

Editorial

Thursday, February 6, 2020

The mental equation

Times are a changing- as everything ought to. Stuff that were not even dreamed about are becoming devices and gadgets for everyday use. The pace of development and inventions is increasing at a dizzying pace and in an unbelievably complex manner. Every single gene in the human body can be identified, isolated and manipulated. Electricity can be transmitted without any wires or cables. Cars that run for more than a thousand kilometers with only a gallon of fuel is no more a fantasy today. Space travel or space tourism is here. Humans with embedded microchips can now manipulate and control his environment, well almost, as of now. Research and development in every field, being aided by sophisticated computers and robots, have quickened their pace and shortened their observation periods, leading to quicker results. It would not be much off the mark to say that the world as we know today is undergoing a paradigm shift in the way we live our lives. Through these radical changes and developments, one thing has withstood the test of time, proving to be an unseen and unaccounted yet a determining factor that could make or mar everything else- the human mentality.

The workings of the human mind - emotions and feelings that cannot be quantitatively ascertained or expressed as an exacting scientific expression or equation, has remained an enigma- a mystery that has not been unraveled till date. Herein lies the genesis of every conflict and differences. Societies created laws and statutes based on the greater good of the citizens, and a system of checks and balances to arbitrate, enforce and amend them. It is a perfect set up- on paper. Unfortunately, the bitter reality is so far removed from the system so envisaged. We, the ordinary citizens are arrested and harassed for raising our voice against what we feel is unjust and wrong- even threatened and shot by those who purport to serve our motherland, whatever form that might take. The powers that be proclaim to work according to the wishes of the people, while the voice is subdued with threats and intimidation, or worse still, let the voice die out and be forgotten with time. And who are we to turn to for help when the terrorists are the army and police who are drug traffickers; who are extortionists; who are the influential and powerful? For us mere mortals, complaints and appeals entail the inherent risk of losing limb and life. Is what we are experiencing a replica of the so called Jungle law? One would like to think that a jungle law would be a far better option- each one would then have a place in the set up.

But then again, we are born equal. A prime minister is as human as a sweeper or a carpenter or a scientist. Each one is doing their bit for the society. The president of India or the Chief Minister of Manipur needs a weaver to weave a piece of fabric which will be sewn into a cloth by a tailor and sold at the market from where it will be brought for his use. We need to accept and embrace one another as our equals. The powerful ones wouldn't have had a concrete mansion to hide within were it not for the masons and plumbers. Respect for others regardless of caste, creed, faith or colour should be the basis of social interaction and formulation of policies. So long as tolerance and understanding is at a premium, no amount of expressed progressive efforts will ever succeed. And the time to adopt an inclusive and tolerant mentality is now; for tomorrow will be a day too late.

Assam Rifles Promotes Fit India Movement

IGAR (South)
Imphal Feb.6

Kakching Battalion of 28 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) organised a friendly Football Match on yesterday to promote "Fit India Movement" and maintain a healthy environment among the people of Manipur.

The match was played between troops of Assam Rifles and Panglalti Youth Club of Thoubal District, a total

of 15 players from Panglalti Youth Club participated enthusiastically in the match. The match was followed by a motivational speech insisting importance of staying fit and to imbibe the sportsman spirit, to encourage and promote "Fit India Movement" among the locals.

This gesture of Assam Rifles was highly appreciated by locals and the locals have expressed their interest for many such events in future as well.

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Tata Sons front runner in Air India take over bid

By Raju Vernekar

Even as the date for receiving queries from bidders is moving closer, the Tata Group appears to be inching forward to bid for Air India by actively exploring a structure for "Air India" acquisition with "Singapore Airlines", its joint venture partner in "Vistara".

The queries on the sale process will be received till 11 February, the government will answer the queries by 25 February, while the respective expressions of interest will have to be submitted by 17 March. The qualified bidders will be informed by 31 March 2020.

The minimum net worth criterion to bid for Air India, reeling under a debt of Rs 80,000 crore, has been set at Rs.3,500 crore, but the government has allowed domestic carriers with negative net worth to put in bids on the strength of their consortium partners if the local airline's share in the consortium is limited to 51%.

Tatas have started working on the structure for such an acquisition, including a merger of "AirAsia India" (headquartered in Kochi, with 49 per cent stake of Malaysian entrepreneur Tony Fernandes and 51 per cent of



Tatas) and "Air India Express" (a 100% subsidiary of AI).

The Tata Group, has reportedly approached Fernandes for his approval to acquire "Air India Express", since the shareholders' agreement stipulates that Tatas can't invest more than 10% in another budget airline without unless he is willing to waive the covenant.

While "Air India Express" flies to over 33 destinations with over 649 services a week to the Gulf countries, "AirAsia India" has been waiting to get government nod to fly overseas. On the other hand, the combination of "Air India" and "Vistara", is expected to help the Tatas to monopolise the full-service space in India. With the two-pronged strategy to acquire "Air India", the Tatas aims to up its ante in the aviation business that it had pioneered in the country.

In "Vistara", Tata Sons holds 51% stakes while Singapore Airlines owns 49% stake and the company is registered as TATA SIA Airlines Limited.

As per the bid document, Air India has an aircraft fleet of 121 aircraft (excluding 4 B747-400 aircraft) as on November 2019, mainly comprising Airbus and Boeing aircraft, out of which 65 are owned or on finance lease. "Air India Express" has a total of 25 Boeing 737-800 NG aircraft of which 10 are owned and 7 on finance lease. The remaining 8 are on dry lease.

However Fernandes, former director of "AirAsia R. Venkataraman, Deputy CEO of AirAsia Tharumalingam Kanagalingam and other top executives are being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate about allegations of

money laundering. While Fernandes was summoned last month and again on Wednesday, Venkataraman has been asked to appear before ED on February 10. Venkataraman had stepped down as managing trustee of the Tata Trusts in March last year and later exited "AirAsia India".

In addition, the CBI, is also investigating Fernandes and others on charges of criminal conspiracy under the Prevention of Corruption Act, under the allegation that a conspiracy was hatched to get the erstwhile 5/20 rule amended during 2009-14, to get the requirement to operate for minimum 5 years to become eligible to fly overseas, scrapped.

Besides Malaysia's Anti-Corruption Commission, working alongside Britain's Serious Fraud Office (SFO), has been probing the case of bribery in the airline. The SFO had found that individuals associated with the plane making, had paid to secure deals with "AirAsia" and its long-haul unit "AirAsia X". Two other agencies in Malaysia, including the aviation agency and the Security Commission, are investigating the matter.

'Ram Janmabhoomi issue would have remained unsolved if...': PM jabs Congress

Agency
New Delhi Feb.6

In his reply to the motion of thanks on the President's Address in Lok Sabha, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said, "Mahatma Gandhi may be trailer for you, he is life for us." "The Honourable President has highlighted the vision for a New India. His address comes at a time when we enter the third decade of the century. Rashtrapati Ji's address instills a spirit

of hope and it presents a roadmap for taking the nation ahead in the times to come," the Prime Minister said. **Here are the highlights from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech** The people of India have not only changed the Sarkar. They want the Sarkar to be changed as well. If we had worked according to the old ways and thought processes, Article 370 would never have been history. Muslim women would have kept suffering due to Triple Talaq. If we worked as per the old ways, Ram Janmabhoomi issue would have remained unsolved. Kartarpur Sahib corridor would not be a reality. There would be no India-Bangladesh land agreement. Pressing that India can no longer wait for problems to remain unsolved, Modi said his government's aims are "speed and

scale, determination and decisiveness, and sensitivity and solutions." India can no longer wait for problems to remain unsolved. And, rightfully so. That is why, our aim is: Speed and scale. Determination and decisiveness. Sensitivity and solutions

For years, distance became a reason to ignore the Northeast region. Things have changed now. The Northeast is becoming a growth engine. Great work has been done in so many sectors. The issue of higher MSP was pending for decades. We had the honour of solving this long-standing demand. The same applies to crop insurance and irrigation related schemes. The agriculture budget has risen 5 times during our Government's tenure. PM-KISAN Samman Yojana is transforming the

lives of many farmers. Several farmers have benefited due to this. In this scheme there are no middlemen and no extra file-work.

We have kept the fiscal deficit in check. Price rise is also under check and there is macro-economic stability. Our vision is: Greater investment. Better infrastructure. Increased value addition. Maximum job creation. Stand up India. Start up India and Mudra initiatives are adding prosperity in the lives of many. Substantial number of the Mudra beneficiaries are women. Next-generation infrastructure will drive India's progress. In the earlier days, infrastructure creation brought "economic opportunities" for a select few. Not any more. We have made this sector transparent and are working to boost connectivity.

Physiotherapy camp for scribes at Guwahati Press Club

By a Correspondent
Guwahati Feb. 6

City-based scribes will get an opportunity to discuss about various physical pains on neck, shoulder, chest, etc and also get the preliminary treatment on Saturday (8 February 2020) at Guwahati Press Club. The brief camp between 1 and 4 pm will be attended by Dr Ujjal Bhattacharya (PT) and Dr Abhishek Das (PT) from the physiotherapy department of Royal Global University for benefit of the participants.

Assam Rifles Conducts Security Meeting

IGAR (South)
Imphal Feb. 6

Continuing with its Philanthropic activities in maintaining security of the area of responsibility and general awareness, Kakching Battalion of 28 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) organized a meeting with village Chiefs on yesterday.

The aim of the meeting was to reach out to the local populace through

the village Chiefs and to apprise the people regarding the current security situation, the present status of Naga Framework Agreement and the initiatives taken by Assam Rifles to protect the local populace during the adverse situation.

The meeting was held in Wabagai of Thoubal District at around 10:30 am on 05th Feb 2020. A total of five village Chiefs, nine Ward Members from Wabagai were

present in the meeting. The event was followed by refreshment. The gathering and benevolent gesture was appreciated by village Chiefs and the Ward Members who were present in the meeting assured of their co-operation and support in maintaining the security situation of the area of responsibility and also for various welfare measures which are being run by Kakching Battalion.

Ramanathan-Raja storms into doubles quarters at the third edition of Tata Open Maharashtra, to face Paes on Thursday

By a Correspondent
Pune, Feb. 6

Indian pair of Ramkumar Ramanathan and Purav Raja made their way into the doubles quarter-final of the third edition of Tata Open Maharashtra with hard-fought yet convincing 7-6 (8-6), 6-3 victory against compatriot Sumit Nagal and his Partner Egor Gerasimov of Belarus at Mhalunge Balewadi Stadium in Pune on Wednesday.

The Indian rising star Nagal, who was included into doubles main draw following withdrawal of German pair Peter Gojowczyk-Cedric-Marcel Stebe, could not capitalise on the opportunity. After winning the first in the tie-breaker Ramanathan-Raja came strongly into the next set which saw them dominating and wrapping it up 6-3 easily as well as the match in straight sets. The duo will now face stiff challenge of India's Leander Paes



on Thursday.

Eight-time Grand Slam doubles champion Paes, playing alongside Australian Matthew Ebden beat compatriot Divij Sharan and his partner Artem Sitak 6-2, 7-6 (7-5) in the doubles opening round match Tuesday.

Earlier in the singles round-of-32, Sasikumar Mukund dished out a gritty performance before going down against the Japanese Taro

Daniel. The 23-year-old Indian youngster, who was handed a wildcard entry during his third appearance at the Tata Open Maharashtra, made strong comeback into the second set before losing the first 6-2. However, despite putting a solid performance in the second set that saw Daniel struggling, Mukund went on to lose 6-2, 7-6 (9-7) in the thrilling tie-breaker. "Making a main draw

debut in Pune is a very special for me. Playing here has given me experience of playing in front of the crowd. I got broken too early in the sets. I had a chance with five all. It's not because of that one break point why I am sitting here. It was because of all the points I played," said Mukund, who played in the qualifying round in the last two editions of India's premier ATP 250 event, which is organised by Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association (MSLTA) in association with Government of Maharashtra.

Meanwhile, in the doubles round-of-16 match, Robin Haase of Netherlands and Sweden's Robert Lindstedt played to their head to work hard in their opening round match against Dutch pair of Sander Arends and David Pel which went into tie-breaker. However, top-seeded pair of Haase-Lindstedt somehow managed to comeback in the decider and completed 6-7 (5-7), 6-3, 10-8 win.