मंजिला में ही जायेगी भटकते ही सही,
गुमराह तो वो है जो घर से निकले ही नहीं...
A dyad of dynasts

The Congress strategic team, said to be the triangular party offices, is a window of opportunity at a time of decline. The Mulayala Sathya Sai Reddy constituency might have tapped into a new constituency.

Sekar power breaks a price barrier

One China check for Donald Trump

Letters to the Editor

Consistency, clarity and flair

An uphill task for Marine Le Pen

Sex offender registries don’t work

From the Archives
Solar power breaks a price barrier

- Solar photovoltaic (SPV) power per kilowatt hour has dropped below 3 to 2.97 in Madhya Pradesh, providing a clear pointer to the future course of renewable energy.
- 750 MW Rewa project over a 25-year period is 3.29, which is less than half the rate at which some State governments signed contracts in recent years.
- The progress of this clean source of energy must be deepened with policy incentives - the most important is the need to connect millions of people without access to electricity.
- A rapid scaling-up of solar capacity is vital also to meet the national goal of installing 100 gigawatts by 2022, a target that is being internationally monitored as part of the country’s pledges under the Paris Agreement on climate change.
- Pollution from large new coal-based power plants can be avoided.
- There is everything to gain by accelerating the pace of growth that essentially began in 2010, with the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission.
- Yet, performance has not matched intent and the target of installing 12 GW solar capacity in 2016-17 is far from attainable.
A glaring lacuna in the national policy on renewables is the failure to tap the investment potential of the middle class.

While grid-connected large-scale installations have received maximum attention, there is slow progress on rooftop solar.

Clearly, adding capacity of the order of more than 10 GW annually over the next six years towards the 100 GW target will require active participation and investment by the buildings sector, both residential and commercial.

This process can be kick-started using mass participation by citizens, with State electricity utilities being given mandatory time frames to introduce net-metering systems with a feed-in tariff that is designed to encourage the average consumer to invest in PV modules.

The experience of Germany, where robust solar expansion has been taking place over the years.

SPV costs are expected to continue to fall, and tariff paid both for large plants and smaller installations require periodic review.

At some point, significant subsidies may no longer be necessary- That scenario, however, is for the future.

Currently, India needs a lot more good quality power, which renewables provide.

Solar power is an emissions-free driver of the economy, generating growth in both direct and indirect employment- A lot of sunlight remains to be tapped. [Q-International Solar Alliance-?]
A solar cell, or photovoltaic cell (previously termed "solar battery"), is an electrical device that converts the energy of light directly into electricity by the photovoltaic effect.

It is a form of photoelectric cell, defined as a device whose electrical characteristics, such as current, voltage, or resistance, vary when exposed to light.

Solar cells are the building blocks of photovoltaic modules, otherwise known as solar panels.
U.S. energy consumption by energy source, 2015

Total = 97.7 quadrillion Btu

- petroleum 36%
- natural gas 29%
- renewable energy 10%
- coal 16%
- nuclear electric power 9%
- hydroelectric 25%
- biomass waste 5%
- biofuels 22%
- wind 19%
- geothermal 2%
- solar 8%

Total = 9.7 quadrillion Btu

Note: Sum of components may not equal 100% because of independent rounding.

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, Monthly Energy Review, Table 13 and 10.1 (April 2016), preliminary data
One China check for Donald Trump

- Donald Trump - One China policy signals a softening of his administration’s approach towards Beijing.
- First, he accepted a congratulatory call from the Taiwanese President, breaking 37 years of American practice and thereby infuriating Beijing.
- Beijing in its trade and currency policies, triggering speculation that he would improve ties with Taiwan and use the policy as a bargaining chip.
- Such speculation was effectively killed last week when Mr. Trump took a 180-degree turn on China in his first telephone conversation with Chinese President Xi Jinping.
- It is not clear what made Mr. Trump change his mind.
- since he accepted the call from the Taiwanese leader, Beijing drew a One China red line for further cooperation on key issues between the two countries.
- It took three weeks for the Trump-Xi conversation to take place after the former took office, a relatively long time given the importance of bilateral ties between the world’s largest economies.
- Mr. Trump had talked to at least 30 world leaders before he got Mr. Xi on the line.
For Beijing, the One China policy is the bedrock of its engagement with the world. Picking a fight with China over an issue it deems most sensitive in its security. It would unnecessarily escalate tensions between the two countries. This doesn’t mean the U.S. should accept Chinese terms on all global issues. There are areas where both can cooperate, such as in dealing with global conflicts; 1)-areas where they compete, such as in trade and investment; 2)-and areas where they disagree, such as the South China Sea dispute. The challenge before Mr. Trump is to address these issues with Beijing without disrupting the existing equilibrium in Sino-U.S. ties.
Sex offender registries don’t work

A sex offender registry is a system in various countries designed to allow government authorities to keep track of the residence and activities of sex offenders, including those who have completed their criminal sentences.

Last month, Minister for Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi once again reiterated the need to set up a national sex offender registry- After a convicted sex offender allegedly confessed to raping hundreds of girls for over 10 years in New Delhi.

These registries are not a novel suggestion.

They have been operational in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and a few other English-speaking countries for more than a decade.

The laws in the U.S. and South Korea go even further- They allow the public to access these records so that the community may be aware of a sex offender in their locality.

This data is generally accessed through websites that will provide you the name, physical description, address, and photo of all the sexual offenders near you.

Ms. Gandhi has vouched for a similar system in India where the public can have access to such records.
Impact on crimes

- While sex offender registration laws and public access to these records create a sense of security to parents and residents.
- Sometimes they create more harm than good—Even in the U.S., where stringent registration laws with public access have been around for over 30 years, several studies arrive at the same conclusion.
- That these registers are simply not reducing sex crimes, however, making them more likely to commit additional sex offences.
- These laws disproportionately result in severe hardships to former offenders—As a consequence of former convicts often find it very difficult to gain meaningful employment and have very limited options in finding housing as many localities are proudly branded as ‘Sex Offender-Free Zones’.
- Several studies find that because of open and free public access to these registries, former convicts often face threat, harassment and violence from other members of the community.
- A troubling aspect of Ms. Gandhi’s suggestion is that she wants to include even juveniles and persons standing on trial for sexual offences to be on the register.
- The proposal to put children on a sex offender register displays a complete lack of understanding of their rights under the Constitution and our international obligations under the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
Framing sexual offences

More importantly, before proposing a sex offender registry it is significant to have a look at how our sexual offences have been framed.

At present, the Protection of Children From Sexual Offences Act, 2012 - sufficient to tell us that most special courts are now barraged with romantic cases instigated through complaints filed by objecting parents. Young adults can face legal consequences.

To effectively tackle the incidence of sexual offences will require a hard look at our own institutional failure in tackling these cases.

A study conducted by the Centre for Child and the Law, NLSIU (2016) on the functioning of children’s courts in Delhi found that 67.5% of victims do not even testify against the accused.

With a poor conviction rate and a majority of cases still pending before courts, how would a register aid in preventing sexual offences by former convicts?

Even in the present case, where the former convict allegedly confessed to raping hundreds of girls over a period of 10 years, we must question why the investigative machinery failed completely.

What happened to the complaints and investigations into these cases assuming that at least some of them registered a complaint? Why did it take a decade for them to nab a dangerous criminal? Where is the institutional set-up and mental health evaluations to deal with violent sex offenders and paedophiles - a person who is sexually attracted to children?

In the background of weak investigative and institutional machinery and overwhelming evidence showing that these sex offenders registries simply don’t work, Ms. Gandhi’s suggestion - seems far-fetched and unrealistic.

Our existing systems that need to be urgently addressed before we jump to formulating new solutions.
The **International Solar Alliance** is an alliance of more than 120 countries, most of them being *sunshine countries*, which come either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.

- The alliance's primary objective is work for efficient exploitation of **solar energy** to reduce dependence on **fossil fuels**.
- This initiative was first proposed by **Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi** in a speech in November 2015 at **Wembley Stadium**, in which he referred to sunshine countries as *suryaputra* ("sons of the sun").
- The alliance is a **treaty-based inter-governmental organization**.
- The initiative was launched by Modi at the India Africa Summit, and a meeting of member countries ahead of the **2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference** in Paris in November 2015.
- The **Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance** opened for signatures in **Marrakech, Morocco** in November 2016, and 121 countries have joined.