Rain continues to pound North India, toll rises to 25

300 people, including tourists, stranded in Lahaul-Spiti and Kullu districts of Himachal Pradesh; extensive damage to highways, power stations, water supply systems; PM speaks to CM Sukhu

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

Relentless rain continued to pound most parts of Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh for the third consecutive day on Monday, putting life out of gear.

The rain across the northern parts of the country has led to landslips and flash floods in the region.

Seventeen people died in Himachal Pradesh in rain-related incidents in the past three days, while six deaths were reported in Haryana and two in Punjab.

Heavy damage

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said roads, transformers, electric sub-stations and water supply schemes suffered extensive damage in the State. "As per an initial estimate, the loss could be in the range of ₹3,000 crore-₹4,000 crore," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Mr. Sukhu over telephone and inquired about the extent of damage caused to life and property. Mr. Modi also called Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami to inquire about the situation in the State.

Spate on street: The scene at a residential area at Thunag in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh following flash floods. PTI

Mr. Sukhu said efforts were under way to evacuate around 300 people, including tourists and residents, stranded in Lahaul-Spiti and Kullu districts by using helicopters once the weather permitted.

He said the 'Shrikhand Mahadev Yatra' had been halted for the rest of the season due to six deaths reported during the pilgrimage.

Rescue operations on

In Mandi district's Nagwain, six people who were stranded were safely evacuated on Sunday night, while 29 people trapped in Manali's potato ground were rescued around 8 a.m. The Mandi administration got 113 houses evacuated in the wake of a flood-like situation in the Beas. About 200 tourists are stranded near Chandertal Lake in Lahaul and Spiti district, and efforts are under way to rescue them. An operation has been launched to trace eight missing local people at Lohardi in the Baijnath area of Kangra district.

Heavy rain that triggered landslips has left hundreds stranded as several roads, including National Highways, have been damaged, adversely impacting vehicular movement in Himachal Pradesh.

The incessant rain has left Sutlej, Ravi and Beas rivers, flowing through Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana, in spate.

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Rain continues to batter North India, toll up to 25

In Haryana, Yamuna and Ghaggar are flowing close to the danger mark. Flood-like conditions and water logging have been reported following continuous rain in several places in Punjab, including Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar (Mohali), Anandpur Sahib, Pathankot, Roopnagar, Nawanshahr and Fathegarh Sahib districts. Several roads, railway tracks, and farmland have been inundated following rains.

As Punjab and Haryana sought help from the Army, the flood relief columns of Western Command were mobilised to assist the civil administration in rescue and evacuation efforts in flood-affected areas. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar convened a meeting of senior officials to review the situation. Authorities had ordered the closure of schools in some affected areas.

The meteorological department issued a red alert for "extremely heavy" rain in Himachal on Monday. Officials said rail operations on the Shimla-Kalka route have been suspended till Tuesday as landslips blocked the track at several places. Educational institutions were ordered to remain shut on Monday and Tuesday. The State has so far witnessed a loss of 72 human lives owing to rain-related incidents.

Streets across the northern States, including Punjab, Delhi and Uttarakhand, were flooded. In some areas, rescue personnel used rubber rafts to rescue people stranded inside their homes, local media said. "Please stay inside your homes because more heavy rain is expected in the next 24 hours," Mr. Sukhu said on social media.

(With inputs from agencies)

Import of urea may ease by 2025, alternative forms will replace it, says Mandaviya

A.M. Jigeesh
NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers Manukh Mandaviya says a special package estimated at ₹3.7 lakh crore for farmers have to be brought in as the use of fertilizers has become unbalanced in the country. Talking to *The Hindu*, he said the nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium ratio should have been 4:2:1, instead it is 8:3:1 in the country now.

"The balance of the soil has been damaged and production has become saturated as a result. Soil health, human health, animal health, and environmental health are connected with one another. To promote one health package, we brought this scheme," he said.

Mr. Mandaviya, however, said the Centre is in no hurry to shift to natural farming. "Overuse of fertilizers, according to a study, resulted in a 16% decrease in production in Punjab despite a 10% increase in the use of fertilizers in the State during the same period. This is leading to the deterioration of soil health over a period of time. It is clear that balanced use of fertilizers is needed for steady production, food security, and for helping farmers too," the Minister said.


Mansukh Mandaviya

He mentioned that there is no move to stop the consumption of chemical fertilizers completely.

"The country is moving towards natural farming and organic farming, step by step. We cannot go to organic farming suddenly which could lead to a Sri Lanka-like situation. Our attempt is to end import dependence on urea by 2025 and replace it with nano urea and other alternative forms of urea," Mr. Mandaviya said. Nano urea too will not fully replace conventional urea, he added.

"Awareness has to be built among farmers about nano urea and they will start using it. Farmers had not accepted chemical fertilizers too very soon. Nano urea was approved after all scientific studies by several governmental institutions and departments. It will not harm soil health. A 500-ml bottle of nano urea will replace one bag of 45 kilograms of urea. It will reduce the transportation costs as well. Farmers will happily accept nano urea," Mr. Mandaviya said.

Adding, the country cannot compromise on food security, and farmers' income should also not come down.

How urban India is reclaiming spaces for its communities

From open-air auditoriums to roadside parks, cities are repurposing vacant, unused or underused spaces to promote recreation and social interaction

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

A café on the terrace of a prominent hospital in Maharashtra's Pimpri-Chinchwad, an anganwadi under a flyover in Gujarat's Vadodara, and a children's park in place of a dumpyard in a slum colony in Telangana's Greater Warangal.

With India's growing urban population in need of open spaces, these are just a few examples of how vacant, unused or underused spaces are being reclaimed for the benefit of communities.

This approach that prioritises people over infrastructure is called placemaking. It aims to create public spaces that are more than just utilitarian, and promote social interaction.

In Pimpri-Chinchwad, 'Sudharshan Chowk' was a 2,200 sq m concrete stretch covering a four-lane subway that was used mostly as an unauthorised car park. With community participation, it was turned into an "8 to 80" park dedicated to the young and the elderly in just 75 hours. "People have started moving around and even come here for small celebrations with family and friends," says Prasanna Desai, an architect involved in designing the park.

In Nagaland's capital Kohima, Forest Colony was a small patch of land where people disposed of garbage. Now, it is a 950 sq m roadside park that serves as a meeting point for citizens. "A team from Kohima Smart Cities Mission suggested child-friendly initiatives like a sand pit and swings. The community took over and now we have a sitting area, a playpen and a mini stage where amateur artists perform in the evenings," says Avelu Ruho, a city official.

Green haven: People walk through a garden created in 2016 under Nanalal D. Mehta flyover in Mumbai's Matunga area. FILE PHOTO

Stirred to action

The initiative is part of a special project of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs under its Smart Cities Mission. It is mostly implemented through urban local bodies, communities and MLAs and corporators. According to the Ministry, 34% of India's population lives in cities. In 2021, it was ₹498.17 crore.

With 50% of the country's population living in inadequate housing, the need for open spaces for urban communities was felt strongly when people were confined to their homes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We saw streets across the world being reclaimed for outdoor dining and recreation. In India, we realised the value of having small public spaces close to homes for better physical and mental well-being," Jeenal Sawla, principal adviser at Smart Cities Mission and one of the anchors of the project, told *The Hindu*.

200 projects, 55 cities

Over 200 projects, covering approximately 2.75 lakh sq m, have been completed so far in more than 55 Indian cities.

The first placemaking marathon was launched in October 2021, with cities asked to suggest places that could be repurposed. Trial projects were identified in 14 cities and the turnaround time was as less as 75 hours. They involved upgradation of parks, restoration of waterbodies, construction of plazas and creation of outdoor spaces in primary health centres and anganwadis.

In a primary health centre for child vaccination in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, an outdoor play and sitting area was created. In Rourkela district of Odisha, a local pond was revived and the area around it was turned into a picnic spot.

Funding for the projects comes from various sources, including municipalities, the Smart Cities Mission corpus, NGOs, the Women and Child Development Department, and even local politicians.

"Local politicians have often approached us offering funds to take up projects that benefit voters in their areas," said a senior official in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Forest Dept. steps up vigil around national park in the Nilgiris to curb poaching

Rohan Premkumar
UDHAGAMANDALAM

Following the arrest of a gang of poachers from North India in the Nilgiris forest division a few months ago, the Tamil Nadu Forest Department has initiated a number of steps to bridge the gaps in surveillance in densely-forested regions of the district.

'Grey areas'

The gang was arrested in February and charged with poaching a tiger and a leopard near Avalanche in the Nilgiris forest division.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, S. Gowtham, District Forest Officer (Nilgiris division), said that prior to the incident, there had been no established system of anti-poaching operations in the region where the poachers operated, which was one of several "grey areas" in six ranges surrounding the Mukurthi National Park (MNP).

"In order to address these gaps in surveillance, additional protection watchers have been recruited to take part in anti-poaching operations in Kundah, Korakundah, Udhagai South, Parsons Valley, Pykara and Naduvattam," Mr. Gowtham said.

To address gaps in surveillance, additional staff have been recruited to take part in anti-poaching operations in Kundah, Korakundah, Udhagai South, Parsons Valley, Pykara and Naduvattam.

These regions were "grey areas" as they contained dense forests with poor coverage of the Forest Department's surveillance to check poaching, and were also located along inter-State boundaries, which could allow the entry of poachers from surrounding regions.

In addition to the sanctioned anti-poaching watchers (APWs), 15 APWs had been posted in different parts of the division, Mr. Gowtham said. They will conduct regular patrols, and will also stay in anti-poaching watcher camps regularly to monitor illegal entry into the forests.

Outreach effort

As the gang of poachers from other States had pretended to be blanket sellers to gain intelligence on the location of the tigers, the Forest Department has also reached out to the managers of private estates in the region to keep tabs on the migrant workers they employ.

To spread the word that hunting wild game will not be tolerated, the Forest Department has begun clamping down on people hunting small game such as jungle fowl and wild boar, with cases being registered in Coonoor and Kotagiri.

"We are trying to emphasise that firm action will be taken against poaching, so that people who begin poaching small game do not have the sense of impunity to begin hunting larger animals," Mr. Gowtham said.

Second moonshot

Chandrayaan-3 speaks to moon's rising importance in scientific, political milieus

At 2.35 p.m. Indian Standard Time on July 14, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) plans to launch the Chandrayaan-3 mission to the moon onboard a Launch Vehicle Mark 3 from Sriharikota. Chandrayaan-3 is largely a replica of its predecessor, Chandrayaan-2, that was launched in July 2019 in the form of an orbiter and a lander ('Vikram') bearing a rover ('Pragyan'). While the orbiter entered into orbit around the moon, the surface mission failed in September when the lander crashed instead of executing a slow descent. ISRO later identified a problem in the guidance software and unexpected dispersion in the propulsion system during certain phases of the descent. In Chandrayaan-3, the rocket will place the payload in an elliptical orbit around the earth, where a propulsion module will take over and pilot the lander to a circular orbit around the moon. Finally, the lander will detach and begin a series of manoeuvres culminating in a gradual landing (on August 23-24 this year) over the surface. To improve the chances of success at this stage, ISRO has strengthened the lander's legs, lowered its minimum thrust, enhanced the availability of power, and upgraded the landing sequence.

This will be India's second attempt to soft-land a lander and rover on the lunar surface, and demonstrate end-to-end capability in the relevant technologies. Soft-landing on the moon is a complicated exercise and the possibility of failure exists, even if it may be lower – yet there is good reason to focus on the consequences of a complete success. The mission will play out with India's decision to join the Artemis Accords in the backdrop; in this group, if the mission succeeds, the country will be just the second to have soft-landed a rover on the moon. The importance of this feat cannot be overstated: a slew of public and private moon-landing missions is in the works worldwide as the establishment of permanent bases on the natural satellite has emerged as a major geopolitical goal. The Accords define the U.S.-led axis while China and Russia are working on an 'International Lunar Research Station'. The success of Chandrayaan-3 will also make it the surface mission closest to the lunar south pole to date, a region of the moon that has been found to be geologically unique and host to spots in permanent shadow. To study these and other features, the mission has six scientific payloads. A seventh instrument, on the propulsion module, will profile the signs of life on earth to help scientists look for similar signs on planets beyond the solar system. Taken together, Chandrayaan-3 offers opportunities for India to lead the world's response to the moon's growing importance in the scientific and the political milieus.

The strange particle that holds the key to 'quantum supercomputers'

Majorana zero modes can be used to realise a powerful form of computing called topological quantum-computing. They can work as qubits and won't easily lose the information vested with them. Such a computer could also take advantage of peculiar mathematical rules called non-Abelian statistics

Vasudevan Mukunth

In a paper published on June 21, researchers at Microsoft announced that they had figured out a way to create a strange kind of particle that could potentially revolutionise quantum computing.

These particles are called Majorana zero modes, whose unique properties could help build quantum computers that are less fragile, and more computationally robust, than they are today.

What does 'Majorana' mean?

All subatomic particles that make up matter are called fermions.

In 1928, the British physicist Paul Dirac wanted to understand how quantum mechanics would change if it accommodated the special theory of relativity as well. The result was the Dirac equation, which described the behaviour of subatomic particles that moved at near the speed of light.

Dirac noticed that the equation predicted the existence of an antiparticle for each particle, such that if the two meet, they annihilate each other. Based on his prediction, scientists found the first antiparticle, the positron (the anti-electron), in 1932.In 1937, the Italian physicist Ettore Majorana found that the Dirac equation also allowed particles that satisfied certain conditions to be their own antiparticles. In his honour, fermions that are their own antiparticles are called Majorana fermions.

What is a Majorana zero mode?

All particles have four quantum numbers associated with them. No two particles in the same system can have the same four quantum numbers. The numbers are together like each particle's ID.

The characteristic feature of fermions is that one of these numbers, called the quantum spin, has only half-integer values, like 1/2, 3/2, 5/2, etc. This is why any particle, even two particles bound to each other in some way, can be a fermion: the total quantum spin needs to have a half-integer value.

Most of the rules that apply to single fermions also apply to these pairs, or bound states. When these bound states are their own antiparticles - i.e. if they meet, they annihilate each other - they are Majorana fermions. Physicists call such bound states *Majorana zero modes*, and have been looking for them for at least two decades.

Benefit to quantum-computing

Majorana zero modes can be used to realise a powerful form of computing called topological quantum-computing.

A quantum computer today can use individual electrons as qubits - its fundamental units of information. Information can be encoded in some property of each electron, like its spin. Then, the computer manipulates that information by having the electrons interact with each other according to the quirky rules of quantum mechanics.

These quirks are what make quantum computers better than classical computers: they allow the computers to access computational techniques and pathways not available to systems that are limited to the possibilities of classical physics. For example, a qubit can have the values 0 and 1 at the same time thanks to a property called quantum superposition. But a semiconductor in a classical computer can have only one value at a time, 0 or 1.

On the flip side, quantum computers are very fragile. Tap your fingers on a table on which there's a computer and it could lose its quantummy abilities. That is, it could *decohere*.

Now, say we have a Majorana zero mode that's an electron and a hole. A hole is a point where there could be an electron but isn't. It effectively has a positive charge. We can build a quantum computer whose qubit is such a Majorana zero mode. That is, we encode information onto some property of the mode.

The zero mode is composed of two entities (electron and hole), so say we pull the entities apart and keep them at a distance from each other. In this configuration, physicists have found that even if one of the entities is disturbed, the overall qubit doesn't decohere, and continues to protect the encoded information. In principle, if there is no overlap between the two 'half-particles', such a qubit can exist forever, Indian Institute of Science associate professor Anindya Das told this writer.

What does 'topological' mean?

The information is protected thanks to *topological degeneracy*.

Degeneracy in quantum mechanics means that the system has multiple states at the same energy. In topological systems, the system has multiple states at the lowest or ground state energy.

That is, the quantum system can exist in two (or more) possible states at its lowest energy. This is usually not possible: in its ground state - i.e. when a system has the least amount of energy - it will have a particular configuration and will exist in a particular state.

If a system can exist in two possible states, or configurations, at its ground state, then the information encoded in that energy level can be recovered from one state or the other. 'Topological degeneracy' refers to a special case. Topology is the study of those properties of matter that don't change when it undergoes *continuous deformation* - i.e. when it's stretched, folded, twisted, etc., but not ruptured or glued to itself.

The first big challenge today is to create Majorana zero modes in a system. A popular example of a system that could give rise to them is a structure called a topological superconductor

For example, a rubber band that's continuously deformed will continue to have one hole. A pair of shorts that's continuously deformed will always have three holes. This is why a rubber band (no matter how big) can't seamlessly transform into a pair of shorts. It will need to undergo a discontinuous deformation. That is, the rubber band and the shorts are in topologically different states.

If they are also topologically degenerate, the rubber band and the shorts would be two possible states of the same system in its ground state. So the information can be stored between different topological properties, such as in the number of holes each state contains.

In effect, Majorana zero modes can work as qubits and they won't easily lose the information vested with them. This is why people building quantum computers are interested in finding them.

What are the advantages?

A quantum computer based on Majorana zero modes could be interesting in other ways, too. For example, it can take advantage of the peculiar mathematical rules that describe the behaviour of Majorana zero modes, called *non-Abelian statistics*. In these rules, changing the order of steps in which you perform a task changes the task's outcomes.For example, say you have an algorithm that performs a series of steps in the order A-B-C-D. If the algorithm played by the rules of non-Abelian statistics, A-C-B-D would give a different result from A-D-B-C. So algorithms running on a quantum computer using non-Abelian statistics will have one more degree of freedom than those running on a computer that doesn't.

Majorana zero modes

The first big challenge today is to create Majorana zero modes in a system. A popular example of a system that could give rise to them is a structure called a topological superconductor.To be a Majorana zero mode, any bound state should obey the Dirac equation and should be its own antiparticle. A topological superconductor is built to allow particles to meet these conditions.

It consists of a semiconductor in the form of a nanowire, with a superconducting sheath wrapped around it. The sheath covers a part of the nanowire. At one end, the nanowire is connected to a small junction through which electrons are fed into it. A magnetic field is applied over the materials to complete the setup. Here, Majorana zero modes are expected to exist at the ends of the nanowire, due to the interactions between the materials' electronic structures.

In a 2021 study, researchers created this setup but couldn't find Majorana zero modes. They found that the junction where the electrons entered the nanowire was the problem. Another paper, also published in 2021, claimed to have found Majorana zero modes, only to be retracted after mistakes were found in its data.These are just two examples from a panoply of studies. Scientists have also come up with other ways to realise Majorana zero modes. But they are yet to be observed.

Apart from creating these 'particles', confirming that they are there is also tricky: they need to be inferred indirectly, from their effects on the surrounding material. One way was thought to be the presence of a zero-bias conductance peak - the ability of an electric current to flow very easily in the absence of a voltage, while controlling for some parameters. But studies later found that such a peak wouldn't be caused by Majorana zero modes alone, that they could be caused by other phenomena as well.

This left the field in a mess, Dr. Das said.

What has Microsoft found?

In the new study, published on June 21, researchers from Microsoft reported engineering a topological superconductor made of an aluminium superconductor and an indium arsenide semiconductor.

They have said that this device was able to pass a "stringent protocol", based on measurements and simulations, that indicated with a "high probability" that it hosted Majorana zero modes. The protocol is called the topological gap protocol. According to the researchers, passing this protocol as well as observing the conductance peak is a smoking gun for Majorana zero modes.

According to Dr. Das, while topological quantum computing remains the ultimate goal, the existence of Majorana fermions hasn't been settled yet. The result will need to be independently confirmed. Nonetheless, several news outlets reported that Microsoft had taken an important step towards a "quantum supercomputer".

For example, *TechCrunch* quoted Microsoft's VP of advanced quantum development saying "the company believes that it will take fewer than 10 years to build a quantum supercomputer using these qubits that will be able to perform a reliable one million quantum operations per second." Dr. Das's estimate of the timeline for such a device was at least a century.

The paper itself concluded thus: "Continued improvement in simulation, growth, fabrication, and measurement capabilities will be required to achieve the topological gap required for ... coherent operations."

Quiz buffs, we're sorry for skipping the quiz today. Instead, check out the one for 'World Population Day' on Text & Context.

The Global South: origins and significance

The term "Global South" is not geographical. Rather, its usage denotes a mix of political, geopolitical and economic commonalities between nations

EXPLAINER

Jorge Heine

The unwillingness of many leading countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to stand with NATO over the war in Ukraine has brought to the fore once again the term "Global South."

"Why does so much of the Global South support Russia?" inquired one recent headline; "Ukraine courts 'Global South' in push to challenge Russia," declared another.

But what is meant by that term, and why has it gained currency in recent years? The Global South refers to various countries around the world that are sometimes described as 'developing', 'less developed' or 'underdeveloped'. Many of these countries – although by no means all – are in the Southern Hemisphere, largely in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In general, they are poorer, have higher levels of income inequality and suffer lower life expectancy and harsher living conditions than countries in the "Global North" – that is, richer nations that are located mostly in North America and Europe, with some additions in Oceania and elsewhere.

ISTOCKPHOTO

Going beyond the 'Third World'

The term Global South appears to have been first used in 1969 by political activist Carl Oglesby. Writing in the liberal Catholic magazine *Commonweal*, Oglesby argued that the war in Vietnam was the culmination of a history of northern "dominance over the global south."

But it was only after the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union – which marked the end of the so-called "Second World" – that the term gained momentum. Until then, the more common term for developing nations – countries that had yet to industrialise fully – was 'Third World'. That term was coined by Alfred Sauvy in 1952, in an analogy with France's historical three estates: the nobility, the clergy and the bourgeoisie. The term 'First World' referred to the advanced capitalist nations; the 'Second World', to the socialist nations led by the Soviet Union; and the 'Third World', to developing nations, many at the time still under the colonial yoke.

Sociologist Peter Worsley's 1964 book, *The Third World: A Vital New Force in International Affairs*, further popularised the term. The book also made note of the 'Third World' forming the backbone of the non-aligned movement, which had been founded just three years earlier as a riposte to bipolar Cold War alignment.

Though Worsley's view of this 'Third World' was positive, the term became associated with countries plagued by poverty, squalor and instability. 'Third World' became a synonym for banana republics ruled by tinpot dictators – a caricature spread by Western media.

The fall of the Soviet Union – and with it the end of the so-called Second World – gave a convenient pretext for the term 'Third World' to disappear, too. Usage of the term fell rapidly in the 1990s.

Meanwhile 'developed', 'developing' and 'underdeveloped' also faced criticism for holding up Western countries as the ideal, while portraying those outside that club as backwards. Increasingly the term that was being used to replace them was the more neutral-sounding "Global South."

Geopolitical, not geographical

The term 'Global South' is not geographical. In fact, the Global South's two largest countries – China and India – lie entirely in the Northern Hemisphere.

Rather, its usage denotes a mix of political, geopolitical and economic commonalities between nations.

Countries in the Global South were mostly at the receiving end of imperialism and colonial rule, with African countries as perhaps the most visible example of this. It gives them a very different outlook on what dependency theorists have described as the relationship between the centre and periphery in the world political economy – or, to put it in simple terms, the relationship between "the West and the rest."

Given the imbalanced past relationship between many of the countries of the Global South and the Global North – both during the age of empire and the Cold War – it is little wonder that today many opt not to be aligned with any one great power. And whereas the terms 'Third World' and 'underdeveloped' convey images of economic powerlessness, that isn't true of the "Global South."

Since the turn of the 21st century, a "shift in wealth," as the World Bank has referred to it, from the North Atlantic to Asia Pacific has upended much of the conventional wisdom on where the world's riches are being generated.

By 2030 it is projected that three of the four largest economies will be from the Global South – with the order being China, India, the U.S. and Indonesia. Already the GDP in terms of purchasing power of the the Global South-dominated BRICS nations – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – surpasses that of the Global North's G-7 club. And there are now more billionaires in Beijing than in New York City.

Global South on the march

This economic shift has gone hand in hand with enhanced political visibility. Countries in the Global South are increasingly asserting themselves on the global scene – be it China's brokering of Iran and Saudi Arabia's rapprochement or Brazil's attempt to push a peace plan to end the war in Ukraine. This shift in economic and political power has led experts in geopolitics like Parag Khanna and Kishore Mahbubani to write about the coming of an "Asian Century." Others, like political scientist Oliver Stuenkel, have began talking about a "post-Western world." One thing is for sure: the Global South is flexing political and economic muscles that the 'developing countries' and the 'Third World' never had.

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