



All animals are equal

So why does the Centre's PCA notification make cattle more equal than others?

The Centre's move to notify new rules to regulate livestock markets under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 (PCA) is either extremely poorly thought out or much too clever for its own good. In a way, both. On the surface, the notification, which spans eight pages, reads like a general document on the regulation of the sale of all kinds of livestock bought and sold in animal markets, with some welcome prohibitions on the cruelty inflicted in the transport and treatment of animals. But parse the rules, and it is evident that cattle – a category that includes cows, buffaloes, bulls and camels – come under a slew of special restrictions which, when effected, could have an extremely serious impact on the meat and livestock industry, not to mention the livelihoods and dietary choices of millions of people. Surprisingly, only the purchase or sale of cattle for slaughter in animal markets has been prohibited. This raises suspicions that the Centre has attempted to conceal, or at least soften perceptions about, an extremely controversial provision, in the guise of passing a seemingly inoffensive, even enlightened, body of rules relating to animal cruelty. The rules framed for the sale of cattle are so cumbersome – for instance, buyers must verify they are agriculturists, and sellers must furnish photo identity proof and written declarations stating that the cattle are not brought to the animal market for slaughter – that one wonders whether the objective is to surreptitiously throttle the entire cattle trade in an elaborate ream of red tape. Is the ban on the sale of cattle for slaughter in animal markets intended to act indirectly as an absolute ban? Is the notification, stripped of its generalities and niceties, really about the BJP government's pet concern, cows?

Such questions are bound to be raised given the way the rules were notified. If the main subject of the notification was the regulation of livestock markets, why was it issued by the Ministry of Environment and not the Animal Husbandry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, which deals directly with this issue? Moreover, on what ground can the slaughter of any animal for food be prevented under the PCA, when it explicitly recognises that animals may constitute "food for mankind"? What the Act prohibits is only the "infliction of unnecessary pain and suffering" when animals are consumed as food. Such legal infirmities are bound to be challenged in court, but meanwhile the economic costs of this decision will merit a close watch. If estimates that 90% of slaughtered buffaloes are bought and sold in animal markets are correct, then the trade will be crippled. The Centre must address the concerns of the trade as well as of those who suspect the notification is a part of a Machiavellian plot to influence and curb food choices. While there is a case to retain most of the rules prohibiting the cruel treatment of animals, the ban on the sale of cattle for slaughter in animal markets must go.

Temer in trouble

Brazil's President faces new charges, hurting the credibility of politicians even more

Ever since the unpopular Michel Temer took over as President of Brazil after the controversial impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, clearly it was only a matter of time before another corruption scandal surfaced in the country. Mr. Temer formally succeeded Ms. Rousseff in August 2016 by virtue of being the vice-president and leading the centre-right Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), a crucial part of the ruling coalition when it came to power in 2014. While the impeachment motion brought Ms. Rousseff down, many leaders in the PMDB were already embroiled in cases of corruption, including the then House Speaker, Eduardo Cunha, who led the motion. Mr. Cunha was indicted in the "Operation Car Wash" scandal in May 2016 involving the state-owned oil company Petrobras, and later suspended as Speaker by the Supreme Court over allegations ranging from intimidation of members of the legislature and obstruction of investigations against himself. Five months later, he was arrested for hiding money received from bribes in offshore accounts. When audio tapes surfaced this month showing Mr. Temer, who was already under investigation for corruption, discussing the payment of bribes with Mr. Cunha, it was hardly a shock. It led to street protests seeking Mr. Temer's resignation. Predictably, he has refused to resign and instead used force to quell the agitation.

The Brazilian political class, including the ruling PMDB and the Workers Party (PT) that was in power from 2003 to 2016, has been severely discredited over the past few years. Ms. Rousseff's ouster is clearly a case of the ruling elite finding a scapegoat to escape further investigation into mass graft. The PT had successfully engendered a social democratic regime that combined free market policies during the commodities boom with welfare measures that helped raise many Brazilians out of poverty. Schemes such as Bolsa Familia, former President Lula da Silva's signature welfare plan, had helped Ms. Rousseff win successive elections. But following the global economic downturn and drop in commodity prices the model unravelled, resulting in a contraction in the economy. The lid over what was a wide-ranging corruption racket involving Petrobras and ruling politicians was also blown, implicating even Mr. Lula. With the discredited Mr. Temer now in power, the PT in crisis and the lack of a clean opposition alternative, public confidence in the government and institutions is at a new low. The hope is that the judiciary and police officials who have taken on the onerous task of prosecuting cases against powerful ruling officials will not give up. If they do, the credibility of Brazil's institutions will suffer further, and a cynical electorate could well opt for a populist outside the political system, an increasingly visible trend seen in the Americas.

Misreading the tea leaves

The post-War global order based on institutions may be in crisis, but an alternative is not on the horizon as yet



HARDEEP S. PURI

Institutions created by human beings necessarily reflect the pre-eminent preoccupation of their time. The present, the post-Second World War global order, anchored in the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and now the World Trade Organisation, has survived for over seven decades. This is partly because these institutions responded to the imperative of history when they were created to prevent succeeding generations from being subjected to the scourge of war and the need for post-war economic reconstruction.

Two events

Is this present global order still 'fit for purpose'? Much can be said for both sides of the argument. One thing is, however, clear. An alternative order or vision is not on the horizon. It is useful to bear this in mind whilst evaluating two developments. The first is the underwhelming first hundred days of the Donald Trump presidency which finds itself in an internal civil war situation with both the 'deep state' and the 'fourth estate' and provides cause for anxiety to some that it may be unravelling. The second is Beijing's spectacular Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) extravaganza.

Some initiatives result in the building of institutions that are viable and establish their relevance over a period of time. Others, such as the ill-fated League of Nations, start badly and then fail altogether. Those based on flawed thinking find it even more difficult to take



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

off. The present global, post-1945, order can broadly be characterised as having evolved in two phases, the pre-1989 and post-1989 phases. The disintegration of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War and the advent and what seemed like the triumph of globalisation resulted in some intellectuals like Francis Fukuyama to go somewhat prematurely into a celebratory dance.

Brexit and Mr. Trump's victory appeared to some observers to change all that. As I observed elsewhere, it was far too early in 1989 and still too early in 2017 to celebrate the premature demise of globalisation, free trade, human rights, the Washington consensus and interventionist mindsets. All that Brexit and the Trump presidency signify is that Western industrial democracies have still not come to terms with slow rates of economic growth.

Still the only superpower

Does this provide an opening for an alternative order to come into being? Some rebalancing will most certainly take place. But no fundamental alteration and restructuring of the existing global order appears, at this point of time, to be realistically on the horizon. Any suggestions that the Chinese are

taking over or that the two world's largest economies have now resolved all their differences cannot but be somewhat fanciful.

The U.S. is not only an \$18 trillion economy but also has by far the largest industrial military complex and a lead in technology and innovation that it will take several decades for China, the second largest economy, to catch up. The U.S. provides global leadership in terms of global public goods. Even allowing for some set-back through mismanagement, it is inconceivable that these global public goods could be provided by even a transforming China.

This brings us to the BRI extravaganza. When the initiative was first announced in 2013, it was clear that the motivation was to find external outlets for the surplus infrastructure building and manufacturing capacity that had been domestically created and for which demand was now petering out. This brings us to the essential kernel of the problem. Large white elephant type mega projects, such as the one in Hambantota in Sri Lanka, can never be attractive for private investors who will look for returns on their investment. This is where China's state banks come in. With 68% of Sri Lanka's GDP now

required for debt servicing, such infrastructure projects have their limitations. A railway line China is building in Laos is expected to cost \$6 billion and is unlikely to break even after 11 years, as anticipated. Meanwhile Laos's public debt stands at around 60% of GDP. This is a familiar pattern in country after country. Yes, the Chinese are investing heavily overseas but not in BRI projects. BRI projects get funding from the state banks and are laying the ground for acrimony with local communities, on adequate compensation for land acquisition, Chinese labour, collusive award of works and a host of other problems. All these point to an economic model that can never be viable.

The EU-27, which account for a significant proportion of global economic activity, refused to sign on to the trade statement in Beijing. Add to that this the \$18 trillion U.S. and \$5 trillion Japanese economies. It appears highly unlikely that these countries will sign on to a global scheme that is designed to favour contracts being awarded to Chinese economic entities.

India's position is beautifully captured in its May 13 statement: "...connectivity initiatives must be based on universally recognised international norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency and equality. Connectivity initiatives must follow principles of financial responsibility to avoid projects that create... debt burden for communities..." Also: "Connectivity projects must be pursued in a manner that respects sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Staying away from the BRI

India's decision to stay away from the BRI event in Beijing was not only well considered but, in a sense, the only option open to it. That our smaller neighbours decided to attend should not be al-

lowed to influence our overall approach and strategy. Having said that, it needs to be emphasised that the time has come for us to engage the Chinese at a sufficiently senior political and strategic level on how to progress our economic relations. We would be doing ourselves great disservice if we allow this important relationship to be viewed through a 1962 mindset. Equally, a more strategic engagement with China, irrespective of provocations from them, real or imagined, will serve long-term strategic interests in terms of both our security and economic interests.

China has registered impressive economic gains. Apart from lifting hundreds of millions of its citizens out of poverty, it has become a major global economic power. It is running massive trade surpluses with most of its trading partners. Whether these surpluses are the result of China's competitiveness, unfair trading practices or its exchange rate, it is inconceivable that this state of play can continue indefinitely.

Once the leaders who were present in Beijing have returned to their capitals and resumed their normal duties, they will have no option but to evaluate proposals on their merit. The leaders in Africa are already calling for a rebalancing of bilateral trade. It is unlikely that countries ranging from Russia to Hungary or in Central Asia will agree to trading in their interests for a grand scheme in which their long-term economic interests are not looked after. For the BRI to be a success, it will need to build in win-win elements not only for China but for other stakeholders as well. Unless that is done, the scheme is not likely to take off.

Hardeep S. Puri, a diplomat, was India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations both in Geneva and in New York. He is the author of 'Perilous Interventions: The Security Council and the Politics of Chaos'

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

Perception and the reality

Readers' reactions show that coverage of three years of the Modi government has been a complex exercise



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

There are some irrefutable facts that emerged from an exercise to seek readers' opinion on how the Indian media in general, and *The Hindu* in particular, performed its task in covering the first three years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rule, compared to the American media's role in covering U.S. President Donald Trump's. These facts are, at one level, in conflict with the first principles of journalism. The tone and tenor of vocal readers, with contending and conflicting claims, bring out the complex nature of this exercise.

Five facts

The five facts that I deduced from readers' communications are, in reality, the challenges before every

journalist. First, Mr. Modi is a central figure who defines not only the political discourse of this country but also the contours of public discourse – people either adore his approach to governance or they are worried about the hyper-centralisation that is taking place. Second, for his supporters, the idea of giving him a chance seems to be without a deadline. Or if there is a deadline, it is very fluid; for those who do not see any virtue in this government, the media has given him the longest honeymoon period compared to any of the other post-Emergency politicians. Third, a section of the public is not concerned about the fact that Mr. Modi has not called for any press conference, while others feel that he has denied the media the chance to pose counter-questions and seek clarifications. Fourth, he speaks directly to the people, which is seen by one section as a brilliant move to remove the intermediaries and by the other section as a form of monologue that is not subject to scrutiny. Fifth, both sections recognise the power of in-



V. SUDRISHAN

formation that is created outside the legacy media but arrive at directly opposite conclusions. For Mr. Modi's supporters, his direct approach, amplified by the social media, is a god-sent alternative to the mainstream media. For those who are sceptical of the government, this is a dangerous mix of half-truths, myths and lies and pieces of information that is not subject to the basic requirement of what is news – namely, verification, fact-checking, attribution and gate-keeping – and hence its resonance with a growing number of people is a cause for concern.

Whenever the shortcomings of

the government pointed out by reporters, based on investigation and verifiable evidence, there is a counter-question that defies logic: what about the failures of earlier Prime Ministers? The values that govern the public sphere are seen as an impediment to the majoritarian march. The language of dissent, difference and dialogue is not seen as a democratic function but as a dirge of a bygone era.

Readers react

Former Air Vice-Marshal K.R. Karnik questions an editorial in this paper, "Preserve the idea of India", which appeared immediately after Mr. Modi's electoral victory. He was convinced that if the newspaper looked at the achievements of the last three years and juxtaposed them with the editorial, the idea of India was not only intact but had even been cemented stronger by the day. Neither did Mr. Karnik spell out the successes of this government nor was he able to point out how the editorial was wrong in its assumptions.

A reader from Bengaluru,

Ravindra Ramarao, felt that newspapers should refrain from having a political ideology in a democracy. He wrote: "Policies of the government must of course be challenged and queried as and when the need arises, but can the ideology of the government be questioned? Who is to decide if the ideology of party A is better than that of party B, C or D? Surely the electoral choice of the people in a democracy should hold supreme and be the arbiter of what should be the country's ideology – till the next elections."

There seems to be a gap between what this newspaper reports and the public's perception of these reports. A letter from Vijay S. Raghavan, from Mumbai, was in a sense a reflection of this conflicting actuality. He wrote: "There was also feeling that *The Hindu* ought to have been more neutral and 'unbiased' in coverage of Modi-related news. However, at present, I don't remember any such items to pinpoint."

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Another encounter

Six militants were reportedly killed near the Line of Control on Saturday, a day which also saw the encounter of Sabzar Ahmad Bhat, Hizbul Mujahideen commander and successor of Burhan Wani ("Six infiltrators killed in Baramulla ambush," "Protests erupt as Wani's successor killed in Pulwama," May 28). While the former news is welcome, the latter causes anguish. Jammu and Kashmir is a part of India and hence the Kashmiris who demand 'azaadi' also need to be considered Indians and brought into the mainstream. The killing of Wani last year and the consequent violence has not brought any solution to the Valley's political problems. Curbs by the state on freedom of speech, including by repeatedly blocking social media platforms, do not speak well of the situation either. The continuing stone-pelting, the multiple incidents of violence and the failure of the administration to maintain law and order inevitably point out to the need for a change in

strategy. Recent attempts at peace, such as the appointment of interlocutors by the Centre in 2010, proved to be an anti-climax. However, the push for peace needs to continue by involving all parties, under the leadership of the Centre, with a time frame. The armed forces, meanwhile, should concentrate more on border security, leaving the State's law and order maintenance to the police.

S.V. VENKATKRISHNAN,
Bengaluru

■ As the Valley witnesses violent protests after Bhat's killing in an encounter, normal life continues to be crippled, with separatists gaining the upper hand by calling for shutdowns. The separatists' tactics, with elements in Pakistan as well as some locals providing help, are only resulting in more deaths – of civilians, militants as well as security forces. School and college students continue to be the big losers. Before the situation slips further out of hand, the Centre needs to intervene with an open mind, taking assistance from eminent personalities,

to devise a solution to the deep-rooted political issue.

K.R. SRINIVASAN,
Secunderabad

■ The killing of Bhat only underscores that militancy in Kashmir is being very closely monitored by the Centre. Undeterred by the prospects of a backlash, the government's moves to eliminate militants need to be lauded. It will be a big setback to those involved in fomenting terrorism in the Valley. A strong message has been sent to the young radicals that the administration will not take things lying down. When there is a democratically elected government in place, a few gun-wielding youth should not be allowed to hold the state to ransom. It is expected that the advantage gained will not be frittered away. Hopefully, sections of the people of Kashmir too will gradually cease to call the killed militants as martyrs.

V. LAKSHMANAN,
Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

The next President

As the Opposition parties conduct talks to choose a presidential candidate, the

move by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Amit Shah to talk to them is welcome ("BJP to consult Oppn. on next President," May 28). There is some apprehension in the Opposition camp that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) will pick someone with strong saffron leanings and they would definitely like Mr. Shah to clear the air on the matter. An apolitical candidate with impeccable credentials, such as former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who was hailed as the 'people's President', would be an apt choice for the post of the country's first citizen.

C.V. ARAVIND,
Bengaluru

Ban on cattle sale

The ban by the Centre on sale of cattle at animal markets for slaughter is a retrograde step taken with little application of mind. ("New restrictions on cattle slaughter," May 27). Livestock rearing is one of the major allied activities of the agrarian populace in the country. With large parts of the country reeling under an unprecedented drought,

the small and marginal farmers are forced to depend on cattle sales for livelihood. In any case, the animals are sold only after they stop giving milk or became infirm. The Centre's ban would impact the country's big meat export industry. The business activities associated with leather would also face grave uncertainties. The allegation by some sections that this has been taken to further marginalise the minorities cannot be brushed aside. It is disgusting that instead of taking action against vigilante groups, the government is pandering to the same forces.

J. ANANTHA PADMANABHAN,
Srirangam, Tamil Nadu

Let's ruin it

It is shocking that passengers damaged and even vandalised amenities on board the new train, Tejas Express, just after its inaugural run. They walked away with headphones and defaced the LED screens, apart from damaging the bio-vacuum fitted washrooms. This leads to the question: how much does an Indian deserve development? The urge to destroy something new seems irresistible in India and has been demonstrated innumerable times. Didn't the Railway authorities foresee this?

SAMYUKTA A.,
Mysuru

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:
www.hindu.com/opinion/letters/

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

The last paragraph of "Rahman lends his voice for stem cell donation" (May 28, 2017, some editions) erroneously gave the number of Datri's registered stem cell donors as 21,000. It should have been 2,16,952.

An article headlined "What Emperor Ashoka knew about free speech" (May 28, 2017, The Public Eye, Comment), referred to the artful management of the tongue as vacāgati. It should have been vacaguti.

It is the policy of *The Hindu* to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-28552963; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturji Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. No personal visits. The Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor are on www.thehindu.com

Connecting the dots after three years in the saddle

Despite a series of promises made in 2014, the track record of the Modi government in key areas is patchy



KAPIL SIBAL

In 2014, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won the mandate to rule India and took power after 10 years of Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) rule. The BJP-led regime has now completed three years in office – on May 25 this year – which is also a fair enough time to critically examine the track record of this government. I let the facts speak for themselves in light of a series of unkept promises.

Upholding farmers' welfare

In one of his "Chai Pe Charcha" programmes on March 20, 2014, Narendra Modi, then Gujarat Chief Minister, termed farmer suicides as a "national agony" and added that "the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) shall stand behind all farmers hit by natural calamities like the recent hailstorms, or economic crises. I shall not be able to sleep peacefully till I do something for you." He wanted a system where with the infusion of modern technology, water resources and efforts to double agriculture output, farmers were not driven to end their lives. Thus his attention was focussed on ensuring farmer welfare.

According to a National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report, titled "Accidental deaths and suicides in India, 2015", the number of farmers who committed suicide was 8,007. The corresponding number in 2014 was 5,650. Thus there has been a 42% increase in loss of lives between 2014 and 2015. After blaming the UPA and its policies for farmer suicides, in the run-up to the 2014 general election and much after, this government now attributes suicides to reasons which it says have nothing to do with its policies.

For instance, in reply to a question in Parliament on July 24, 2015, Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh even cited among several other reasons, "love affairs" and "impotency" as key factors. To make matters worse, Haryana's Agriculture Minister, O.P. Dhankar, in a statement on April 29, 2015, termed farmers who commit suicide as "cowards".

Now back to Mr. Modi. Addressing a rally in Pathankot in Punjab, on April 25, 2014, as the BJP's prime ministerial candidate, he said: "If the NDA comes to power, it will ensure remunerative prices to the farmers by adding 50%

profit into the peasants' input cost." In addition he said: "We will fix the Minimum Support Price of crops incorporating 50% profit in farmers' cost of production including seed, irrigation, manure, labour." And he ended by saying that "no one will be allowed to loot farmers".

Fast forward to February 2015. In an affidavit filed in the Supreme Court, the Modi government did a U-turn, stating that the Minimum Support Price (MSP) cannot be fixed on the basis of "cost+50 percent" as that would distort the market. Between 2009 and '10, the MSP for paddy was ₹950 a quintal as against a production cost of ₹670 a quintal – translating to a 42% margin of profit for farmers.

In 2015-16, the MSP for paddy was ₹1,410 a quintal against an estimated production cost of ₹1,324 a quintal, which is only a 6.5% margin of profit to farmers. It is clear that the procurement prices of wheat, paddy and other agricultural produce have been much less than the price received by farmers during the UPA's tenure.

Between 2014 and 2016, the Modi government hiked the MSP of rice only by 3.9% per year. In comparison, during 2011 and 2013, the UPA increased the MSP of rice by 9.5% per year. For wheat, the figure is 4.1% per year under the Modi government as against 7% per year under the UPA.

Bringing back black money

Another major issue for the BJP government has been the subject of black money. In his "Chai Pe Charcha" campaign, launched in Ahmedabad on February 12, 2014, Mr. Modi had said: "The whole country is worried about black money... We will bring back each and every penny deposited abroad by Indian citizens. I am committed to this because this money belongs to the poor people of India and no one has the right to do this kind of anti-national activity."

The facts. In the last three years, the Modi government has received the names of those with illegal bank accounts in foreign havens. Yet, they remain a closely guarded secret.

On October 17, 2014, nearly five months after assuming office, the Modi government told the Supreme Court that it could not reveal the names of Indians with accounts in foreign banks due to double taxation avoidance treaties with other countries – a position taken by the UPA. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley dismissed the government's reluctance in revealing the names by saying: "Is the present NDA government led by Modi in any way reluctant to make some names public? Certainly



Selling a dream: Then prime ministerial candidate of Bharatiya Janata Party, Narendra Modi, addresses supporters at a rally in Patna in October 2013. • GETTY IMAGES

not. We have no difficulty in making names public. But they can be made public only in accordance with due process of law."

The Modi government now states that any account opened after 2017 will be made public, pursuant to an agreement between India and foreign powers under the Common Reporting Standards (CRS) or the Standard for Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information, an information standard for the automatic exchange of information (AEOI).

The resulting question is this. Why not the names of account holders before 2017? This was a demand made on the floor of the House by the BJP and the rest of the Opposition who attacked the UPA for not revealing the names of account holders.

Job creation

Let me focus on another Modi promise – of creating one crore jobs. Addressing an election rally in Agra, on November 22, 2013, Mr. Modi had said, "If the BJP comes to power, it will provide one crore jobs which the UPA government could not do despite announcing it before the last Lok Sabha polls." Incidentally, the point about farmer interests becoming paramount under BJP rule was also made at this rally.

The facts. In the three years 2009 to 2011, when India's GDP was still growing at an average 8.5%, the organised sector was producing on average 9.5 lakh new jobs every year. In the last two years, 2015 and 2016, average employment generation has plummeted to less than 2 lakh jobs a year. This is less than 25% of the annual employment generated before 2011. In 2015, employment generated in eight labour intensive sectors collapsed to an all-time low of 1.5 lakh jobs.

By adding service sectors to the organised sector employment data, the figures show a slight improvement in the growth of new jobs in 2016. New jobs generated increased from 1.55 lakh in 2015 to 2.31 lakh in 2016. But this is still only 25% of the organised sector jobs generated in 2009.

Data on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act show that unemployment continues unabated, and in fact seems to be worsening. In Mr. Modi's first year as Prime Minister, 4.65 crore households demanded work in the scheme. In 2015-16, this number had increased by 15% to reach 5.3 crore. In 2016-17, it further increased by 6% to reach a staggering 5.69 crore households in search of work.

Another promise – on the safety of women. In a public rally in Pune, on

November 1, 2013, Mr. Modi, while accusing the Congress of failing to ensure safety for women in the capital, said: "In spite of Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi being women, Delhi is known as the rape capital. People don't know who to trust anymore."

Women's safety

Interestingly, at the BJP's National Executive in New Delhi, in January 2014, Mr. Modi, while speaking about empowering women and ensuring that they went from being homemakers to 'nation builders', said: "What is happening with our mothers and sisters in the country leaves us shame-faced. Dignity of women should be a commitment."

The facts. According to an NCRB report, though there was a slight reduction by 3.1% in crime against women in 2015 as compared to 2014, there was an increase of 2.5% in instances of sexual offences against women. There was also an increase in instances of kidnapping and abduction of women in 2015. Delhi recorded the highest overall rate of crime against women. Data from Delhi, the epicentre of the Nirbhaya rape protest movement, shows that, contrary to expectations, under a new government and with a new law – in 2013, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2013 or

the Anti-Rape Bill, later called the Nirbhaya Act, came into existence – the number of rapes has gone up in the capital of India. As in Delhi, national data on rape too showed a substantial increase in 2015, when compared with 2012 data. In 2012, there were 24,923 cases while in 2015, there were 36,651 cases.

Curbing inflation

Another Modi statement made in early 2014: "The Congress had promised to curb inflation in 100 days, but did they live up to their promises? Don't trust those who betray public trust. If the governments of Vajpayeeji and Morarji Desai could stop price rise, why can't we? The BJP government in 2014 will do it, I assure you."

The facts. Food inflation has not shown any trends of reversing. Instead, prices of essential commodities are on the rise, with pulses especially selling at ₹100-₹150 a kg. Petrol and diesel prices continue to be raised with shocking regularity. Industrial production is down, the rupee is down and somehow people have stopped believing in GDP figures that this government relies upon.

On corruption

Finally, I focus on yet another Modi promise – of delivering a 'corruption-free India'. At a rally in Sujanpur, Himachal Pradesh, on February 16, 2014, Mr. Modi had said: "Mere liye na koi aagey, na peehhey. Kiske liye bhraashatachaar karunga (I have no family ties. I am single. Who will I be corrupted for?)"

He added, "This mind and body is totally devoted to the nation." Then again on February 23, 2014, he tweeted: "When we come to power, we will serve as Chowkidars who will never allow any Hand to loot coffers of our nation." Again on April 13, 2014, he tweeted: "[The] NDA is firm on its commitment to create a corruption-free India so that best opportunities are created for our youth."

The facts. There has been an increase – by 67% – in complaints received of corruption in various government departments. According to the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), the Railways tops the list with over 11,000 complaints.

The probity watchdog received a total of 49,847 complaints in 2016, as against 29,838 in 2015 – an increase of about 67%, according to the CVC's annual report tabled recently in Parliament.

Kapil Sibal is a former Union Minister and senior Congress leader

SINGLE FILE

Cinema of Punjab

With a forthcoming film on Duleep Singh, it continues to explore the region's history

HARI NARAYAN



Among the media chosen for special screening at Cannes this year was a trailer of a biopic on a certain Victorian-era Punjabi royal whose exile and exposure to British culture at a young age fostered a profound sense of identity crisis in him, one that would consume him later. *The Black Prince*, a trilingual, is a Hollywood production with a Punjabi soul. Its release in July will come at a time when the cinema of Punjab is trying hard to move away and create an identity distinct from the Mumbai film industry.

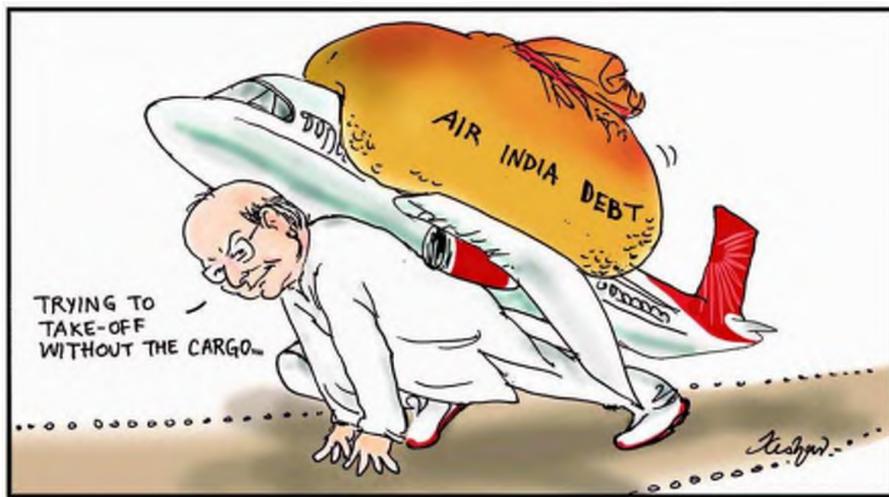
Among the ways Punjabi films have tried to do so is through their focus on historical figures. The biggest success story here is *Chaar Sahibzaade* (2014), an animated account of the life of Guru Gobind Singh and his four sons, which went on to become the biggest blockbuster of the industry.

The Black Prince, by a British actor-director of Punjabi origin, Kavi Raz, is to be a bildungsroman of Duleep Singh (1838-1893), the youngest son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Enthroned as a child, exiled before he entered his teens and deracinated as an adolescent, Singh spent a major part of his life in Europe as a British subject. However, his soul remained that of a fallen royal, his thoughts oscillating between the comforts of England and a desire to regain his conquered kingdom.

Duleep Singh's exile marked the end of the Sikh Empire which had achieved its zenith under Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the early part of the 19th century. Extending from Khyber Pass in the west to western Tibet in the east, its fiercely independent nature was a hurdle in the East India Company's attempts to colonise the entire subcontinent. Hence, it is natural that following the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839, an ascendant British Empire seeking to seize more territory found a ready opportunity. When the 11-year-old Duleep Singh signed the Treaty of Lahore in 1849, forfeiting, among the rest, sovereignty and the Kohinoor diamond, it was 'mission accomplished' for the British, Punjab being among the last kingdoms to fall to the Empire.

There have been articles, books and documentaries – including by the BBC – on Duleep Singh. So, what's left to explore for the big screen? The makers say they have focussed on two aspects of his life that could shine on celluloid: the emotional bond he developed with Queen Victoria and his later reunion with his mother, Jind Kaur.

The ambitious project also indicates that the lukewarm response to *Chaar Sahibzaade*'s sequel has not deterred Punjabi-origin makers from attempting historicals. Other figures on whom films are being made include Joginder Singh Sahnan, awarded the Param Vir Chakra for his contribution to the India-China War in 1962, and Hari Singh Nalwa, a commander under Ranjit Singh. In the footsteps of films on historical events such as *Punjab 1984* and *Chauthi Koot*, these efforts show that when it comes to forging individuality, history provides great material to the cinema of Punjab.



CONCEPTUAL Schelling's model

ECONOMICS

A model that explains racial segregation in housing by using the relatively simple decisions that individuals make regarding the choice of neighbours. When individuals of a particular race show even a mild preference to live near others of the same race, it leads to the rise of segregated housing communities on the whole. Thus, deep racial segregation can result even without the deliberate top-down imposition of racial prejudice on a community. The model was first proposed by American economist and Nobel laureate Thomas Schelling in 1971, and later explained by him in the 1978 book *Micromotives and Macrobehaviour*.

MORE ON THE WEB

Listen: Meena Kandasamy in conversation with Tishani Doshi
<http://bit.ly/MeenaKandasamyIntw>

SHELF HELP

About a reclusive icon

Two books that tell the Fori Nehru story

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE

Fori Nehru, also known as Shobha Nehru (in picture with Indira Gandhi), who passed away recently at the age of 108, was witness to many historic moments. However, she remained an enigma in her lifetime as there was little material available about her.

In 2009, after Fori turned 100, I turned to scholar and conservationist Shernaz Cama, who had known her for many years, for information. I told her that though I had found a mention in books on Indira Gandhi and B.K. Nehru, Fori's husband, hers was a character that appeared only fleetingly. It looked as if Fori's life lacked a full narrative force in itself. In most of the biographies of Indira Gandhi, she appears as a friend and confidante. In B.K. Nehru's autobiography *Nice Guys Finish Second*, she appears as a wife who gives direction and stability to a remark-



able public life. Cama searched her study and fetched me *Letters to Auntie Fori*. "Read this and return the book on time," she said. The book is remarkable as it grew out of a conversation between Fori and Martin Gilbert, a friend of her son Ashok. Gilbert would earn fame later as a historian and the author of Winston Churchill's official biography.

Gilbert was a student at Oxford where he met had met Ashok. In 1957, he visited Delhi and befriended

Ashok's family. Forty years later, Fori disclosed to him that she had no idea of the history of the Jewish community to which she belonged. Gilbert, himself Jewish, began to write a series of short letters, explaining the creation of the Jewish diaspora, the treatment of Jews at the hands of different empires and, finally, their persecution before and during the Second World War, which included the Holocaust. Fori, originally from Hungary, could connect with this last part, as members of her family were among the victims.

In her lifetime, Fori remained inaccessible to most writers. However, the two books – by B.K. Nehru and Gilbert – add up to be a biography of sorts as the former offers glimpses into her life through the eyes of her family members while the latter tells us about her European past and heritage.

FROM THE HINDU ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 29, 1967

Firing and clashes in Calcutta

Four persons were killed and at least 68 persons injured here [Calcutta] when police opened fire to-day [May 28] to disperse rioting crowds in Central Calcutta and East Calcutta. The Army was called out in both the areas to maintain law and order. The trouble in Central Calcutta started this morning [May 28] when two groups of gamblers came to a clash while at Beliaghata in East Calcutta violence erupted in the evening [May 28] when local residents and working class people from outside the State came to blows.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 29, 1917

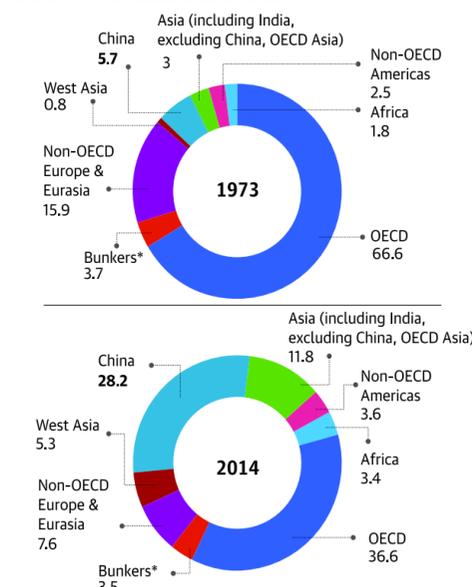
A Bail Application.

This morning Mr. V.C. Seshacharriar moved for bail for 24 Mahomedans, pending the disposal of an appeal to the Sessions Court of North Arcot against the conviction and sentence passed by the additional First class Deputy Magistrate of Vellore in the following circumstances:- There was an antecedent feud between the Hindu and Mahomedan inhabitants of the village of Chengam, Tiruvannamalai Taluk and the alleged occurrence of rioting among others, even according to the prosecution evidence, consisted in the Mahomedans objecting to the Hindu procession passing their mosque during their hours of prayer and worship and their not objecting to the procession itself.

DATA POINT

The Asian contrast

There has been a significant increase in the Chinese and Asian shares in worldwide CO₂ emissions since 1973



*Bunkers denote fuel emissions from international aviation and maritime transport SOURCE: INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY