

# Of polls and India's glory



**Deepak Dwivedi**  
Editor-in-Chief

**The BJP victory in Gujarat is a foregone conclusion while the debate is only about who will be the runner-up**

All eyes are on the upcoming Gujarat Assembly elections and we thought it appropriate to do a comprehensive package on that along with a special story on the other polls in the hilly state of Himachal Pradesh. Written with deep political insight, our Cover Story affirms that the BJP victory in Gujarat is a foregone conclusion while the debate is only about who will be the runner-up – an aggressive AAP or a subdued Congress. The report also delves into the reasons why the BJP is headed for a record win and how, and where, the Congress Party has gone wrong. Extending the poll package to Centrespread, we carry a detailed report explaining the 'Gujarat Model' and the reasons behind its continued success. The other story on the page analyses the Himachal poll scenario and concludes that here, too, the BJP has an edge.

As a precursor to India's glorious moment on the world stage – the assumption of G20 presidency – Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the premium forum's official logo and theme; and that is the lead story on our G20

Podium. As one of the oldest civilisations, India has a lot to offer to the world and its G20 presidency logo and theme are a reflection of its deep-rooted belief in universal equality and harmony, says our report. Quoting extensively from PM Modi's speech, the report says that India's G20 theme of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' not only emphasises the value of all life forms but also celebrates the idea of interconnectedness. It also explains the significance of the seven leaved lotus logo in Indian culture and highlights the PM's remarks that the world is going through a series of disruptions and the Indian approach will unite and bring hope to it. Besides, we carry a report on the Bali Summit of the G20 Religion Forum and introduce a new feature on the weekly events associated with India's upcoming G20 presidency.

We revive the Globetrotting Page with spotlight on Georgia, a transcontinental country that shares historical ties with India. Today, the two countries have robust cooperation in wide-ranging fields and the possibilities of signing an FTA are also being explored, says our report. It also

focuses on Georgia's importance as a major hub for transportation and logistics because of its strategic location in the Black Sea region. Alongside, we carry an informative piece on Georgia's martyred Queen Ketevan, who reigned in the 17th century and the fragments of whose body were found buried in Goa centuries later. A related box describes how Georgia has become a hub of medical education for Indian students.

In the context of the ongoing meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 27) in the seaside city of Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt, we carry two special reports contributed by experts in the field of science and environment. Among the top stories on our news pages are UP Government's quest to hit the trillion-dollar economy target and the dilemma faced by Shiv Sena's Uddhav Thackeray in mending fences with the BJP.

Enjoy reading!

# Climate change negotiations and India's G20 presidency



**Alok Sheel**

The increasing frequency of extreme climate events across the globe has injected a sense of urgency in the global climate negotiations conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and prodded by G20 leaders during their annual summits. These leaders, whose countries account for over 80 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions, are expected to develop a consensus that could contribute to a successful outcome of the COP27 Summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. This will conclude just after the 17th G20 Leaders' Summit is held in Bali, Indonesia, on November 15-16, 2022. India will assume the G20 presidency immediately following this and host the 18th G20 summit in 2023.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Emissions Gap Report (EGR) 2022, policies currently in place point to a 2.8°C temperature rise by 2100. Implementation of current pledges and after considering the new updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the COP21 Paris Accord of 2015, this rise can be kept within 2.4 - 2.6 degrees. While this is an improvement over the 4 degrees projection on the eve of the Paris Accord, it is only marginally better than

the projection (2.7 degrees) in the 2021 EGR, and still very far from the Paris Accord ambition of 1.5 to 2 degrees. Temperatures have already risen 1.1 degrees above pre-industrial levels, and any temperature rise beyond 1.5 degrees could be catastrophic. The UNEP has estimated that current levels of greenhouse gas emissions need to be reduced by 45 pc by 2030 to achieve the 1.5 per cent target, and 30 per cent to achieve 2 degrees.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also announced an ambitious, widely publicised 5-point national agenda (Panchamrit) for environment action at the COP26 Summit which included (i) reducing emission intensity of GDP by 45 per cent (instead of the previously agreed upon 33-35 per cent), (ii) enhancing renewable energy capacity in the total energy mix from 40 to 50 per cent, (iii) reducing total projected carbon emissions by 1 billion tonnes, (iv) increasing non-fossil fuel capacity from 175 GW to 500 GW by 2030, and (v) net-zero carbon

emissions by 2070 (the only major developing country to do so, after China). He also called on developed nations to dedicate 1 per cent of their GDP towards financing green projects in the developing world and for the establishment of a 'clean energy projects fund' at the G20 Rome summit. Earlier India along with France had launched the International Solar Alliance (ISA) at the Paris COP 21, with the ambitious target of mobilising investment of nearly USD 1 trillion

globally by 2030 for the solar energy sector.

India can build on all the above announcements, and what might be achieved at Sharm El Sheikh and Bali, to carry forward the climate agenda during its G20 presidency. By virtue of its status as a major developing country, the Indian Chair is well positioned to bring the North and South closer on the issue of climate change and go beyond the grand bargains of the COP 2009 Copenhagen that set up the Green Climate Fund, and Paris Accords.

The agenda advanced by New

Delhi must incorporate measures to balance concerns of reducing carbon emissions with resultant development lags and job losses that smaller nations fear. The Indian Chair could press for higher environment funding and technology transfers by developed nations in return for more concrete emission targets, both short-term and long-term, with more ambitious timelines, in the light of the discouraging assessment of the UNEP. Action points in this agenda could include cooperation on deciding and achieving short-term decarbonisation targets, creation of jobs in the renewable energy sector on a year-on-year basis proportionately to the ones lost in traditional power generating sectors, phasing out the internal combustion engine, greater use of plant-based fuels like ethanol, cooperation on planned obsolescence of coal-based power generating plants, expansion of carbon trading markets for emerging markets and closing the financing gap in developing countries by collectively leveraging the US, UK and EU to inject investment into green infrastructure and clean technology projects. Under its G20 presidency, India could nudge G20 leaders to incorporate some of these initiatives in the Leaders' Statement and the New Delhi Action Plan expected to be issued at the 18th G20 Summit hosted by it. ■

*The writer is a retired IAS officer and former Secretary, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, and RBI Chair Professor in Macroeconomics*

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