can damage lichen tissues. Climate change-induced alterations in habitats may result in the loss of suitable environments for their growth while fragmentation of habitats can critically limit dispersal and gene flow. The importance of exploring the roles of different organisms involved in the complex eco-processes in the context of global changes cannot be overestimated.

In this context, lichen is increasingly being recognised globally as a bio-indicator of 'Global Change Drivers' that are seen as interconnected stressors like climate change, pollution, land use change, and loss of biodiversity contributing to large-scale environmental impacts. The mapping of epiphytic lichen diversity to assess ecological changes has emerged as a popular bio-moni-

toring approach in Europe and a European standard has been adopted under the Committee European Normalisation (CEN) framework. It aims to provide Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to ensure reliability, consistency and objectivity while simultaneously improving data quality and comparability across space and time.

Needless to say, it is high time that India, possessing almost eighteen per cent of the world's lichen species and being globally the third-highest air-polluted country only after Bangla Desh and Pakistan, prioritises her efforts in this direction. Detailed exploration and study of lichens can also yield many more useful species for an unexpectedly wide variety of ecological as well as human needs and pursuits including their widespread use as bio-prospecting agents.

An extremely valuable natural resource the lichens are, they are reportedly in a losing evolutionary race against climate change. A 2022 study reveals that it could need more than one million years to adjust to the ecological crisis created due to just one degree Celsius of warming.

With the unabated pace of global warming, lichens, considered one of the most unique and hardy species and a bio-monitoring tool, are facing the danger of getting obliterated from the face of our planet. Well, the next time you encounter a tree or rock adorned with colourful lichens, take a moment to appreciate these remarkable organisms. Let us work towards their conservation as their beauty and ecological significance make them an integral part of our natural world.

(The writers are Former PCCFs of UP and Maharashtra; views are personal)

## Educate. Advocate. Act Now: Confronting antimicrobial resistance

Awareness is crucial to stop misuse of antibiotics to stop antimicrobial resistance and its harmful side-effects

As we observe 'World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) 2024' under the theme 'Educate. Advocate. Act Now', we are reminded of both the remarkable achievements of antimicrobial medicine and the escalating threat posed by antimicrobial resistance (AMR). This year's theme serves as a clarion call for individuals, healthcare providers and policymakers to unite in protecting these life-saving drugs. Through education, advocacy and immediate action, we can address the growing crisis and secure a healthier future for all.

**Life Before Antibiotics: A Fragile Existence**  
For much of human history,



SANGEETA SHARMA

infections posed a dire threat to survival. Minor injuries, routine childbirth, or surgical procedures often led to fatal outcomes due to the lack of effective treatments. Ancient civilisations turned to natural remedies such as herbs, honey and garlic, but these measures were often inadequate. The concept of microbes and the role of hygiene were poorly understood, enabling infectious

diseases to spread rapidly with devastating results.

**The Antibiotic Revolution: A New Era of Medicine**  
The discovery of penicillin by Alexander Fleming in 1928 marked a turning point in medical history. By the 1940s, penicillin was widely used to treat infections during World War II, saving countless lives. This success ushered in the "golden age" of antibiotics, spanning the 1940s to the 1960s, with groundbreaking drugs like streptomycin and tetracycline offering solutions to diseases once thought incurable.

These "miracle drugs" revolutionised healthcare, enabling complex surgeries, cancer therapies, and organ transplants that depended

on effective infection control. Antibiotics became synonymous with progress and hope, reshaping our approach to health and longevity.

**AMR: A Global Crisis in the Making**

While antimicrobials transformed healthcare, their misuse and overuse have driven the global crisis of antimicrobial resistance. Mismanagement of these drugs has undermined their effectiveness, allowing resistant strains of bacteria to flourish.

**Misuse and Overuse:** Antibiotics are frequently prescribed for conditions like viral infections (e.g., the common cold), where they have no effect. In agriculture, antimicrobials are



used excessively, often to promote animal growth rather than treat illness. This practice creates resistant bacteria that can transfer to humans through the food chain.

**Underuse:** Failing to complete prescribed antibiotic courses, skipping doses, or using leftover medications allows bacteria to survive and develop resistance.

Examples such as Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) highlight the danger of resistance. Once easily treatable, infections like MRSA now require last-resort drugs, which are often more toxic, expensive, and less effective.

**The Innovation Gap:**

Despite the urgent need for new treatments, the development of antibiotics has stagnated. No new classes of antibiotics have been discovered in recent decades, leaving humanity vulnerable to resistant pathogens. Developing antibiotics is an expensive and time-consuming process and limited financial incentives deter pharmaceutical companies from pursuing research in

this field. As a result, existing drugs are our most critical line of defense, underscoring the need to use them responsibly.

**Educate:**

Public education is a powerful tool in combating AMR. Raising awareness about the proper use of antibiotics is crucial to reducing unnecessary prescriptions. Antibiotics are effective only against bacterial infections, not viruses. Simple practices, such as completing prescribed courses and avoiding sharing or stockpiling antibiotics, can significantly reduce resistance. Community outreach programs and health campaigns are essential in promoting a deeper understanding of AMR and fostering respon-

sible antimicrobial use.

**Advocate:** Governments, healthcare organisations, and advocacy groups play a pivotal role in addressing AMR. Policies that regulate antimicrobial use in agriculture, improve prescribing practices, and promote the use of diagnostics can help mitigate resistance. Antimicrobial Stewardship Programmes in hospitals encourage responsible antibiotic use, ensuring patients receive appropriate treatment while minimising unnecessary exposure.

(The writer is Neuropsychopharmacology Institute of Human Behaviour & Allied Sciences & President, DSPRUD; views are personal)





Canada is already examining tariffs on certain US items following Trump's threat

Canada is already examining possible retaliatory tariffs on certain items from the United States should President Donald Trump follow through on his threat to impose sweeping tariffs on Canadian products, a senior official has said.

Canada, for instance, announced billions of new duties in 2018 against the US in a tit-for-tat response to new taxes on Canadian steel and aluminium.

unfair but say they are happy to work with the Trump administration to lower the numbers from Canada. The Canadians are also worried about influx north of migrants if Trump follows through with his plan for mass deportations.

investing in for national security. "Canada is essential to the United States' domestic energy supply," Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland said.

Zuckerberg dines with Trump in Mar-a-Lago

Donald Trump dined on Wednesday with Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg at the president-elect's Mar-a-Lago club in Florida, bringing together the Facebook founder and the former president who was once banned from that social network.

Stephen Miller, who has been appointed deputy chief of staff for Trump's second term, said Zuckerberg, like other business leaders, wants to support Trump's economic plans.

Zuckerberg has since taken a more positive stance toward Trump. Earlier this year, he praised Trump's response to his first assassination attempt, calling it "badass."

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Still, Trump in recent months had continued to attack Zuckerberg publicly. In July, he posted a message on his own social network Truth Social threatening to send election fraudsters to prison in part by citing a nickname he used for the Meta CEO.

Musk has spent considerable time at Mar-a-Lago since the election, and Trump selected him to lead an outside advisory panel known as the "Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)" to identify waste with Vivek Ramaswamy, a venture capitalist and former GOP presidential candidate.

US embassy in Pak issues security alert for Peshawar

The US Mission here has issued a security alert urging its citizens not to visit Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in northwest Pakistan until December 16 due to "security concerns."

"Active terrorist and insurgent groups routinely conduct attacks against civilians, non-governmental organisations, government offices, and security forces." These groups historically have targeted both government officials and civilians.

"These groups historically have targeted both government officials and civilians. Assassination and kidnapping attempts are common, including the targeting of polio eradication teams and government of Pakistan security service (police and military) personnel," it reads.

सार्वजनिक सूचना
मेरे पुत्र विक्रमलाल राकेश कुमार पुत्र श्रीरंजित सिंह एवं श्रीमती पिकी पत्नी श्री राकेश कुमार निवासयोग पकान नंबर 7/32 युधिष्ठिर गली निवासयोग नगर शाहदरा दिल्ली 110032 ने अपने पुत्र मनीष कुमार व पुत्रवधु नंदी को उनके दुर्व्यवहार के कारण अपनी समस्त चल-अचल सम्पत्ति से वैधखलक संबंध-विच्छेद कर लिए हैं उनके किसी भी कार्य व लेनदेन हेतु मेरे पुत्रविक्रमलाल जिम्मेदार नहीं होंगे।

PARCEL HANDLING CONTRACT
GEM Bid Number: GEM/2024/B/5638483, Dated: 22-11-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work.

PUBLIC NOTICE
To be known to all that I, Rama Sethi W/o Sh. Laxmi Narain Sethi R/o H.No.268, Block-C-4, Yamuna Vihar, Delhi-110053 is the owner of Plot No. 238, Block C-4, situated at Yamuna Vihar, Delhi has applied for Conversion of the aforesaid property in DDA vide online application/Ref. No. 110053/110053/110053/26082024.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is hereby informed to the General Public that, I Dr. Deepali Bhardwaj D/o D.S. Bhardwaj R/o 292, SFS, Hauz Khas, New Delhi have lost the Original (Provisional Allotment Letter No. 49213/AMOB 309 A02 dt. 23.04.2014 issued by Jaiprakash Associates Ltd in respect of Unit No. AMOB309A02 in AMAN 3 project situated at Jaypee Greens, NOIDA on 26.11.2024.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Re: Plot No. 9, Ward No.15, New Fountain Chowk, Sohna, Gurgaon (Hereinafter referred to as the 'said Property'). Notice is hereby given to the general public including Banks, Financial Institutions, etc. that, as informed by our client, Mr. Prince Jain, he is the sole and absolute owner of the said property vide Transfer Deed dated 05.09.2019 executed by Smt. Shakuntla Devi in his favour.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the general public including Banks, Financial Institutions, etc. that, as informed by our client, Mr. Prince Jain, he is the sole and absolute owner of the said property vide Transfer Deed dated 05.09.2019 executed by Smt. Shakuntla Devi in his favour.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the general public including Banks, Financial Institutions, etc. that, as informed by our client, Mr. Prince Jain, he is the sole and absolute owner of the said property vide Transfer Deed dated 05.09.2019 executed by Smt. Shakuntla Devi in his favour.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Deepak Kumar Ray who is purchasing the Freehold Residential House bearing no.45, area measuring 100sq.yds (83.61 sq.mtrs) out of Kharsa no.1290, situated in Village-Loni (Chakkbandi Bahar), Sudesh Vihar, Pargana & Tehsil-Loni, District-Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh from Mrs. Chandrawati owner vide Sale Deed dated 22.08.2022 (Vide Doc. No.13057) executed by Mrs. Satto and same to be finance & mortgage by Muthoot Homefin (India) Ltd. (MHIL), that, Original Sale Deed dated 09.04.2013 (Vide Doc. No.14262) executed by Mrs. Munni Devi in favour of Mrs. Satto has been lost/missing. So, to comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim/right/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of encumbrances, liens etc. Lucam Legal LLP B-93B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank Sector 7, Noida UP-201301 Contact: 9170-4269379

NORTHERN RAILWAY OPEN TENDER NOTICE
The Director/Admin, Northern Railway Central Hospital, New Delhi-110055, for and on behalf of the President of India invites sealed open electronic-tenders for under noted work:-

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE
The Deputy Chief Engineer Const-II, Shivaji bridge, Northern Railway, New Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites open E-Tender for the following work. Tender closing date: 20.12.2024 at 15:00 hrs.

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
No. SSA-33/14/2024-TT-SS/1825165/2024 Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites tender through e-tendering process for supply of Kit of Hand Writing improvement and Calligraphy.

INVITING EOI FOR PURCHASING DIESEL LOCOMOTIVES
Notice No. Mech./DSL/Condemnation/2015/20 Vol-I Dated: 26-11-2024. The principal Chief Electrical Engineer of Electrical Department, N.F. Railway invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from prospective purchasers for purchase of 18 Nos. of WDG3A Diesel Locomotives (Loco No. 13200, 13210, 13241, 13219, 13220, 13227, 13228, 13242, 14755, 14757, 14761 & 14859 of Malda Town Diesel shed & Loco No. 13004, 13010, 13014, 13387, 14836 & 14844 of New Guwahati Diesel shed) of N.F. Railway.

POSSESSION NOTICE
APPENDIX IV (See rule 8(1)) (For Immovable Property)
Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of UGRO Capital Limited, having its registered office at 4th Floor, Tower 3, Equinox Business Park, LBS Road, Kurla, Mumbai 400070, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (S4 of 2002) and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice to repay the amount mentioned in the notice together with interest thereon, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

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THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD.
SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022. EPABX No. 0172-5041812,66
Notice Inviting Tender www.verka.coop

INVITING EOI FOR PURCHASING DIESEL LOCOMOTIVES OF DIESEL LOCO SHED
Notice No.: Mech./DSL/Condemnation/2015/20 Vol-I Dated: 25-11-2024
The Principal Chief Electrical Engineer of Electrical Department, N.F. Railway invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from prospective purchasers for purchase of 09 Nos. of WDM3A Diesel Locomotives (Loco No. 16621, 16634, 16639, 16640, 16724, 16765, 16845, 16848 & 16873) & 07 Nos of WDG3A Locomotives (Loco No. 14502, 14504, 14505, 14506, 14509, 14512 & 14513) a total of 16 Nos. of Diesel Loco Shed Malda Town (MLDD) of N.F. Railway.

Public Notice regarding lost documents and property. Includes details for lost documents, property, and other legal notices.

Public Notice regarding lost documents and property. Includes details for lost documents, property, and other legal notices.

Indian Overseas Bank ROHINI BRANCH (1506)
101-110, 1ST FLOOR, R.G. COMPLEX, SECTOR-8, ROHINI DELHI - 110085, TEL : 011-27940673, 8925951506
(APPENDIX IV) POSSESSION NOTICE (for immovable property)
Whereas The undersigned being the authorized officer of the Indian Overseas Bank, under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 08/08/2024 calling upon the Borrowers / Mortgagees Murli Dhar to repay the amount mentioned in the notice aggregating to Rs 25,41,910.16 (Rupees Twenty Five Lakhs Forty One Thousand Nine Hundred Ten and Paise Sixteen Only) as on 08.08.2024 with further interest at contractual rates and rests, charges etc. till date of realization within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform to the public at large that Mrs. Rani had acquired Ground Floor without roof rights of Built up Property bearing Municipal No. 9597, area 84.5 sq. yds., situated at Gali No. 4, Sarai Rohilla, Delhi vide Sale Deed Dt. 13.06.2024 executed by Mrs. Himanshu Aoria, Mrs. Sunita, Mr. Vishal Kumar, Mrs. Rajani and Mr. Ajay Jain and Now Mrs. Rani is the undersigned owner of the said property.

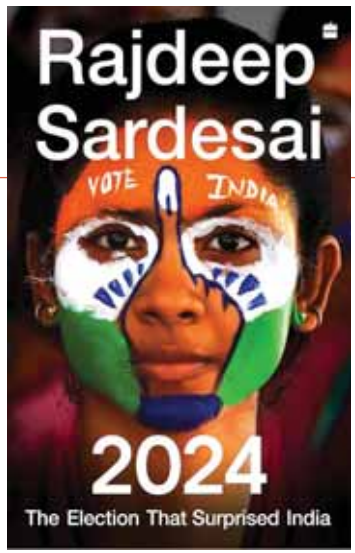
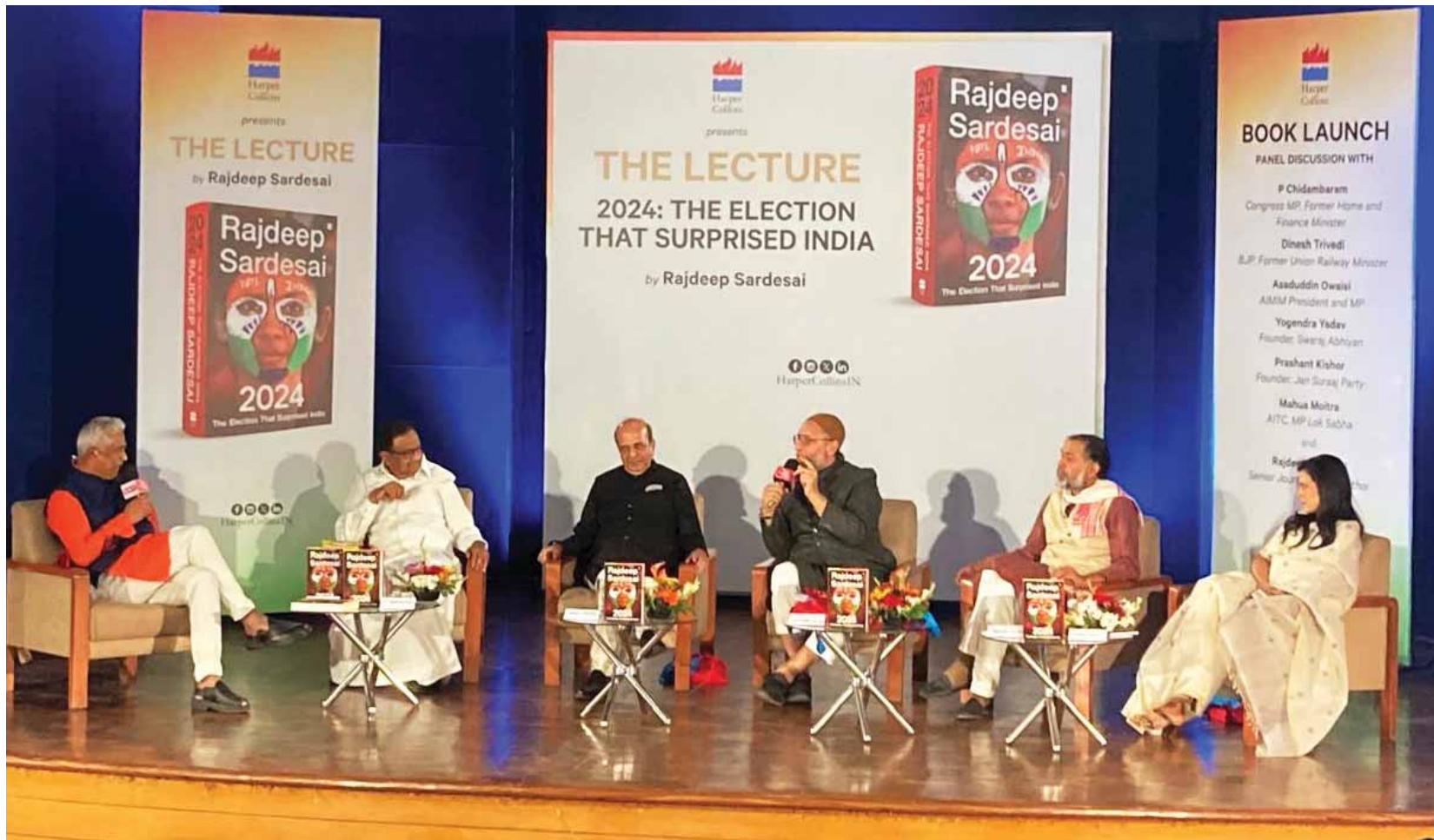


Veteran journalist Rajdeep Sardesai launched his latest book, *2024: The Election That Surprised India*, on Constitution Day at a packed auditorium in Teen Murti Bhavan. Non-fiction books dealing with politics and politicians generally evoke significant interest, especially when penned by a journalist with extensive experience in covering politics and elections. Sardesai's latest work was eagerly anticipated, and the wait proved worthwhile. The book offers a compelling exploration of one of India's most dramatic and unpredictable general elections, held just a few months ago.

This is Sardesai's third book on elections, following his analyses of the 2014 and 2019 general elections. In this new volume, he delves into the missteps of pollsters and pundits, who failed to predict the outcome accurately, and critiques the mainstream media for its perceived one-sided narratives. Sardesai examines why the BJP's "Char Sau Paar" campaign slogan, intended to project overwhelming confidence, failed to resonate with voters as expected. He also sheds light on Rahul Gandhi's Congress, which mounted a surprising comeback after years of setbacks. The narrative explores the operational strategies of the Modi-Shah political team, the role of enforcement agencies during the elections, and the controversies surrounding the fairness of the electoral process. Sardesai highlights the fierce battles in state elections and provides nuanced insights into who truly emerged victorious—and who faltered—in India's increasingly polarised political landscape.

In his characteristic unsparing and incisive style, Sardesai charts the dramatic changes in Indian politics over the last five years, offering readers an insider's perspective on the personalities, strategies, and events that defined the 2024 elections. Building on his bestselling accounts of the 2014 and 2019 elections, this book is a must-read for anyone seeking to understand the shifting sands of power and politics in India. One may agree or disagree with his interpretation and insights, especially since he is not the same as he once was, but the book is a good read and definitely has a shelf life.

**A LIVELY LAUNCH EVENT**  
The book launch was more than a literary occasion; it featured a panel discussion moderated by Sardesai himself, with luminaries from various political parties in attendance. The event, held in a packed auditorium, was marked by engaging debates that delved into the key questions surrounding the electoral verdict that stunned the nation. The distinguished panel included prominent political figures such as P. Chidambaram, senior Congress leader; Mahua Moitra, the fiery Trinamool Congress MP; Dinesh Trivedi, former Railway Minister; and Asaduddin

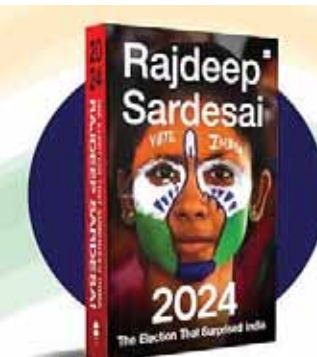


**ABOUT THE BOOK**  
Book: 2024: The Election That Surprised India  
by Rajdeep Sardesai  
Publisher: HarperCollins  
Price: ₹799

# BOOK LAUNCH SPARKS INSIGHTFUL DEBATE

*2024: The Election That Surprised India*, the latest book by **RAJDEEP SARDESAI**, captures the myriad nuances of the recently held general elections, presenting an unflinching narrative of power, ambition, and the changing aspirations of the electorate, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

Owaisi, leader of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM). True to expectations, the discussion was animated and insightful. Adding a unique twist, the panellists took playful potshots at Sardesai himself, "roasting" him in a rare and humorous turn of events. Sardesai, clad in an orange kurta (perhaps making a statement), took the jabs in stride with a smile and humour. On a more serious note, the discussion was refreshingly candid. P. Chidambaram painted a picture of optimism for the Congress, emphasising the growing disillusionment with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He highlighted issues such as unemployment, inflation, and the perceived erosion of democratic



**RAJDEEP SARDESAI**  
ANSWERS THE BIGGEST QUESTIONS ABOUT INDIA'S MOST BRUISING AND POLARIZED POLITICAL ELECTION.

institutions, arguing that these factors could shift voter sentiment. Chidambaram asserted that the Congress was ready to lead the country back to a path of inclusive growth and social justice. On the other hand, Mahua Moitra critiqued the centralisation of power under the BJP and the stifling of dissent. She warned that India's diversity was under threat due to rising authoritarianism and religious polarisation. Moitra argued that regional parties like the TMC were better equipped to challenge the BJP's

dominance because they understood the electorate's pulse more effectively than the Delhi-centric political establishment. Asaduddin Owaisi was humorous yet thought-provoking, raising concerns about the marginalisation of Muslims and other minority communities under the current regime. He criticised the BJP's focus on religious polarisation, warning that it was detrimental to India's secular fabric. Owaisi also called for greater unity among Muslim voters and reiterated his party's commitment to representing marginalised voices while building alliances with like-minded regional players. Yogendra Yadav, a psephologist-turned-politician, countered Dinesh Trivedi's assertion that there were no minorities in India and that "all are Indians." Yadav argued that while leveraging community votes was not new, the BJP had spearheaded campaigns that effectively rendered Muslims second-class citizens. Throughout the discussion, Sardesai kept the conversation dynamic, challenging panellists with incisive questions that encouraged them to think beyond the obvious. The debate was intense, often bordering on contentious, as the political heavyweights offered divergent perspectives on the state of the nation. From discussions on the BJP's electoral strategies to the role of opposition unity, caste politics, and the influence of social media, the conversation reflected the multifaceted nature of Indian politics. The panellists, despite their differing ideological positions, agreed on one point: the 2024 elections marked a watershed moment in Indian politics and that the rightward shift in Indian politics is real and here to stay. While this shift might not be irreversible, it is the reality of the day, nevertheless!

**November Reads!**

By Rupa Publications



**The Wife and the Dancing Girl**  
By ANUJA CHANDRAMOULI  
(PRICE: ₹395, PAGES: 272)

In *The Wife and the Dancing Girl*, Anuja Chandramouli weaves a tale of searing passion and heartbreak inspired by Silapathikaram, the timeless Tamil classic by Ilango Adigal. This story explores the intricate love triangle between Kannagi, the devoted wife, Madhavi, the enchanting dancing girl, and the man they both loved fiercely. Through moments of breathtaking passion and harrowing despair, Kannagi and Madhavi navigate the depths of love and loss, armed with fragile hope and the bitter truth that exquisite pleasure often comes at the cost of endless pain. Chandramouli's retelling is both tender and tragic, delivering a romance that transcends time and leaves an indelible mark.

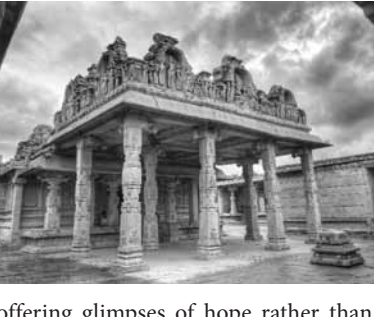
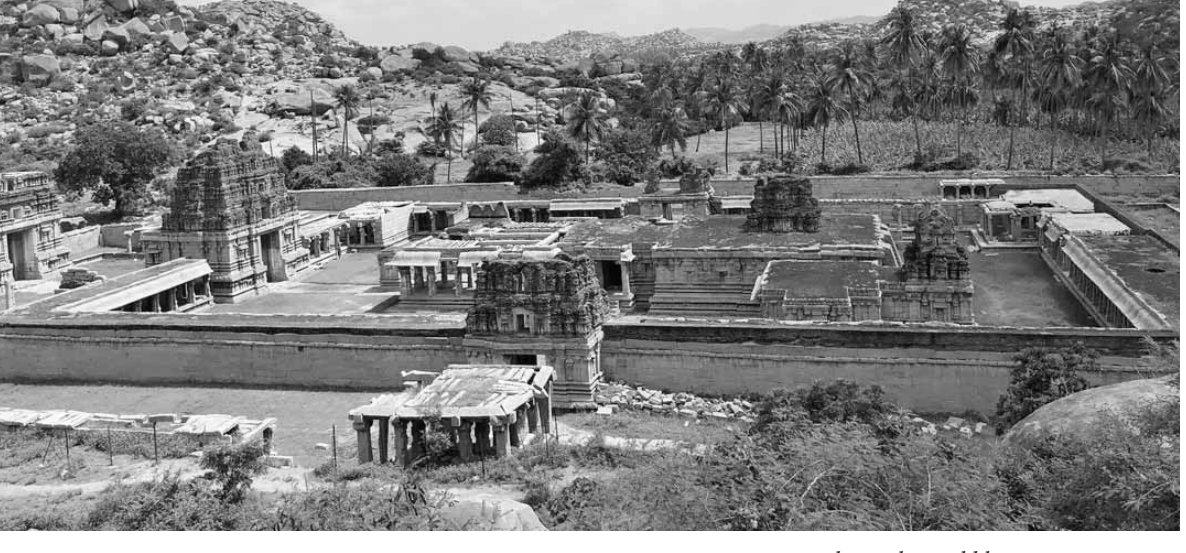
**Unpolitically Correct: The Politics and Economics of Governance**  
By SATYA MOHANTY  
(Price: ₹595, Pages: 232)

In *Unpolitically Correct*, Satya Mohanty, a former senior bureaucrat, delivers a provocative critique of India's governance and economic policies. With growing inequality and 1% of the population holding a disproportionate share of wealth, the book questions whether this disparity is inevitable or the result of a pro-rich policy bias. Challenging conventional beliefs, Mohanty examines issues like inequality, health, education, employment, and privatisation from a refreshingly radical perspective. He deconstructs the narratives of governments, media, and academia, exposing myths about wealth creators and economic progress. The book warns of the dangers posed by fiscal stress, economic slowdowns, and unchecked privatisation without ensuring efficiency and equity. Offering a bold and insightful perspective,

We've all heard the adage: never judge a book by its cover. While this is sound advice, there are exceptions. *One Foot in the Ruin and Other Poems* by Janhwi Sharma is one such exception where the cover perfectly mirrors the book's essence. The image—a lone wayfarer treading an uneven, weathered path amidst ruins, with distant figures barely visible—evokes a sense of solitude and introspection. Towering hills frame the background, while trees and bushes border the ruins in the foreground. Rendered in shades of black, white, and grey, the photograph conjures an atmosphere steeped in history, timelessness, and philosophy. It invites the reader to reflect: What is life if not a journey, and what are we if not wayfarers navigating an unpredictable path? This evocative cover sets the tone for the meditative and poignant journey that unfolds within the book. The title poem, "One Foot in the Ruin," found on page 166, epitomises this theme. Accompanied by a photograph of an abandoned street in Hampi, the poem reads:  
*One foot in the ruins...  
I walk on the weather-beaten path  
setting one foot in the ruin  
I may wander  
wander aimlessly  
carelessly ceaselessly  
but never to get lost  
but maybe at times to  
find new paths, new goals  
embark on a new journey  
or simply to return home.*  
Traditionally, ruins evoke somberness, loss, and mystery. Sharma, however, takes a refreshingly different approach. He portrays the ruins not as dead relics but as sites of exploration, learning, and renewal. The poet walks through them not to lose himself but to discover new meanings, new paths, and, ultimately, a way home. In these lines, Sharma shares a hopeful philosophy: life, no matter how unpredictable or transient, holds potential for growth and return. This hopeful outlook resonates in another short poem, "Silent Spaces," on page 41, paired with a photograph of the Red Fort's barracks in Delhi:  
*Silent spaces  
haunting...  
filtering rays of hope  
for the ruin.*  
Here, Sharma's ruins filter light,

# Whispers of Ruins

JANHWIJ SHARMA'S *One Foot in the Ruin and Other Poems* is a captivating blend of evocative photography and reflective poetry that explores the intersection of history, memory, and the human spirit, writes **SWATI PAL**



**ABOUT THE BOOK**  
Book: 'One foot in the ruin and other poems' - The poem book by Janhwi Sharma, Dev  
Publisher: Dev  
Price: ₹2,495 Pages: 218

offering glimpses of hope rather than despair. Similarly, in "Is There a Way" (p. 77), paired with a photograph from Fatehpur Sikri, the poet muses on the stories ruins whisper:  
*Is there a way to hear the ruins  
still telling tales of its  
proud past with all  
moments it lived  
cherished and felt...  
Time feels alive  
within these ruins...  
all that will one day remain  
will be the ruins' whispering tales*

to those who could hear. Sharma's ability to hear and convey this "whispering tales" makes this collection profound. Of the book's five sections—North, West, Central, South, and East—each rooted in different regions of India, the Central section lingers in memory. For example, the poem "Excavated" (p. 159), paired with a photograph of Sarnath, explores time and its interplay with history:  
*Unearthed remains brought to fore  
testaments of the era silent long back...  
Time unwinds and time unwraps  
bringing ruins to another life  
time now stands still...*  
Similarly, "In His Shelter" (p. 162), set against an image of a shrine in Hampi, reflects on the timeless pursuit of divine shelter:  
*In perpetual obeisance  
prostrations before the divine  
seeking His shelter and blessings  
humbly forever...*  
Sharma's poems often delve beneath the surface of ruins to unearth

enduring values, faith, and hope. This sentiment finds expression in "Stones Speak" (p. 120), inspired by the Ellora Caves:  
*Hewn out of rock/sculpted over  
time/lasting forever.  
Stones speak/louder than words/echoing  
memories/with ceaseless gaze.*  
The poet also captures spiritual and surreal elements, as in "The Other World" (p. 203), paired with an evocative photograph from Assam:  
*Passage for the ultimate departure  
there is deathly silence around...  
one never dies as they say  
no need to ever mourn those who  
leave...*  
Balanced against these profound reflections are moments of lightheartedness, as in "Craftsman's Prank" (p. 112), inspired by a seemingly purposeless carved handle on a wall at Adalaj Vav, Gujarat:  
*Why is it there/I ponder  
what purpose does it serve/makes me  
think harder...  
Surely he is having a good laugh/even  
in his grave.*  
This blend of spirituality, history, and human touch showcases Sharma's ability to see both the solemn and the whimsical in his subjects. Whether contemplating eternity or musing on a craftsman's playful detail, his poems bridge past and present, light and shadow, permanence and impermanence. The book's concluding poem, "Through the Ruin" (p. 32), paired with a photograph from Sarai Amanat Khan in Amritsar, encapsulates the collection's overarching message:  
*Through the ruin...  
And I walk alone/framed through the  
ruin  
ravaged by time...  
And I walk ahead/through the voids of  
the ruin  
reaching the destination/where my  
future will be.*  
As we reflect on the book's title and its solemn promise, we find that *One Foot in the Ruin* does not burden readers with heaviness. Instead, it uplifts, offering hope and perspective. Sharma's work reminds us that ruins, like life, hold stories worth hearing and lessons worth cherishing. Both the poetry and photographs take readers on an evocative journey across India, making this book a treasure worth exploring.

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।  
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

भगवद्गीता 3-21



# International GITA Mahotsav

28 November - 15 December  
Kurukshetra, Haryana



## Main Programme

Venue - Purushottampura Baag, Kurukshetra  
Time - 6:30 pm

Date	Programme	Presentation
5 December	Choreography	By Artists from Tanzania and Haryana
7 December	Play 'Humare Ram'	Sh. Ashutosh Rana and Team
9 December	Sand art based on Mahabharata	Smt. Manisha
9 December	Kavi Sammelan	By Dr. Kumar Vishwas and Other Poets
11 December	Play 'Draupadi' based on Mahabharata	Smt. Meenakshi Sheshadri and Team



www.internationalgitamahotsav.in  
www.48koskurukshetra.com



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“सभी देशवासियों को गीता जयंती की अनंत शुभकामनाएं। श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता सदियों से मानवता का मार्गदर्शन करती आई है। अध्यात्म और जीवन-दर्शन से जुड़ा यह महान ग्रंथ हर युग में पथ प्रदर्शक बना रहेगा।”

- नरेन्द्र मोदी