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SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

[White House Chief of Staff] Reince [Priebus]: Please, sir, no tweeting for a while. Trump: Got it. Reince: Ok, I'm just going to tie my shoe...

STEPHEN COLBERT

American comedian and host of *The Late Show* on CBS; 13.3 million followers on Twitter



PAPER CLIP

FLAGGING INTERESTING RESEARCH

TEXTILE ENGINEERING MOISTURE-RESPONSE

Published in *Science Advances* on May 19, 2017

AUTHORS: Wen Wang, Lining Yao and Others

Workout suit that breathes as body gets warm, sweats



Fabric uses live cells. *Hannah Cohen*

A TEAM of MIT researchers has designed a breathable workout suit with ventilating flaps that open and close in response to an athlete's body heat and sweat. These flaps, which range from thumbnail- to finger-sized, are lined with live microbial cells that shrink and expand in response to changes in humidity. The cells act as tiny sensors and actuators, driving the flaps to open when an athlete works up a sweat, and pulling them closed when the body has cooled off.

Why use live cells in responsive fabrics? The researchers say that moisture-sensitive cells require no additional elements to sense and respond to humidity. The microbial cells they have used are also proven to be safe to touch and even consume. What's more, with new genetic engineering tools available today, cells can be prepared quickly and in vast quantities, to express multiple functionalities in addition to moisture response.

"We can combine our cells with genetic tools to introduce other functionalities into these living cells," says Wen Wang, the paper's lead author and a former research scientist in MIT's Media Lab and Department of Chemical Engineering. "We use fluorescence as an example, and this can let people know you are running in the dark. In the future we can combine odour-releasing functionalities through genetic engineering. So maybe after going to the gym, the shirt can release a nice-smelling odour."

In nature, biologists have observed that living things and their components, from pine cone scales to microbial cells and even specific proteins, can change their structures or volumes when there is a change in humidity. The MIT team hypothesised that natural shape-shifters such as yeast, bacteria, and other microbial cells might be used as building blocks to construct moisture-responsive fabrics.

EXCERPTED FROM MIT NEWS

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP

China-Pakistan, bhai-bhai

The countries describe their friendship as being 'higher than the mountains, deeper than the oceans, sweeter than honey'. To this, CPEC might well add, 'stronger than steel'. It's a relationship that has endured nearly 7 decades of changes in geopolitical and strategic interests. It's a layered, complex story — in which considerations about India have often played a dominant role.



IN FACT
BY NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN

EXPRESS EDITORS INTERPRET

ON THE night of July 12, 2007, hours after Pakistani commandos stormed Lal Masjid, the mosque in the heart of Islamabad that had become a militant stronghold, General Pervez Musharraf, then both President and Army Chief, made a sombre television address. He explained why the operation that killed 103 people inside the mosque had become necessary. His speech contained a valuable insight into the Pakistan-China relationship, and how the two countries conducted it.

"The worst example [of the extremist takeover of Lal Masjid] is that 7 nationals of our friendly country China were abducted," Musharraf said. "This shameful incident happened to the people who belonged to our best friend, who always supported us, stood by us in troubled times and also helped us in economic, trades and defence fields. To hold hostage Chinese nationals was a very shameful act. The Chinese President called me over the telephone and asked me to ensure security of its citizens. So, in my mind this is extremely shameful for our country and citizens... If [Chinese] citizens are not secure in a country, for which they did a lot and [are] still doing, [it] is so regrettable for us."

China did not make a public spectacle over the hostage crisis, it preferred to quietly work the phones instead. Among the militants holed up in Lal Masjid were Uighurs, fighting the Chinese state in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, but Beijing made no public demand that Pakistan act against them. Later, Chinese officials flatly denied having forced Musharraf's hand in the decision to storm the mosque.

Imagining how the United States might have responded in the same situation helps understand better how Pakistan and China view their relationship, and the rules of their engagement.



Pakistan-China is the only bilateral relationship, other than with Saudi Arabia perhaps, in which Pakistan is happy to play the junior partner. Islamabad, which is wont to cast ties with China emotionally, describes the friendship as one that has no parallel in the world. "Higher than the mountains, deeper than the oceans" is the usual description for it from both sides — but how they have built this "all-weather" (and all terrain) relationship is a layered story of several highs and lows. And through all of it, India has been the dominant theme.

Pakistan was among the earliest non-communist countries (India was the first) to recognise the People's Republic of China. But while the two established diplomatic relations in 1951, Pakistan's eager membership of the two United States-led anti-communist military pacts, SEATO and CENTO, soon afterwards, was not the perfect starting point for their relationship in the same decade in which India and China celebrated *Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai*.

It was only after India's defeat in the war with China in 1962 that the Pakistan-China relationship really took off. If Beijing had by then identified Pakistan as a country through which it could contain India, home since 1959 to the "splittist" Dalai Lama, China's



(Top) Hoardings in Islamabad of Presidents Xi Jinping and Mamnoon Hussain, and PM Nawaz Sharif. Though Nehru, seen in Beijing with Chairman Mao in 1954, enthusiastically embraced China, it was the relationship with Pakistan that the Chinese quickly came to value much more. The Chashma nuclear power plant (above left) was built with Chinese help. AP/MEA/IAEA

tacit support for Pakistan in the 1965 war was a turning point — the beginning of their enduring defence and, some would say, nuclear, cooperation.

While there is much speculation about the Chinese role in the development of Pakistan's nuclear bomb, in 2016, China acknowledged assistance to Pakistan in building 6 nuclear reactors. Two of these, at Chashma, were declared at the time it joined the Nuclear Suppliers' Group in 2004, and China was allowed to "grandfather" them as part of an agreement that predated its membership of the elite group; since then it has helped Pakistan build 2 more reactors at Chashma, and has declared assistance for another 2 at Karachi, despite protests at NSG.

China, which last year vetoed India's membership to the NSG, did not oppose India's civilian nuclear deal with the US, but has on occasion argued for the same kind of nuclear exceptionalism to Pakistan, which the US allowed for India.



Despite the money and military hardware the US pumped into Pakistan over the years, Pakistanis see China as a far more reliable ally. They see the US as using their country to achieve strategic goals in the region, and ditching it at will, constantly asking it to do "more", and publicly humiliating Pakistan over its "terror factories".

China, on the other hand, provides Pakistan the security of constant backing by

a big power, while Islamabad acts as its unquestioning ally at a strategic crossroads of Asia. Indeed the idea of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) — India's primary objection to China's staggeringly ambitious Belt and Road Initiative — did not come about overnight. The first bit of brickwork was perhaps laid by the Sino-Pak agreement of 1963, under which China ceded 1,942 sq km to Pakistan, and Pakistan recognised Chinese sovereignty over thousands of square kilometres in northern Kashmir and Ladakh. India contests the agreement, which includes land that is part of Jammu & Kashmir.

Possibly the first person to articulate the idea of a "trade and energy corridor" from Gwadar overland into China, was Musharraf. The Pakistan-China relationship, he was arguing, should be about more than simply providing an easy market for Chinese goods. At the time, China was sinking money in Gwadar port, but many dismissed much greater Chinese involvement in Pakistan's economy (other than in defence production) as a pie in the sky because of Pakistan's security situation. The CPEC, with its energy, finance, information technology and commu-

nications components, along with security and political dimensions, is an upgrade many times over of that basic idea of Pakistan offering its strategic location in exchange for investment.



Pakistan's great moment in international diplomacy came when it facilitated Henry Kissinger's secret ice-breaking visit to China in 1971, laying the ground for a visit by President Richard Nixon the following year. It went on to also act as the bridge between China and the Arab world, starting with Saudi Arabia.

But through the years, Pakistan has also learnt not to take China for granted. It suffered a stunning blow in 1971, months after it had helped the US and China find each other again, when contrary to expectations of both Pakistan and the US, and to the dismay of both, China kept out of the war that led to the birth of Bangladesh.

Pakistan also watched with worry as India and China re-established diplomatic relations in 1978 after a long hiatus. Through the 1980s and '90s, as India-China relations improved through trade even as they talked on the boundary dispute, the Chinese leadership's firm casting of Kashmir as a bilateral dispute was a bitter pill for Pakistan.

China has held on to this position, reiterating it time and again, including after its ambassador to Pakistan suggested last year that his country supports Islamabad on the

SUGGESTED READING
■ *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics*, by Andrew Small

Kashmir issue.

China also refused to offer nuclear guarantees to Pakistan after India's 1998 nuclear tests, which Beijing condemned in harsh language, and dismissed contemptuously India's position that its nuclearisation was to counter the threat from China. When Pakistan tested its own devices, China expressed "deep regret".

During the Kargil conflict, China refused to give Pakistan any overt lift.

Seeking to balance its growing relations with India, China signed a Treaty of Peace, Co-operation and Friendship with Pakistan in 2005 during the visit of Premier Wen Jiabao, which one former Pakistani ambassador to China described as "a legal framework that has converted an old friendship into marriage".



Andrew Small, author of *The China-Pakistan Axis*, contends it was China that kindled Pakistan's interest in the use of proxies against India, quoting from a meeting between Zhou Enlai and Ayub Khan, at which the Chinese Premier urged Pakistan to take up guerrilla warfare. He also cites China's own use of proxies in the Northeast, and how Pakistan, when it still had the eastern wing, collaborated with the Chinese on building these up. China also supplied arms and ammunition to Pakistan and US-backed *mujahideen* against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Where it comes to protecting its interests, Beijing has drawn a red line on Islamist irregulars such as the East Turkestan Independence Movement, which it has held responsible for terror attacks in Xinjiang. But as was evident from the Lal Masjid episode, it does not publicly denounce Pakistan for Uighur safe havens in north Waziristan or Afghanistan.

In the wave of international condemnation after the Mumbai attacks of 2008, China was unsympathetic to Pakistan, lifting its technical hold on the Security Council 1267 designation of Jamaat-ud-dawa and its chief, Hafiz Saeed. But it has refused to do this in the case of Jaish-e-Muhammad founder Masood Azhar.

In India, each Chinese rap on the knuckle for Pakistan, or each episode of Chinese protection for its client, tends to be viewed as representative of the whole of their relationship. In reality, the China-Pakistan relationship is greater than the sum of these parts, one that has endured nearly 7 decades of changes in the geopolitical and strategic interests of both countries.



In recent weeks, an advertisement for a famous Pakistani *masala* brand was viral on social media. It showed a Chinese couple in Karachi, the husband telling the depressed-looking wife that she should try and make friends in the neighbourhood. The wife then makes a *biryani* using the said masala, and takes it across to the neighbours', where she is received like a long lost family member. The ad isn't inaccurate in depicting Pakistanis as being emotional about their relationship with China.

Most countries in South Asia and beyond now view ties with China as a strategic necessity, but remain distrustful of the Asian superpower. In Sri Lanka and Myanmar, people are putting tough questions to their governments on deals that seem to benefit the Chinese more. Never so in Pakistan. Despite the obvious absence of cultural bonds, it is only in Pakistan that there is so much people love for China. When Premier Wen Jiabao arrived in Islamabad in 2005, such was the "people's" welcome that he was moved to add "sweeter than honey" to the usual frothy allusion to mountains and oceans. CPEC might well add another: a relationship stronger than steel.

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How seed vault in deep Arctic had a run-in with climate change

HARIKRISHNAN NAIR
NEW DELHI, MAY 22

MORE THAN 360 feet inside the belly of the 1,500-foot Platåberget mountain in Nordenskiöld Land on the island of Spitsbergen in Svalbard, Norway, is a vault that contains humanity's ultimate food security. Locked in airtight boxes at minus 18 degrees Celsius lie millions of seeds of crop varieties — from Indian rice to Uzbek corn.

This deep-freezer of the world's food supplies — the Svalbard Global Seed Vault (SGSV) facility — recently faced a grave existential threat: the permafrost around the entrance of the so-called "doomsday" vault melted, flooding the access tunnel with water.

Permafrost refers to the perennially frozen soil found in the Earth's higher latitudes. Technically, it is ground (which could be soil and/or rock) that remains at or below a temperature of 0°C for at least 2 consecutive years.

On Saturday, the builders of the SGSV announced that repairs were under way at the facility, and that water had reached no seeds.



The entrance of the tunnel leading to the Global Seed Vault. AP



"After nine years of operation, Svalbard Global Seed Vault is facing technical improvements in connection with water intrusion in the outer part of the access tunnel because the permafrost has not established itself as projected," Statsbygg, the Norwegian state construction group, said in a release. "The seeds in the seed vault have never

been threatened and will remain safe during implementation of the measures," it said, adding that "The measures are being carried out to provide additional security to the seed vault, based on a precautionary ('better safe than sorry') approach."

Norway's government owns the vault; Statsbygg is responsible for the administra-

tion of the physical installation and its technical operation.

The thaw in the permafrost around the entrance of the facility is likely the result of consistently rising global temperatures. Sixteen of the 17 warmest years in the Earth's 136-year record have all occurred since 2001, and 2016 was the warmest year on record.

FOOD SECURITY

THE VAULT is 145.9 m from the front door of the portal building to the back of the vault. Each vault is approximately 27 m long, 9.5 m to 10 m wide, and 6 m high.

STORAGE CAPACITY is 4.5 million seed samples (500 seeds/sample). Seeds are stored at -18 degrees Celsius in specially-designed four-ply foil packages that are placed in sealed boxes. Depositors retain ownership rights.

At the poles, sea ice extent is currently at or near record lows.

After breaching the access tunnel, the water froze before entering the vaults themselves. Breaking through the ice and discovering the more than 8,64,000 samples (of 500 seeds each) safe, took some time.

But the question now haunting scientists

and managers of the vault is whether it might happen again.

The SGSV, commissioned in 2008, is built to withstand manmade and natural disasters. It is theoretically protected against conventional bombs, and sits out of reach of rising sea levels. India has sent 9,44,57,537 seeds to Svalbard. It also has its National Genebank, which, according to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, is one of the world's most modern, and has a capacity to store up to 1.25 million samples.

"Such genebanks are very important for conserving seeds for the future," said Dr R K Tyagi, head of Germplasm Conservation at the National Bureau of Plant Genetics Resources in New Delhi. "We recently accessed our seed bank to send red rice variety to Himachal Pradesh where they had stopped cultivating it because of its low yield. Its medicinal properties were only gradually understood."

The last time the contents of the Svalbard vault were accessed was in 2015, when the Syrian conflict had made it difficult to access seeds of drought- and heat-resistant local wheat.

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WORDLY WISE

THE LAW CAN'T MAKE A MAN LOVE ME, BUT IT CAN KEEP HIM FROM LYNCHING ME. THAT'S PRETTY IMPORTANT.

— MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

The reformist landslide

By re-electing Hassan Rouhani, Iranians have chosen not just a president, but the way forward



RAMIN JAHANBEGLOO

IRAN IS A key player at the heart of the Middle East and West Asia. Apart from its obvious strategic importance, Iran is also a self-declared defender of the Shia cause around the Islamic world. This being said, Iranian politics is difficult to manage, with a complex structure and a complicated reality on the ground. And Iranian decision-makers are well aware of this.

The recent presidential election and the second landslide victory of Hassan Rouhani is more than ever a true exemplification of such a complexity, which is often missed by foreign analysts of Iran. As such, the Iranian population always surprises world public opinion by the level of its complexity and pragmatism. Despite a highly flawed electoral system, where the elections are neither fair nor free, Iranian eligible voters participated massively in the presidential elections with a 75 per cent turnout. More than 40 million votes were cast on Friday, May 19, reported by the Iranian Interior ministry, a number higher than the 56 per cent turnout in the 2016 US elections and the 65 per cent turnout in the recent French elections.

The reason is simple: Supporters of incumbent President Hassan Rouhani, who was running for a second term, came out in force to vote and to stop the election of his ultra-conservative opponent, Ebrahim Raisi, the custodian of the holy shrine of Imam Reza in the city of Mashhad and a member of the Supreme Leader's trusted circle. As such, once again, Iranians voted against a candidate who was considered to be favoured by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. This has now become a well-known pattern among the Iranian population since the presidential election of 2009 and the tragic events that followed it.

However, this year's presidential election in Iran has been politically and economically more significant and meaningful than the previous landslide victory of Rouhani in 2013. First of all, in the eyes of many Iranians, this election was a way to re-affirm and consolidate the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran, the United States and five other world powers. Secondly, the landslide re-election of Rouhani is presented to the Europeans, and especially to the Trump administration, as

an expression of the moderation and peaceful will of the Iranian people. Despite Trump's undermining of the nuclear deal with Iran, and his recent visit to Saudi Arabia, Iran's arch enemy in the Persian Gulf, the Iranian people who re-elected Rouhani expect him to do more in his second term to bring about peaceful measures through diplomatic management and the pursuit of improved relations with the world. Interestingly, while the Trump administration and its Middle Eastern allies put pressure on the Islamic regime in Iran to return to a policy of isolation, Rouhani and his future cabinet will have a hard time ensuring the survival of the Iran deal as well as engaging in more proactive action against the Islamic State, within a security framework for the Middle East.

Last but not least, the re-elected president needs to go back and retackle immediately Iran's social and economic problems such as unemployment and growing inequality, which affect millions of young Iranians. Everyone, including Rouhani, knows that the economy is the Iranian government's Achilles' heel. Rouhani's main opponents have taken advantage of this weakness during the past four years of his presidency and even in the three television debates before the election.

Rouhani was even criticised very recently by the Supreme Leader Khamenei who implicitly stated that he understood the "pain of the poor and lower class people with his soul, especially because of high prices, unemployment and inequalities". Even during the election campaign, Rouhani's main opponent, the ultra-conservative cleric Ebrahim Raisi vowed that, if elected, he would fight poverty, corruption and unemployment.

Moreover, Rouhani will continue to face pressures from the Iranian hawks to adopt tougher stances on foreign policy issues, including the conflict in Syria. Surprisingly, despite the signature of a nuclear agreement with world powers, Rouhani's influence on Iran's foreign policy remains very limited. The Iranian Revolutionary Guards and the Quds Force continue to support Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen. It goes without saying that this new victory strengthens Rouhani's political mandate to integrate Iran with the global economy.

this new victory strengthens Rouhani's political mandate to integrate Iran with the global economy. But the extent of his success will depend on the cooperation of Iran's conservative establishment, led by Supreme Leader Khamenei.

It will also depend on the future actions taken by US President Donald Trump, whose recent talks in Saudi Arabia have focused on ways to contain the Islamic Republic's regional influence. Speaking alongside his Saudi counterpart in Riyadh on Saturday, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said he hoped that Rouhani would use his mandate to enforce broad change. According to Tillerson, the US wants Rouhani to "begin the process of dismantling Iran's network of terrorism" and put an end to ballistic missile testing.

The international community needs to wait and see up to what point Rouhani can loosen restrictions on cultural and social activities and push civic boundaries zealously guarded by hardline conservatives.

Last Friday, the Iranians decided to stand on the side of popular sovereignty rather than divine sovereignty in yet another election that had all the frustrating signs of making the fate of a nation. The majority of Iranians chose a way out of the crisis, rather than just a president. As a result, in the next four years, President Rouhani will continue to swim with Iranian and American sharks in the troubled waters of the Middle East and the world. His success or failure in addressing Iran's deep-seated domestic and international problems will understandably be a major issue in the consolidation of his power, but also that of Iranian civil society which struggles to protect human rights and civil liberties in Iran.

However, one thing is clear: The message sent by the Iranian voters who voted for Rouhani against the hardliners in Iran will increasingly segue into the question of who will decide the future of Iran. After all, this is what this presidential election was really about. It was about Iran's choice between change and continuity.

The writer is professor and executive director, Mahatma Gandhi Centre, Jindal Global University

THE NEW ASSERTION

Jantar Mantar protests may point to the making of a new phase in Dalit politics, outside the political mainstream

THE DALIT MOBILISATION on show in Jantar Mantar in Delhi on Sunday reflected a churn within the community. Called to protest the anti-Dalit violence in Saharanpur and the response of the Yogi Adityanath regime, the gathering also amounted to a reproach and a challenge to political parties like the BSP and the Congress. That the Bhim Army and its founder, a young lawyer named Chandrasekhar, could mobilise Dalits in such large numbers, mainly from the districts of western UP and Delhi, speaks of the community's disenchantment with the existing leadership that claims to speak in its name. The protests in Delhi also featured Jignesh Mevani, another young Dalit leader who gained national attention after his campaigns in the wake of the flogging of Dalits by vigilantes in Una in Gujarat. There are signs of a wider coalition being forged. The mobilisations have been remarkably peaceful and, so far, the leaders have invoked the rule of law and sought remedies within the ambit of the Constitution. Both the government and the political mainstream need to sit up and pay heed.

The provocation for the May 21 protests at Jantar Mantar — the clashes in Saharanpur — involved mobilisation by both communities, Thakurs and Dalits. Yet, predictably, the Dalits bore the brunt. In this incident, as in others, the lopsidedness of state response compounds the social and economic discrimination that Dalits have historically faced. It is a factor that also unites Dalits across regions, from Una in Gujarat to Saharanpur in UP and the Hyderabad Central University (HCU) campus. Notably, as in the case of Saharanpur, the response to instances of atrocities and discrimination are being directed by groups and leaders outside the political mainstream. Students of HCU led the campaign to ensure justice for Rohit Vemula; Mevani and others emerged leaders in the course of post-Una protests; and now the Bhim Army has emerged as the new face of Dalit mobilisation in UP. These protests have also been remarkable for rising above the immediate contexts to highlight broader issues of discrimination, from basic safety to the right for political expression to landlessness among Dalits.

Of course, the new leaders will not immediately replace established players like the BSP, which even in its worst defeat in UP maintains a 22 per cent vote share. But the party faces the risk of being overtaken by the new groups, who are more alert to ground realities, and use social media to educate and mobilise cadres. BSP supremo Mayawati may have to recalibrate her politics of election-centric mobilisation and become more responsive to daily acts of discrimination and violence.

RULE OF IMPUNITY

Jharkhand lynching frames a state that is ceding its monopoly on violence. Chief Minister Raghubar Das is answerable

SEVEN PERSONS WERE lynched on the basis of motivated rumours within days of Raghubar Das launching 21 projects of Momentum Jharkhand, the 2017 campaign to attract hundreds of crores in investment to the state. Now, Das must decide whether he wants to be remembered as the head of a reformist government or as the chief minister who presided over the breakdown of the rule of law. His future depends on whether he acts decisively in this moment — some arrests have already been made but these must be followed through. The violence was triggered by a rumour campaign about kidnapers, a very real fear which periodically infects poor districts, the legacy of a long history of child trafficking. It was amplified by messages in official social media. It has been known to be an anonymous force multiplier from 2012, which saw the panic flight of migrant workers from the Northeast. The Jharkhand government should track down the messages to the originating phone numbers and penalise the owners.

But the lynchings would have been unimaginable without a perceived climate of impunity. Clearly, state deterrence was not perceived to be credible. Graphic videos taken in Shobhapur village show policemen in the mob at the scene, doing nothing to prevent the murders. Perhaps they were outnumbered, but that only points to sloth in the police and the administration. The anonymous campaign against child-lifters had been visible well before violence broke out, giving the authorities enough time to react, if only to allay fears and suspicions. While the administration did try to launch a counter-campaign, it was too little, too late. Exemplary punishment is the sovereign remedy for impunity. Justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done.

A deficit of justice which is seen to be done has permitted the incidents of lynchings across states. Unchecked by the state, the sudden assertiveness of vigilante gau rakshak groups set the stage, tacitly assuring the people that lethal attacks would not face a commensurate response. Now, it seems to be legitimate for citizens to unleash lethal force on other pretexts. This is a perversion of democracy, which confers upon the state an absolute monopoly on violence. Unfortunately, the state is not guarding it very zealously, with serious implications for the rule of law in Jharkhand and other states.

ROUHANI ONCE MORE

He returns to power in Iran. But victory is unlikely to smoothen the hurdles for his agenda

ITSELF, THAT Iranian President Hassan Rouhani won the country's presidential polls held last week, is no surprise — every Iranian president since 1981 has returned to a second term. But there is great significance to Rouhani's return. In an election with a 70 per cent voter turnout, Rouhani defeated hardline Islamist cleric, Ebrahim Raisi, winning 57 per cent of the ballot, or 23.5 million votes. His supporters look to Rouhani — instrumental in pushing the US-Iran nuclear deal, ending sanctions and allowing foreign investment — to further Iran's engagement with the world and prevent international isolation. Alongside, Rouhani will have to resuscitate Iran's ailing economy, impacted by sliding oil prices — one in every four Iranians is unemployed. Raisi targeted Iran's parlous economy, but his hardline Islamist stance, accusing Rouhani of compromising on religious values, was un-endearing to many, with younger Iranians and women voters reportedly backing Rouhani for his modern outlook.

Rouhani will now have to live up to these expectations and deliver on hopes like the release of political detainees and greater media freedoms. By all accounts, alongside Raisi, who won over 15 million votes, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei doesn't support Rouhani's vision either. There will be challenges to Rouhani's agenda, but so far, the president — who, post-elections, thanked reformist icon Mohammad Khatami, breaking the security forces' taboo against mentions of Khatami — has indicated his willingness to meet these.

Rouhani's task will be complicated further by external opponents. In contrast to his predecessor Barack Obama, US President Donald Trump has a bitterly anti-Iran stance, blaming it for the Middle East's instability, threatening to scrap the US-Iran nuclear deal. Trump used his recent speech in Saudi Arabia mostly to Iran-bash, telling Saudi's monarchy to "isolate a nation that fuelled... terror". Hitting at Iran can help the embattled Trump to show himself at odds with Russia, which supports Iran. Surrounded by such complexities, Rouhani faces a difficult path. But he can be buoyed by the Iranians who danced in Tehran's streets celebrating his win, breaking another taboo.



SHAIBAL GUPTA

THE "GANDHI CONCLAVE" in Patna on April 10 and 11 commemorated the centenary of Gandhi's visit to Bihar in 1917 in connection with the Champaran Satyagraha, which, for the first time, lent a mass character to the Congress-led freedom movement in the country. At a time when the country is enveloped by clouds of helplessness, the conclave underlined how Gandhian strategy has a non-violent solution for almost every problem confronting the world.

Two conclusions can be drawn if one approaches Gandhism in a simple manner. One, Gandhi appears compulsively antediluvian; two, he was not bound by standard frameworks. The period when he wrote *Hind Swaraj* was probably Gandhi's most negative phase, though the text should be treated as a critique of India's de-industrialisation by colonialism. From 1919, after the successful Champaran Satyagraha, Gandhi scripted the Swadeshi Movement which gave a foundation to domestic industrialisation. He was possibly the first Indian to underline that the development and emancipation of the country required concurrent dialogues with the colonial state, civil society, the market and corporate sector.

Apart from the Patna conclave, two books I read inspired me to revisit Gandhi's philosophy, specially its economic dimension — *How the Other Half Dies: The Real Reason For World's Hunger* by Susan George and *Rich People's Movements: Grassroots Campaigns To Untax The One Percent* by Isaac

GANDHI, THE ECONOMIST

His idea of trusteeship needs to be revisited in times of growing inequality

William Martin. George makes three seminal points: One, the Third World War will be over water; two, the consumption of cereals by pets in the First World is higher than by human beings in the Third World; three, four Earths would be required if the Third World emulates the First World's consumption pattern.

Martin's book is about the counter movement of the rich for tax holidays and their demand of removing all financial fetters. He writes on the "tax day, April 15, 2010 hundreds of thousands of Americans turned out to rallies around the United States to protest against taxes and big Government... offered forthright defense of capitalists and the rich using grassroots tactics of the poor".

Revisited two basic Gandhian economic principles after reading the two books. One, the limitation of wants: No maximisation technique is enough to satisfy unlimited wants, and social interest outweighs self-interest. Production should be mindful of the earth's capacity. The unbridled use of natural resources will lead the world towards disaster, as prophesied by George.

Two, the concept of "trusteeship": With the idea of market-centric development under mammoth multinationals assuming hegemonic proportions, there is a need to appreciate this concept. Even though Gandhi promoted Indian capitalism as a spin-off of the Swadeshi Movement, he was aware of the monstrous consequences of capitalism. Just before his assassination, Gandhi finalised

the "practical trusteeship formula", which would have transformed the "present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one (in which) an individual will not be free to hold or use wealth for selfish satisfaction".

Liaquat Ali Khan, the finance minister of the interim government in 1946 under the premiership of Jawaharlal Nehru, held similar views. He not only introduced 91 per cent income tax in the maiden budget of the interim government, but also instituted a commission to investigate ill-gotten accumulation during WW II. G.D. Birla, who was in the visitor's gallery of Parliament when the budget was presented, not only walked out but organised fortnightly strikes of the stock exchange in protest. India's top industrialist and closest comrades of Gandhi rallied to demand Khan's ouster from the cabinet.

Partition and Gandhi's assassination meant that the principle of trusteeship and equity-centric taxation never got full play. Today, we pride ourselves on having the third highest numbers of billionaires when we also have the highest number of poor in the world.

The "Gandhi Conclave", I hope, will bring back Gandhi's ideals on the centrestage, nationally and globally. Unless the counter movement of the rich is stalled, the world won't have authentic economic democratisation.

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MAY 23, 1977, FORTY YEARS AGO

JANATA IN UP

THE JANATA PARTY is in total disarray in Uttar Pradesh. In fact, it exists no more as a political entity. It has not only disintegrated into the old parties which had merged but has scattered into individuals, following the in-fighting seen over the selection of candidates and the widespread resentment and frustration the belated list has created among those who aspired for tickets. Since the release of the list, which deprived many from filing nominations, the virulent, vicious propaganda mounted by the have-nots has thrown the party in the welter of a serious crisis and spoilt its image in the eyes of the common people.

LIMAYE ON BENGAL

MADHU LIMAYE, GENERAL secretary of the Janata Party, alleged that some business houses were trying to force a coalition government of his party and the Congress in West Bengal. He said that his party would not tolerate their interference. There would be no coalition with the Congress "under any circumstances", he stated. Limaye also said that the business houses were interested in such a coalition probably because the people had no happy experience about the Marxist government seen in the past. That was the reason why they did not favour an alliance between the Janata Party and the CPM.

CHINA'S WAR ON FLIES

THE PEOPLE OF Peking took to the streets to declare war on flies. On the orders of the central authorities, the Chinese capital became the scene of a mass hygiene campaign against the insects and the diseases which they spread. Residents awoke to the noise of drums, gongs and loudspeakers mounted on lorries which crisscrossed the city, calling on the seven million inhabitants to "fight disease" and first of all, wipe out flies. At the same time, thousands of young "pioneers", wearing red silk scarves and carrying small flyswatters and bamboo brooms, took to the pavements to kill the insects.

15 THE IDEAS PAGE

Will Rajini, or won't he

Space has opened up in Tamil Nadu politics for an alternative to the DMK and AIADMK. But screen popularity may not be sufficient for Rajinikanth



AMRITH LAL

RAJINIKANTH'S INTERACTION WITH his fans in Chennai last week, eight years after he last undertook a similar exercise, has triggered excitement about whether the Tamil super hero was poised to join politics. When questioned, his responses were sufficiently ambiguous to keep everyone guessing. "My life is in the hands of God. I'm not sure what he has in store for me. But I will always perform the duty that he bestows on me. So, don't feel disappointed if I don't enter politics," he said initially.

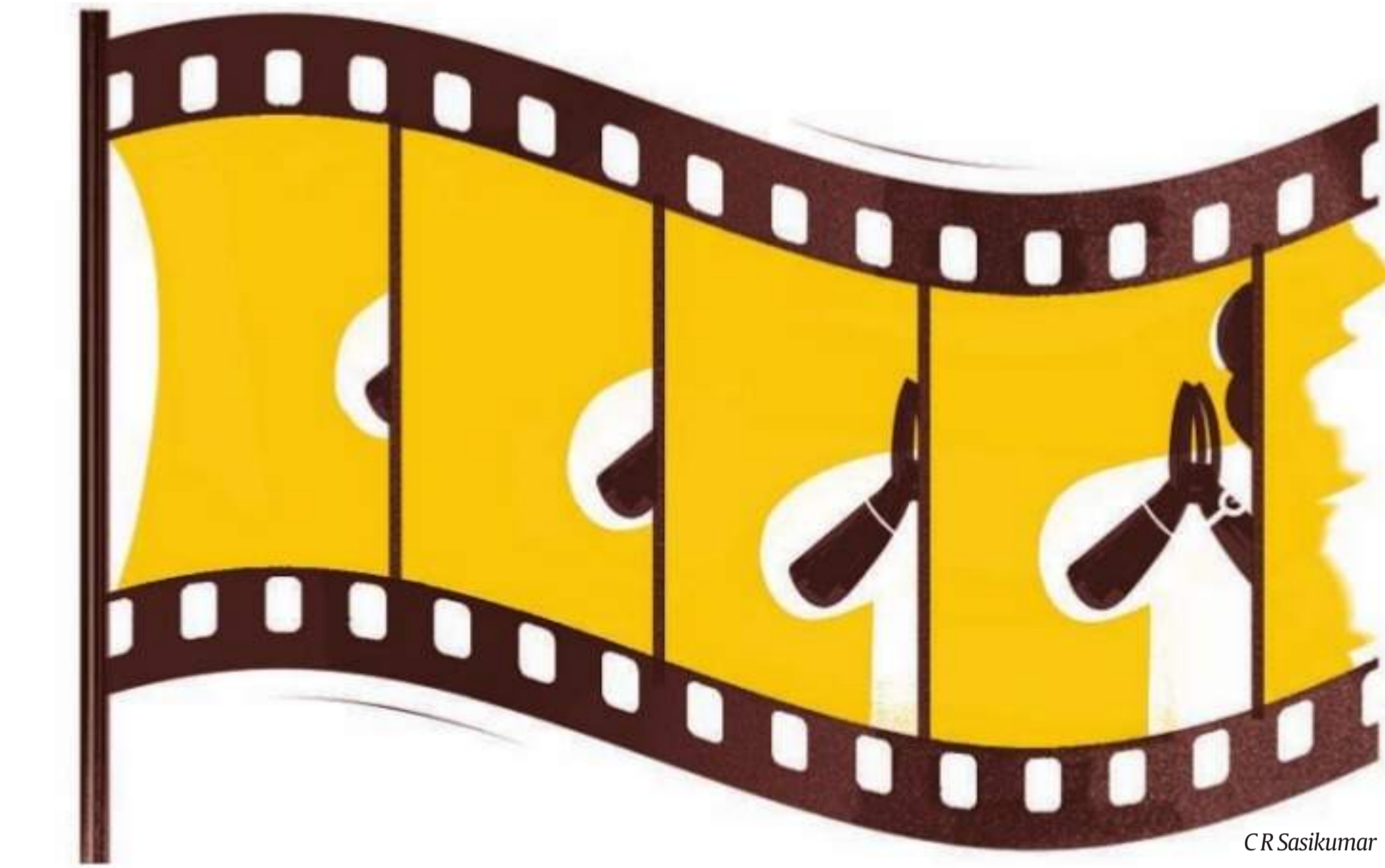
Later, he clarified: "I have responsibilities and work, same with you, let's do it, but when the ultimate war comes, we all will see." This was more like Muthu, a character he played two decades ago: "Naan eppo varuvuven eppadi varuvuvennu yarukkum theriyathu. Eppo varunumo appo correctaa varuvuven" (Nobody knows when I'll come, how I'll come. But when I need to come, I'll just be there). A year after the release of *Muthu*, ahead of the 1996 Tamil Nadu assembly election, he declared support for the DMK-Tamil Maanila Congress combine. J. Jayalitha, facing corruption allegations, and outrage over the ostentatious wedding of her foster son, lost that election badly.

Since then, Rajinikanth's entry into politics has been a matter of constant speculation. His scriptwriters have kept the pot boiling by throwing suggestive lines in his dialogues. The electorate's fatigue with the dominance of two parties — the DMK and the AIADMK — in state politics, perhaps, is a reason for the chatter around his political entry. There is a perception that filmstars influence Tamil Nadu politics and Rajinikanth, being the biggest of them, can provide an alternative to the Dravidian parties. The current spin is also influenced by the BJP's attempts to find a foothold in the state, which it seems to believe is possible if Rajinikanth associates with the party in some manner.

No doubt the death of Jayalitha and DMK patriarch Karunanidhi's retreat from active politics have opened up the political space in Tamil Nadu. Barring the AIADMK and the DMK, no party has a serious pan-state presence or cadre loyalty in Tamil Nadu. Mobilisations like the Jallikattu protests earlier this year reveal deep disenchantment among the youth with the established parties and leaders.

Since 1967, the DMK or AIADMK has ruled Tamil Nadu, with smaller parties aligning with either of them. The attempts to project a third alternative — by the DMK in 2006, the NDA in 2014, a People's Welfare Front including the Viduthala Chiruthaikal Katchi and the communists in 2016 — didn't gain sufficient traction. The NDA, in 2014, got over 20 per cent votes and two MPs. Similarly, the DMK projected its chief, Vijayakanth, a popular hero with the moniker *Karuppu* (black) MGR, as an alternative to Jayalitha and Karunanidhi in the 2006 Assembly election. It polled nearly 10 per cent votes but all its candidates, barring Vijayakanth, lost. However, the votes gained by the DMK in 2006 and the NDA in 2014 (DMK was a part of it) indicate that the space for a third force exists in Tamil Nadu.

But can Rajinikanth occupy it? Can he, like M.G. Ramachandran or MGR, a superstar in his day, launch an outfit and hold sway over the Tamil masses? Is his screen image suffi-



C R Sasikumar

cient to pull in voters?

The truth is, MGR was an exception; no other male filmstar in Tamil cinema has been successful in transferring his screen popularity to electoral success. Sivaji Ganesan could compete with MGR at the box office. But his forays into politics failed — Sivaji was with the DMK, the Congress and even headed the Janata Dal in the state. Tamils across class, caste and religion loved him as *Nadigar Thilakam* (jewel among actors), but did not trust him with their votes. Many stars of the 1970s and '80s — K. Bhagyaraj, Rajender, Sarath Kumar, Karthik — flirted with politics, they could land only minor parts. Some like Napoleon associated with established parties to become legislators. The point is, cinema influences Tamils, like it does people elsewhere. But stardom is insufficient to win elections. In fact, the intimacy of cinema with politics has more to do with the economy of the film industry.

It is a misreading of MGR's film and political career to assume that his success as a politician is entirely due to his work in cinema. MGR launched the ADMK or Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in 1972. As the name of the party suggests, he claimed the legacy of both Anna, the founder of the DMK, and the Dravidian Movement. He could do so because he was associated with the Dravidian Movement for many years, first as a campaigner and a fund-raiser, then as a party office bearer. His loyalty to the party had been endorsed by Annadurai himself, who found his popularity useful to the party and the movement. Anna leaned on cinema as a useful propaganda forum to spread the word about the DMK's ideals among the illiterate poor. By the time MGR launched the ADMK after falling out with Karunanidhi, who had become chief minister after Anna's death, he already had a political profile; Tamils knew MGR as a disciple of Anna and a follower of the Dravidian Movement.

MGR, of course, built a bank of goodwill by doing carefully curated roles that portrayed him as an underclass hero, with the will and power to transform society. He had also organised his fans in *rasikar mantrams* (fan clubs). When he floated the ADMK, these thousands of *rasikars* became his cadre. After forming the government in 1977, he turned the populist welfarism promised by his heroes into state policy. From broad-basing the PDS basket to expanding the mid-day

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meal scheme to customised welfare measures for targeted groups, he reinforced his popularity by projecting state welfare as his largesse to people. He transformed politics in Tamil Nadu from being movement-oriented to leader-centric. The paradigm has stayed, influencing every other party, including the DMK, to follow suit.

Jayalitha, who succeeded MGR, of course had a film career, but she was hardly the star her mentor was. She worked her way up in the party, flaunting her closeness to the *Puratchi Thalaivar* (Revolutionary Leader). In office, she furthered the MGR model. Now *Puratchi Thalaivi*, she insisted on being a legatee of Periyar, Anna, the Dravidian Movement and, of course, MGR. She too turned the government's welfare agenda into an extension of her personal brand.

In short, both MGR and Jayalitha were rewarded by the Tamil Nadu electorate not merely for their career in films but also for their political cunning and ability to work the system. They were a part of established political platforms. They nurtured extremely regressive and anti-democratic tendencies, but the patronage politics they cultivated did not discriminate against any community.

At 66, it is anybody's guess whether Rajinikanth has the energy and ambition to carve out his space in politics. His *rasikar mantrams* may provide a core cadre. But many of those who whistled from the front rows when a young Rajini danced to rustic numbers like *Poduvaga en manasu thangam* have aged with him. Rajinikanth in real life seems an unpretentious person, who prefers to keep to himself and follow personal spiritual pursuits. Will he be up for a 24x7 job? The BJP is eager to launch him. But its ideological baggage may weigh down the party's prospects in Tamil Nadu. Hindutva nationalism will have subservient to Tamil subnationalism and its pet peeves like vegetarianism will have been dumped in the Bay of Bengal if it wants to expand beyond its current pockets of influence in Kanyakumari and western Tamil Nadu.

Tamil politics, surely, is undergoing a churn. But the beneficiary may not necessarily be an ageing star, however much he promises to lead the "war" or reiterates his Tamil credentials.

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WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"There is no gainsaying the fact that Pakistan suffered a setback when the court in the Hague issued a temporary injunction against Jadhav's death sentence."

—THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE

Modi diplomacy, Part Two

Three years into his term, PM must deal with changes in great power dynamics, border troubles and backlash in the West against immigration



RAJA MANDALA

BY C. RAJA MOHAN

FEW WOULD DISAGREE with the proposition that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has had a great run with foreign policy over the last three years. His personal energy and pragmatism, coupled with an emphasis on problem-solving, had allowed Modi to rejuvenate India's post-Cold War foreign policy. But the harder part for the PM may have already begun. India's problems with Pakistan and China and the difficulties, for example, with the membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group over the last year are symptomatic of the larger challenge that confronts Modi.

In India, the foreign policy discourse has become increasingly partisan. Both admirers and critics of Modi are quick to see every diplomatic development as a triumph or a failure. The shared presumption is that the Indian PM is a free actor on the international stage and that foreign policy is all about "us" and not "them". Any Indian PM deals with multiple other sovereigns, big and small. Delhi can't bend the political will or shape the domestic dynamics of other sovereigns.

Nor can India regulate the frequent flips in the relationships amongst other independent actors. Nor can it predict, let alone control, sweeping political and technological revolutions that produce systemic change. Even a carefully constructed foreign policy strategy could go awry if the external circumstances change radically. Prime Minister Narendra Modi may have arrived at that juncture three years into his tenure.

In the first half of his five-year term, Modi could win quick gains on the diplomatic front by the mere application of his strong political will and the stronger domestic position that he enjoyed over his predecessor, Manmohan Singh. The policy path was, in fact, largely laid down way back at the turn of the 1990s when the Cold War ended and Delhi had to embark on economic reforms.

The unstated diplomatic guidelines included a greater emphasis on economic goals and improved relations with all major powers. There was a special focus on normalising ties with China and ending the estrangement with America. Delhi also sought to limit the conflict with Pakistan, promote regional cooperation in the Subcontinent, reconnect with Asia and the Indian Ocean, and bring Delhi's multilateral diplomacy in tune with India's changing national needs in the reform era.

All governments since 1991 have followed these policies with varying degrees of success. A number of external factors facilitated India's advances in this period. One was the relative harmony among the major powers, thanks to the uncontested

American unipolar moment. The second was the widespread acceptance of economic globalisation or the Washington consensus. The third was the digital revolution that allowed India to create a niche for itself in the IT sector.

Modi accepted the imperatives of the external world and pushed vigorously for improving ties with the US, reaching out to China and Pakistan, welcoming foreign investment, strengthening India's regionalism and raising its international profile. But Modi's world has changed considerably over the last three years. He had considerable successes with America, but must now cope with a great power that is distracted by internecine battles in Washington. The PM's effort to strengthen ties with Russia have entered a complex phase, as President Vladimir Putin tightens the China embrace and seeks a deal with US President Donald Trump.

President Xi Jinping has decided that China's moment in the sun has arrived, thanks to the huge and growing power differential between Beijing and its neighbours. As Modi found out, being nice to Beijing does not mean China will reciprocate on NSG membership. Xi's enhanced bet on Pakistan has also made Islamabad less vulnerable to Western pressures, such as they are, on terrorism. Pakistan will neither be seduced by an Indian outreach, nor give into Delhi's threats. Finding ways to deal with a rising China and manage Pakistan's intransigence will remain big problems for India.

The shifting dynamic amidst great powers and the continuing trouble on the borders is matched by the political backlash in the West against free trade and immigration. The new external constraints come amidst the deepening of India's interdependence with the world. Nearly 40 per cent of India's GDP is linked to the world and for half a century, its skilled personnel enjoyed open doors in many markets. Some of those are beginning to close.

On top of it all, the dramatic acceleration of technological change has put pressure on the one sector that has come to generate nearly a tenth of India's GDP and symbolised India's rise.

These negative developments are not a call for pessimism about India's prospects. As its economy grows at seven percent and more, India's net weight in the international system can only improve. But to sustain India's rise, Delhi must necessarily focus on three important elements: It must shed the current complacency about growth and bring its economic and technology policies in line with the rapidly evolving external environment. Second, India needs urgent and significant defence sector reform to lend purpose and effect to its growing military mass. Third, sharper commercial, security and technology policies will help India better navigate the unfolding power shifts amongst America, China and Russia and construct durable strategic partnerships with such middle powers as Japan, France and Germany.

The writer is director, Carnegie India, Delhi and contributing editor on foreign affairs for *The Indian Express*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

YES, HONOUR HIM

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'I applaud Major Gogoi' (IE, May 20). I concur with the writer that the government should award the officer concerned with an appropriate gallantry medal. He saved the lives of his subordinates and other people working for the government.

Madan Lal, Ambala

CHECK THE CHINESE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Looking China in the eye' (IE, May 22). The One Belt One Road project is not a multilateral endeavour; it is unlikely that every country will find China's conditions for the project attractive. Here lies India's chance: We can queer China's pitch by weaning away some of these doubters.

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

JADHAV'S HEALTH

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Justice for Jadhav' (IE, May 19). After the International Court of Justice (ICJ) accepted India's stand, the next step is to find out about the physical and mental health of Kulbhushan Jadhav. The Pakistan government is responsible for ensuring Jadhav's safety. But many suspect Jadhav may not be in sound health after the severe torture he has been subjected to. The picture will become clearer once Pakistan provides consular access to Jadhav, as enjoined by the ICJ.

S.C. Vaid, Noida

IMPROVING IT

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Future

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301. Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

THE WINNER RECEIVES SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS

shock' (IE May 20). The IT sector has been a huge growth generator for India. To prevent its downfall, we need to better the skill sets of our engineers. The IT curriculum in our colleges must be made dynamic and ready to adapt to a rapidly changing job market. The existing workforce should also be skilled in emerging key areas such as robotics and AI. Alongside, to ensure the best global exposure, the Centre should promote foreign investments in IT and IITES.

Sayantana Ghosh, Kolkata

Three unsettling years

The national consensus Gandhi began building a century ago is under threat



ASHUTOSH

A HUNDRED YEARS is a short intervention in the life of a civilisation but it's a big interface in the history of a nation. Exactly 100 years ago, a man appeared in India and disrupted a sleeping giant. His name was M.K. Gandhi and he spread the message of non-violence, truth and satyagraha.

A hundred years later, another Indian is engineering disruption of a different kind. His name is Narendra Modi. Gandhi, before embarking for the Indian coast, successfully experimented with truth in South Africa, and could say, with disarming simplicity, "I bear no enmity towards the English". Similarly, Modi had his own "simple" brush with history in Gujarat. His instruments of truth have been entirely different from Bapu's.

India has taken a distinct turn in the last three years. Whether this turn is civilisational remains to be seen. Modi adheres to an ideology which is at war with history, and with thousands of years of civilisational consciousness. We have collectively witnessed the change in shades of Indianness, the social fabric tearing, the impulse of "us" versus "them" intensifying, the sense of victory over "others" getting crystallised and a consolidation of base instincts like viciousness, bitterness and vengeance.

Manmohan Singh left a regime besmirched by corruption. Modi was seen as an alternative who, as chief minister, had created a lethal cocktail of brute state power and ruthless crony capitalism. Once he moved to Delhi, it was assumed that he would be a "new" man who would rid the Indian state of indecisiveness, policy paralysis and multiple power centres. But over the years, his Gujarat experiment is written in bold letters across the country and people have begun saying what a friend of mine told me a few days ago — that, in his lifetime, he probably would not see the India that he lived in till 2014.

When Akhlaq was killed by his neighbours in a Dabri village, it was considered an isolated incident. But the brazen justifications by central ministers and their ideological colleagues in the name of cow protection hinted at a new dawn. This was followed by Rohit Vemula's suicide. The ban on beef in Maharashtra, the appointment of Yogi Adityanath as chief minister, the overnight closure of slaughterhouses in UP, killings or thrashing of the likes of Pehlu Khan in broad daylight and the merciless beating of Dalits in Una, are all reflections of the mindset which looks at minorities as the enemy and the marginalised with contempt.

But what surprised me most was the silence of the prime minister. He was also silent when campuses were targeted by the RSS's student wing, the ABVP. If JNU was targeted for its internationalism and pluralism, Jadavpur University was taken to task for its vibrant leftism, Hyderabad University for standing by a Dalit student, Delhi University for its democratic freedom and the FTII for its creative liberalism. A young scholar, Kanhaiya Kumar, was beaten inside the court, senior SC lawyers were openly heckled and institutions were left rudderless. A "new nationalism" has been invented which is masculine, blind and unidimensional, which entertains no discourse except one on Kashmir, Pakistan, terrorism, Naxalism and national security.

This "new normal" harbours a bizarre contradiction — it inflicts surgical strikes on Pakistan and, at the same time, permits the ISI to inspect the Pathankot air base, but it does not give space to any alternate discussion by its citizens. The Kashmir issue has been so badly handled that it reminds us of the pre-1991 situation. The army has always been given an exalted position but it has now acquired a mythical status, which does not auger well for the democratic ethos of the country.

Gandhi espoused compassion, Modi in-

vites intimidation. The naked use of power has diminished the autonomy of institutions; the cabinet system has surrendered to the cult of personality; the bureaucracy is deeply politicised; shadowy figures are omnipresent and every conversation is eavesdropped on; bipartisanship has been thrown in the dustbin, institutions of opposition — political parties or the media — are circumvented; and the whispers in the corridors of power are that even the judiciary is feeling the heat. But he is winning election after election and a new myth has been formed that he is the most popular PM India has ever had.

Today, one is reminded of Gandhi and the consensus he built. That consensus is broken. The past three years have shown glimpses of the future. If this disruption is allowed to continue, then no Gandhi will ever say what he said in 1942: "A mission came to me in 1906, namely to spread truth and non-violence among mankind in the place of violence and falsehood in all walks of life." It is ironic that Modi belongs to the same Gujarat which is the birthplace of Gandhi. Yes, 100 years is too long a time.

The writer, a former journalist, is with the Aam Aadmi Party