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## Escalating Violence In Gaza

The invasion of Gaza by Israel which has so far killed over 31,000 people, most of them children and women, seems unlikely to end anytime soon. On the contrary, it is only intensifying with Israel set to invade the crowded Rafah, where the Palestinian refugees of the war have sought refuge. And in doing so, Israel is defying most of the world. The humanitarian crisis unfolding in the region is a stark reminder of the urgent need for diplomacy and peace-building efforts to halt the cycle of violence and bring about much-needed ceasefire.

For far too long, the people of Gaza have endured the devastating consequences of hostilities between Israel and Hamas. The latest escalation has only exacerbated the already dire situation, with civilian casualties mounting by the day. It is unacceptable that thousands of innocent lives, including women and children, are being wantonly killed, subjected to unimaginable trauma and hardship.

The toll of this conflict extends far beyond the loss of life. Basic necessities such as food, water, and medical supplies are in short supply, exacerbating the already dire humanitarian conditions in Gaza. The United Nations has warned of an impending famine, underlining the urgent need for unrestricted access to humanitarian aid to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population.

The international community must act swiftly and decisively to broker a ceasefire agreement that addresses the root causes of the conflict and ensures the protection of civilians on both sides. Dialogue and diplomacy must take precedence over military escalation, as there can be no lasting peace without a two-state solution along 1967 borders.

A ceasefire would provide much-needed relief to the besieged population of Gaza, allowing humanitarian organizations to deliver life-saving assistance to those in need. It would also create an opportunity for political leaders to engage in meaningful negotiations aimed at a sustainable peace agreement.

Moreover, a ceasefire in Gaza would have far-reaching implications for regional stability and security. The ongoing violence only serves to perpetuate a cycle of animosity and distrust, further complicating efforts to achieve a comprehensive and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By prioritizing dialogue and de-escalation, the international community can create a conducive environment for meaningful peace talks and reconciliation.

The suffering endured by the people of Gaza demands urgent action and unwavering commitment from the international community to uphold the principles of human rights and humanitarian law. It is incumbent upon all parties involved to prioritize the protection of civilians and respect for international law, including the principles of proportionality and distinction. Time is of the essence, and failure to act decisively risks further escalation and untold human suffering.

# Why Isn't Climate Crisis an Election Agenda in India?

Himalayan CSOs prepare  
Demand Charter for Political Parties



Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

Jammu & Kashmir has been facing a severe climate crisis for the last many years. The choking of our wetlands, destruction of rivers, lakes and streams plus dumping of municipal solid waste in open and near water bodies are some of the big environmental challenges we are facing. Even as these problems are reported almost daily by the media, this has never become an election agenda neither for political parties nor are people pushing for this.

The situation is not better in other Himalayan states like Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Ladakh, North Eastern states etc. Even the states located in plains like Delhi are gasping for clean air. Bangalore is facing a severe water crisis. Despite all this, the environment remains an outlier in India's electoral politics and that is the reason this isn't even discussed or debated during the election campaigns.

The NGO's, Civil Society Organisations -CSOs working in India have mostly been focussed towards the livelihood sector and that is the reason environmental issues don't get better advocacy. For last many days Sonam Wangchuk, a Ladakh based social entrepreneur and innovator is leading a "climate fast" to demand tribal area status for Ladakh, which he says will help protect the fragile ecology and tribal identity of the region, but unfortunately media isn't giving enough coverage to this peaceful protest.

Political parties are also least concerned about environmental issues and their election manifestos don't include issues related to the climate crisis. With an aim of addressing these gaps several civil society organisations from different Himalayan states recently joined hands to create a joint platform so that a demand charter is prepared and submitted to various political parties before the lok sabha elections. Several organisations and concerned citizens under the banner People for Himalayas met at Palampur Himachal Pradesh on February 27th and 28th to discuss and deliberate on this issue.

#### People for Himalayas

During the two-day meeting, civil society actors, activists, concerned citizens from Jammu & Kashmir,

Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and other Himalayan states assembled at Palampur under the banner of People for Himalayas. It was discussed during the two days meeting that major factors leading to occurrence of disasters in Himalayan states were setting up of big hydropower projects, unregulated urbanization, excessive tourism, deforestation, construction of 4-lane highways, mega railways etc. These things have increased the vulnerabilities of the people living in the Himalayan states. Today, while a demand is being raised from within the society for sustainable and need-based development, the governments of the Himalayan regions approach is limited only to relief and rescue operations in the form of compensation for loss of life and property. The recent environmental disasters have made it very clear that the governments of the Himalayan states are incapable of handling such disasters and are silent on the real issues.

"Today, no Himalayan state is untouched by these disasters and now the need is being felt that concerned citizens and people working on social and environmental issues of all the Himalayan states should develop a mutual understanding re-

ways, new railway lines and tunnels in J&K as this will prove to be disastrous in the future. One understands the importance of Baramulla-Srinagar-Udhampur Railway project but to take railway lines to Pahalgam and Kupwara or Uri by sacrificing so many apple orchards and green forests would prove to be disastrous. Kashmiri people would have loved to give their land for this project had their landholdings been huge like we see in states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat or Rajasthan. If someone loses his half acres (4 kanals) of apple farm will he be able to buy a new one or set up a new farm? No, because there is hardly any land availability in the apple producing areas of South and North Kashmir.

#### More compensation in land acquisition

The Govt must pay more compensation for land acquired in Himalayan states like J&K, Himachal, Uttarakhand and Ladakh and the Right to Fair Compensation Act 2013 must be amended to incorporate these provisions because people in these regions have small landholdings and once a developmental project is taken up the affected people

has frustrated the local population.

#### Promoting Eco Tourism

At a time when population is on the rise in J&K and other Himalayan states the agricultural land is shrinking at an alarming rate in these areas. The Govt has to devise policies that would ensure sustainable utilisation of our natural resources. The lakes, wetlands, rivers and streams of J&K have become garbage dump sites and setting up sanitary landfill sites in J&K has become a challenge for authorities. In Srinagar administration is not able to acquire even 100 acres of land for setting up a scientific landfill site. The only landfill site in Srinagar city located at Achan is fully choked. There is no wasteland available in Srinagar or its outskirts where a new landfill site would be set up, isn't this a big challenge?

#### Conclusion

As explained above, around 67 Civil Society Organisations working in different Himalayan states have prepared a joint demand charter to be submitted to various political parties. This document calls upon the leadership of the country to seriously think about conserving and protecting Himalayan biodiversity which is under serious threat. When the Govt seeks investments in setting up good hotels in Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Uttarakhand, Ladakh or North East India, a lot of thrust has to be given to protect the local biodiversity and environment, considering large-scale shrinking of our land mass. Instead of going ahead with construction of massive hotels in Kashmir, Himachal and other places the Govt must consider setting up eco-friendly lodges and huts, or high end tented accommodation. Govt of India has in-fact come up with a National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism last year wherein trust has been given on Sustainable Tourism. This policy document has to be implemented on the ground now. The Political parties need to come clear on the environmental crisis in Himalayan regions and they must devise a plan to overcome it and the same must be incorporated in their Lok Sabha election manifestos which they would be issuing in the coming weeks.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer

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Today, no Himalayan state is untouched by these disasters and now the need is being felt that concerned citizens and people working on social and environmental issues of all the Himalayan states should develop a mutual understanding regarding these disasters and work on a joint strategy, keeping in mind the 2024 elections, so that the voice of the Himalayan states can be raised with the Govt of India as a concrete demand

garding these disasters and work on a joint strategy, keeping in mind the 2024 elections, so that the voice of the Himalayan states can be raised with the Govt of India as a concrete demand," reads the document prepared by People of Himalayas.

#### Marginal Farmers in Himalayan States

More than 90% of farmers in all the Himalayan states are marginal farmers as per official figures. The size of small agricultural landholdings in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, J&K and adjoining areas was estimated to be less than a hectare. This figure came down further in the 2015-16 Agriculture Census. In the Kashmir valley, where most farmers own less than an acre of land, any government policy related to land acquisition, especially for "development projects", needs to take into account the fragile mountainous environment and climatic conditions as well.

#### No to big highways & railways

Govt should not set up big high-

lose enough land which they cannot purchase again. Thus the government of India must include a provision in the land acquisition act for better land compensation in Himalayan states.

#### Moratorium on Hydropower Projects

The Hydropower projects have caused lots of displacements and environmental disaster in many Himalayan states including J&K. A moratorium must be imposed for setting up of new hydropower projects and instead solar and wind energy must be explored in J&K which is yet unexplored. In Doda and Kishtwar districts of J&K we have had huge hydropower projects set up in the last 20 years but the people in these districts continue to suffer on account of electricity. 24 x 7 electricity supply still remains a distant dream for people in Chenab valley which is a matter of serious concern. On one hand people in this region have given so many sacrifices during setting up of power projects but in return they have got nothing and continue to suffer due as the electricity crisis



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## Why Investment in Shares is Considered Risky in Kashmir

Irshad Mushtaq

The stock market in Kashmir, also known as the share market, has garnered a reputation for being a risky place for investors. This negative perception is largely due to aggressive intraday trading, illegal practices by certain stock brokers, and a lack of understanding of fundamental investment strategies.

Aggressive trading, often with the use of leverage, has led many individuals to trade with amounts that far exceed the actual value of the stocks. This high-risk practice can result in significant losses when the market experiences volatility. The unpredictable nature of the stock market makes it particularly risky for those who engage in such practices. Additionally, illegal activities by some brokers have also contributed to significant financial losses for investors in Kashmir. Trading in clients' accounts and making false promises of guaranteed profits can lead to severe consequences when the market turns negative, leaving unsuspecting investors in a financially compromised position.

Another contributing factor to financial losses in the share market is the lack of understanding about long-term investment. Many individuals engage in intraday trading with the hopes of making quick profits, without realizing the high level of risk involved. It is important for investors to recognize the importance of long-term investment and the patience required to see significant returns.

Additionally, there is a lack of awareness about the risks involved in aggressive trading and the importance of diversification. It is essential for investors to understand the potential consequences of engaging in high-risk trading practices and to diversify their investment portfolios to mitigate these risks.

In conclusion, the share market in Kashmir can be a risky place for those who fail to take proper precautions. By avoiding aggressive trading, illegal practices by brokers, and leveraging trading, while focusing on long-term investment strategies buy only quality companies, hold with discipline, patience, proper diversified portfolio and mutual funds, individuals can minimize the risk of losing money in the share market. It is essential for investors to educate themselves about the intricacies of the stock market and make informed decisions to protect their financial interests. This increased awareness and cautious approach can help in avoiding substantial financial losses and building a more secure investment portfolio.

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# Ramazan Muslims Hypocrisy or Reverence?

Jewel Khufia Noor

The month of Ramazan is a time of spiritual rejuvenation and introspection for Muslims around the world. It is during this sacred month that many individuals, who may not actively practice their faith throughout the year, find themselves drawn to Masajids, prayer, and acts of charity, earning them the label of 'Ramazan Muslims' (Muslims only in Ramazan).

This term often carries a hint of skepticism, questioning the sincerity of these temporary changes. However, could these seasonal transformations be indicative of a deeper, underlying faith waiting to be reignited? Is this phenomenon a form of hypocrisy, or does it reveal the presence of dormant faith, however faint, within the hearts of Muslims?

## RAMAZAN'S INFLUENCE IN AWAKENING THE SPIRITUALLY DORMANT

The symbolism of Ramazan, with the opening of the gates of Paradise and the closing of the gates of Hellfire, holds deeper significance than mere metaphors.

These things happen in the realm of the unseen and the spiritual part of the believers perceive these changes, resonating with their spiritual senses and drawing them closer to acts of worship and self-reflection.

One striking manifestation of this spiritual awakening is witnessed in the phenomenon of 'Ramazan Muslims,' individuals whose devotion intensifies during this month. Despite their minimal engagement with religious practices outside Ramazan, they find themselves drawn to religious acts, indicating a hidden faith yearning to be revived.

An illustrative example of this awakening is observed in the story of a non-Hijabi girl embracing the Hijab during Ramazan. Her Hijab, becomes a visible sign of the light that exists within her heart.

Similarly, individuals grappling with Quranic recitation find solace in the knowledge that their sincere efforts are valued by the Divine.

Moreover, the sight of Masajids



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**The sincere repentance of a person, regardless of their past actions or shortcomings, can be accepted and rewarded by Allah (SWT). Conversely, even acts of worship spanning decades may be rejected if tainted by ostentation or insincerity**

bustling with worshippers during Ramazan symbolizes more than increased religious fervor; it signifies that the truth still exists within the community.

## THE DAMAGING EFFECT OF EXCESSIVE CRITICISM ON RELIGIOUS GROWTH

Critiquing and failing to encourage the small acts of devotion exhibited by Ramazan Muslims can have a detrimental effect on the delicate seed of faith (Iman) sown during this blessed month. Each individual's spiritual journey is unique, akin to a seed that requires nurturing and care to blossom into a beautiful flower of faith.

It is crucial to understand that not everyone progresses at the same pace on their spiritual journey. Some individuals may experience rapid growth and profound spiritual transformations within a short period, while others may stumble and need to restart multiple times. This diversity in progression is part of the human experience and should be embraced rather than criticized.

The disparity in religious journeys, including failures and setbacks, highlights the importance of embracing imperfections and learning from them. In many other aspects of life, such as education or career development, failures are seen

as opportunities for growth and learning. However, when it comes to religious practice, there is often an expectation of perfectionism, which can be unrealistic and discouraging.

Instead of focusing solely on outward displays of religious devotion, it is essential to value intentions and efforts. God appreciates sincerity and the striving spirit more than flawless execution. Every small act of worship contributes to the overall growth of faith.

## REALIGNING OUR SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES: CLARITY, COMPASSION, AND SHARED SUCCESS

As Muslims, our ultimate goal is to attain Jannah (Paradise) for

ourselves and our loved ones. However, in our pursuit of this noble aspiration, it is essential to maintain clarity in our objectives and cultivate compassion towards others.

Just as a child passionately defends her favorite toy or treat in front of her mother, we should strive to protect and cherish the spiritual well-being of ourselves and those around us. This means focusing on the positive aspects of people's actions and encouraging their efforts towards improvement, rather than dwelling on their shortcomings.

Having a clear vision entails seeing beyond differences and recognizing the sincerity in oth-

ers' intentions. It involves wishing for them the same mercy and understanding from Allah (SWT) that we seek for ourselves, ultimately aiming for collective success in attaining Jannah.

By embracing this mindset of compassion and clear vision, we not only strengthen our own spiritual journey but also contribute to a more supportive and harmonious community, where everyone strives towards the shared goal of pleasing Allah (SWT) and earning His ultimate reward.

## RESPECTING DIVINE AUTHORITY:

### LEAVING JUDGMENT TO ALLAH

It's important to refrain from judging the intentions of others, especially among Ramazan Muslims, as we cannot accurately analyze their hearts and motives. Only Allah (SWT) has the ultimate knowledge and authority to judge individuals' sincerity and intentions.

The sincere repentance of a person, regardless of their past actions or shortcomings, can be accepted and rewarded by Allah (SWT). Conversely, even acts of worship spanning decades may be rejected if tainted by ostentation or insincerity.

Therefore, our focus should be on our own sincerity, seeking forgiveness, and striving to improve ourselves without passing judgment on others. Ultimately, the reward and acceptance of our deeds lie in the hands of Allah (SWT), who knows the true intentions behind every action.

Let God do his job and not try to take over his role.

## CONCLUSION

Ramazan acts as a mirror, reflecting the latent spirituality within individuals, akin to detecting life in a cataleptic patient. The crucial question is whether we will endeavor to revive and nurture these spiritual traces or allow them to wither under the weight of our criticism!

Let's reflect and relate the wisdom captured in these lines:

*Abhi Sooraj dooba nahi, zara se shaam to hone do,  
Me khud he laut jawuga, mujey nakaam to hone do!*

The author is an engineer

## Spiritual Rejuvenation During Ramazan

Dr. Tauseef Ahmad Parry

It is a well-known fact that humans, as rational beings, possess a physical body, rational faculty and a soul. For the physical body, we try our best to remain fit and healthy by having a balanced diet, remaining away from unhygienic stuff and unsuitable environments, and taking medicines if we feel unwell. We also do different types of exercises and activities to keep our physical bodies strong. We also take care of our mental health and consult a mental psychologist or psychotherapist if the need arises. The way we protect and care for our physical and mental health, we need to be careful and vigilant about our soul and spiritual elements as well. One such way and means is spiritual rejuvenation, considered as an important aspect of personal growth and development, which involves taking time to connect with oneself and one's soul, whether through prayer, meditation, or other means.

Islam, as the complete way and philosophy of life, provides us with guidelines, means, and methods for being spiritually well grounded and, on occasion, provides us training programs to nourish, nurture, improve and rejuvenate our spirituality. One such means and methods is the fasting in the Ramazan, a blessed month that is not only a month of fasting or a month in which the Quran was revealed but also a month of intense spiritual rejuvenation with a heightened focus on devotion.

In other words, the month of Ramazan, both for Muslim men and women, is a month full of moral lessons and philosophy. It provides ample food for nourishing our spirituality and revitalizing our inner self—through attaining and then endeavoring to maintain piety and righteousness, getting closer to our Creator through acts of self-restraint, and by means of many spiritual exercises. It is a time both for spiritual purification and rejuvenation, rekindling the spiritual spark in our hearts and refreshing our love for our Creator and Sustainer, Almighty Allah.



Fasting helps us to learn the merits of remaining patient, steadfast and determined. We try our utmost not to think or do any evil, but to spend time to think well, to be benevolent to others, and to re-establish a strong connection with Allah.

Among the many blessings of Ramazan are that it helps us to change our attitude towards others—to reaffirm to behave better, to live in kindness and love with others—be they our family members, neighbors, colleagues and indeed strangers.

During the month of Ramazan, not only the intake of food is restricted, but more importantly, it trains all of our physical senses (eyes, ears, tongue, etc.) to stay in control. Ramazan is a time to focus, look at the positive side of life, and eschew the negative. It is also an excellent time to break bad habits, like smoking, speaking ill of others, backbiting, etc.

In short, the month of Ramazan is full of blessings, full of moral teachings, and full of lessons and messages helpful in growing and grooming spiritually.

Let's pray to Almighty Allah to bless us all with the innumerable benefits and blessings of this blessed month, and help us grow physically, intellectually and spiritually.

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## Women Can Help Build A Sustainable Future For The World

By Alisha Moopen

Two hundred and sixty-seven or 267 years — That, according to United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), is the number of years it would take to bring about equality in women's economic empowerment and participation.

Gender equality is listed as a fundamental human right and made part of international human rights law that was adopted by the United Nations in 1948, three years after the end of the Second World War. However, 75 years later, a healthy inclusion of women across all sectors is yet to become a reality.

### NEED FOR A LEVEL PLAYING GROUND

Gender equality is listed as UN's SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) #5 that aims for sustained gender equality, and empowering women and girls. (1). Even today, more than 2 billion women do not enjoy equal employment opportunities. (2)

It is estimated that this will take about a century before the global remuneration gap between genders is closed. In fact, the wage gap is alarming at present - for every \$1 that a man earns, a woman earns just 80 cents. (3)

### WHY RIGHTS OF WOMEN MATTER?

Despite the emphasis on the importance of legislated gender quotas in achieving equality in politics, we need to help open more areas of employment for women, as of today more than 20 per cent of the countries are yet to set aside quotas for women's representation in parliament.

At a micro level, today, nearly every second woman in the world does not have the power to take decisions regarding her own sexual and reproductive health and rights. (UN Sustainable Development Report of 2023)

### INCLUSION A DEFINING DECISION

Inclusion is a non-negotiable prerequisite to pave the way for a



sustainable future. It will ensure a healthier and much more robust business sector which translates to a better and healthier lifestyle for all. A fact pointed out by a report from McKinsey Global Institute which states: if women and men shared identical roles at the workplace, the annual global GDP would increase by a whopping 26 per cent. (4)

According to the report, closer home, if women's participation is fully equal to men's, it could result in an overall gain of \$101 billion. In other words, it would result in a GDP of \$10,985 per person! (5)

It is also becoming increasingly apparent that when women enjoy equality in society, their health improves which has a huge trickle-down effect on every aspect of life. While a healthy woman will raise healthier children and thereby a healthy generation, such women also aspire to have the same education and job opportunities as men, and as mentioned above, more women entering the workplace can positively impact the nation's GDP. A win-win for everyone.

### THE BLUEPRINT FOR INCLUSION

Can we ensure women take an equal chair at the local, regional, national, and global tables for a sustainable future?

One of the first prerequisites is providing women with adequate health care facilities. A recent World Economic Forum study found that women's health and reproductive biology as a scientific

field ranked low on the priority scale at not just educational institutions but also in research and clinical settings.

We also need to ensure that women are literate not just academically but financially as well. This will ensure that they are well-placed to demand and manage—better incomes for the holistic development of the family and thereby society.

Next on the list of priorities is asking all related entities to offer support to women's organizations and businesses to help them grow and diversify. Making them aware of their rights is also as important as financial literacy.

### GENDER EQUALITY AND PEACE

Last but not in the least, at a time when violence and wars are grabbing headlines regularly, it is heartwarming to note that gender equality has been linked to greater peace.

Ensuring women's representation at major if not all decision-making levels—from national to regional and even corporate boardrooms—has been found to have a positive impact in nurturing durable and peaceful environments.

A World Bank blog report found that including women as mediators and signatories to peace deals increased the probability of a lasting deal by up to 35 per cent. Now, who doesn't want a peaceful, sustainable, equitable and prosperous world?

The article was originally published by Khaleej Times





# Australia Call Off T20 Series Against Afghanistan Over Women's Rights

Agencies

**MELBOURNE:** Australia has called off a T20 series against Afghanistan citing a deteriorating human rights situation for women and girls in the Taliban-ruled country, Cricket Australia (CA) said on Tuesday. Australia withdrew from a one-day series scheduled for March last year in the United Arab Emirates after the Taliban imposed strict restrictions on Afghan women, including banning them from attending universities.

The teams were scheduled to play three T20 matches in the UAE in August this year but CA said that after consultations with the Australian government, it had decided to call off the series. "The government's advice is that conditions for women and girls in Afghanistan are getting worse," the cricket board said in a statement.

"For this reason, we have



maintained our previous position and will postpone the bilateral series against Afghanistan." The Afghanistan Cricket Board was not immediately available to comment.

CA added that it would en-

gage with its Afghan counterpart as well as the International Cricket Council to "... determine what actions could be taken to support the resumption of bilateral matches in the future". Afghanistan's women's team

was disbanded and several members fled the country after the country's Taliban takeover in 2021.

Australia also cancelled a one-off test against Afghanistan in Hobart the same year.

## PERTH TO HOST INDIA'S FIRST TEST AGAINST AUSTRALIA IN NOVEMBER: REPORT

Perth is set to host the opening Test of the five-match series during the much-anticipated India's tour of Australia later this year.

According to a report in 'Sydney Morning Herald', Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney have also been picked as the venues for the blockbuster series.

"Adelaide will host the second Test and Brisbane the third, with the Boxing Day and New Year's Tests keeping their traditional time slots in Melbourne and Sydney," the report said.

The Adelaide Test will be a day-night affair.

Cricket Australia is yet to come out with its schedule for the next season but a final announcement is expected by the end of this month.

The series is likely to start in late November this year.

## Short TAKES

### Want To Know How It Feels To Win IPL: Virat Kohli

Star batter Virat Kohli on Tuesday hoped to emulate the Royal Challengers Bengaluru women's WPL winning feat and add the IPL trophy to the team's cabinet in the upcoming edition of the league, starting from March 22.

"That's a dream of mine to know what it feels like winning an IPL trophy. I will be here, be a part of the team that wins the trophy for the first time," said the former captain of RCB.

### SKY To Miss Mumbai Indians' Season Opener In IPL 2024

Star batter Suryakumar Yadav is certain to miss Mumbai Indians' IPL opener against Gujarat Titans on March 24 as he is yet to get fitness clearance from the National Cricket Academy (NCA).

The world No 1 T20 batter Suryakumar has been stationed at the NCA in Bengaluru for his recovery and rehabilitation following a surgery for sports hernia.

Suryakumar had a fitness test at the NCA on Tuesday but PTI understands that the 33-year-old needs "further assessment".

### Hasaranga Suspended By ICC, To Miss Test Series v Bangladesh

All-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga could be available for initial few games for Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League after he was suspended from the upcoming two-Test series against Bangladesh by the ICC, despite coming out of retirement on Tuesday.

The ICC informed that the 26-year-old has 'breached the threshold of eight demerit points, which, pursuant to article 7.6 of the Code, have been converted into four suspension points' in his latest offence during the third ODI.

### Messi Out Of Argentina Friendlies In The US Due To Muscle Injury



Lionel Messi will not play in Argentina's two friendlies in the United States this month due to a right leg muscle injury, the Argentine Football Association said on Monday. The captain was injured last week while playing for his Inter Miami club in the CONCACAF Champions Cup.

The 36-year-old Messi will miss Argentina vs. El Salvador on Friday in Philadelphia and a friendly against Costa Rica four days later in Los Angeles, AFA said in a statement.

### Man United Teenager Kobbie Mainoo Gets First England Call-Up

Manchester United teenager Kobbie Mainoo's swift rise to prominence could yet see the midfielder play for England in high-profile friendlies against Brazil and Belgium in the coming days.

The 18-year-old Mainoo received his first call-up by England on Tuesday, his latest step in a breakthrough season that could yet end with a place in his country's squad for the European Championship in Germany across June and July.

## IPL To Introduce Smart Replay System To Bolster Decision Making

Press Trust of India

**MUMBAI:** A Smart Replay System will be introduced in the upcoming IPL to bolster speed and accuracy in decision making. The TV umpire will get inputs directly from two operators of the Hawk-Eye system who will sit in the same room as him and help with images captured from eight hi-speed cameras placed across the ground, a report in ESPNcricinfo stated.

Under the new system, the role of the TV broadcast director becomes redundant who serves as a 'conduit' between the umpire and the Hawk-Eye operators. The new system will enable the TV umpire to analyse more visuals than before



including split-screen images, and will also broadcast live his interactions with the Hawk-Eye operators so that the viewers have clear understanding of the thought process.

The system will be able to help the umpire with more and clear visuals from different angles when it comes to judging catches near boundary ropes, caught behind, leg-before, stumping or even

those catches which are taken inches off the turf.

The BCCI has recently conducted a two-day workshop here for select umpires as about 15 of them, comprising both Indian and overseas umpires, would work with the Smart Replay System in this IPL. A similar referral system was trialled by the England and Wales Cricket Board in The Hundred competition.

## Sidhu Back In Commentary Box After Decade This IPL

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Set to be back in the commentary box after a decade with the upcoming IPL, flamboyant former India cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu says the glitzy league would help decide the T20 World Cup squad of not just India but also other countries. After a decade-long stint in the unforgiving world of politics, Sidhu and his 'Sidhuisms' will be back on air starting with the IPL, which precedes the T20 World Cup in June.

"The IPL will set the tone for the World Cup. There is no other cricket happening. The eyes of the world are on IPL. This is where you can snatch a berth for the T20 World Cup, not only Indians, even the foreign players," Sidhu told PTI in an inter-



view facilitated by the IPL's official TV broadcaster 'Star Sports'.

In the early years of the IPL, Sidhu provided the X factor to the commentary box and the stupendous success behind the mic made him a prominent face in the entertainment world where he was paid handsomely to appear on a comedy shows.

## Not Even Thinking About CT Going Out Of Pakistan: PCB Chief

Press Trust of India

**KARACHI:** Pakistan Cricket Board chief Mohsin Naqvi says he is not even considering the possibility of next year's Champions Trophy being moved out of his country despite the never-ending speculation surrounding India's participation in the event. Addressing a media conference here on Monday night during the Pakistan Super League final, Naqvi confirmed that he held talks with BCCI secretary Jay Shah on the sidelines of the ICC meetings last week in Dubai.

"Yes we spoke for a while and it was cordial but it would be unwise to divulge details of what was discussed," he said.



Asked if India's reluctance to travel to Pakistan would cause the tournament to be shifted out of Pakistan, Naqvi said, "I am not even thinking on those lines we are confident we will host the Champions Trophy on schedule in Pakistan."

His comments come after an

ICC board member told PTI recently that it will not ask India to defy any government policy that bars travel to Pakistan. Naqvi added that the PCB was also prepared to deal with any situation as the event came closer.

He outlined that three stadiums in Karachi, Lahore and

Rawalpindi, which would host the most Champions Trophy matches, would undergo renovation.

"Even as I speak plans have been drawn up and work will begin soon on these three stadiums to give the fans the best experience of watching the matches at the venues," he added.

India have not engaged in bilateral cricket with Pakistan since the November 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, in which over 150 people were killed. The last time an Indian cricket team travelled to Pakistan was the Asia Cup in June-July of 2008.

Last year's Asia Cup, which was to be held in Pakistan, was ultimately conducted in a hybrid manner with just four games held

here and the rest in Sri Lanka after the Indian team refused to travel.

### PCB SET TO ANNOUNCE REVAMPED SELECTION COMMITTEE

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief Mohsin Naqvi has decided to revamp the national selection committee to give it more independence and authority to appoint the captain and team.

"I don't want to get involved in appointing the captain, team and all that. I will be revamping the national selection committee and will give it more authority and independence to take cricket related decisions," PCB chief Mohsin Naqvi said on Monday during a press conference here.

## An Independent Regulator Will Oversee English Soccer. Here's What Its Powers Will Be

Agencies

**LONDON:** Legislation to establish an independent regulator in English soccer will be introduced on Tuesday in an effort to ensure the financial sustainability of clubs and stop teams from joining breakaway competitions like the European Super League.

The Football Governance Bill, which will underpin the creation of a new regulator which will license clubs in the top five tiers of the English game, was described by British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak as a "historic moment for football fans."

The British government is acting on a recommendation from a fan-led review carried out in the wake of the collapse of two lower-league clubs — Bury and Macclesfield — because of financial mismanagement. It also comes in response to the failed attempts of 12 of Europe's elite clubs, including six from England's Premier League, to set up a European Super League in 2021.

The English clubs quickly shelved the idea after a backlash from fans and the government.

The government said the regulator will be a standalone body — independent of the government and soccer's



authorities — that is "equipped with robust powers revolving around three core objectives: To improve financial sustainability of clubs, ensure financial resilience across the leagues, and to safeguard the heritage of English football."

Under the bill, new owners and directors will face more stringent tests to stop clubs falling into the wrong hands, and face the possibility of being removed from owning clubs if they are found to be unsuitable.

Clubs from the Premier League down to the fifth-tier National League will, for the first time, need a license to compete in elite competitions. That license will require all clubs to meet certain mandatory conditions, such as basic requirements on fan engagement, corporate governance and financial reporting.

Clubs will be required to consult their fans on key off-field decisions, such as club heritage and the club's strategic direction. There will be protection against breakaway competitions and stadium relocations.

The regulator also will have the power to settle an ongoing row over financial distribution between the Premier League and the English Football League — the three divisions be-

low the top-flight. "Backstop powers," as the government has called them, will be confirmed when the bill is introduced to Parliament on Tuesday.

"Football is nothing without its fans," Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer said. "We are determined to put them back at the heart of the game, and ensure clubs as vital community assets continue to thrive."

"The new independent regulator of football will set the game on a sustainable footing, strengthening clubs and the entire football pyramid for generations."

Facing a possible reduction of its powers, the Premier League — the most-watched and most lucrative domestic league in the world — said it will study the bill and work closely with the government, having previously voiced concerns about how a regulator could potentially damage the league's ability to attract investment.

"Mindful that the future growth of the Premier League is not guaranteed," the competition said on Monday, "we remain concerned about any unintended consequences of legislation that could weaken the competitiveness and appeal of English football."