



A thought for today

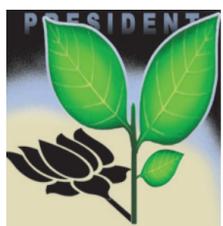
'The only chance George has of reconciliation,' argued his friend, 'is by distinguishing himself in the coming campaign'

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, Vanity Fair

Chennai Churning

With AIADMK now split into three factions, governance has gone for a toss

Tamil Nadu politics has been in a state of flux since the death of chief minister J Jayalalithaa, who had neither put in place a second line of leadership nor groomed a successor to the AIADMK throne. The breaking of AIADMK – first into two and later into three – has implications for not just Tamil Nadu in terms of balance of power, but also for the Centre that wants the party to remain united as a support block in Parliament. For AIADMK, the latest in a series of destabilising moves came on Thursday when 25 legislators and district secretaries asked chief minister Edappadi Palaniswami to acknowledge the leadership of TTV Dhinakaran, deputy general secretary of the party and nephew of party general secretary Sasikala. However, EPS is firm that the Sasikala clan will be kept at bay.



O Panneerselvam, who took over as chief minister moments after Jayalalithaa's death, appeared to be cruising comfortably when he was suddenly asked to step down. After he turned a rebel in February, it has been virtual anarchy in AIADMK. BJP, at the Centre, has been discreetly calling the shots much to the chagrin of DMK, the main opposition party in the state. With DMK leader MK Stalin asking the governor

to call for a second trust vote by the EPS government, AIADMK can remain fragmented only at its peril. A united AIADMK is also in the interests of BJP which doesn't want DMK to cash in.

The casualty, meanwhile, is governance. Development and economic growth have come to a standstill, no major policy decision is being taken, and corporates are looking elsewhere to invest amid allegations of corruption. Aggravating the situation is the debilitating drought. With the ruling party in disarray, the government is even wary of holding the long overdue local body elections.

Such churning has to be resolved if Tamil Nadu has to return to the path of progress. Stability in governance can happen only if the AIADMK factions sort out their differences and merge. If rapprochement cannot be achieved, an alternative is for the state to go in for fresh elections. Two assembly elections in as many years may not be an ideal exercise in democracy, but if only a fresh mandate holds out the possibility of a stable government it can no longer brook delay.

Mumbai's Long Wait

Glacial pace of convictions in 1993 blasts case indicts India's criminal justice system

The conviction of six men last week in relation to serial bomb blasts which terrorised Mumbai in March 1993 is an important milestone in bringing perpetrators to justice. This is the second batch of convictions with 123 people prosecuted earlier for one of the world's worst terror strikes, where 257 people were killed on account of 12 bomb blasts in less than three hours, devastating India's commercial capital. What remains very worrisome is that some of the prime accused, including Dawood Ibrahim, are yet to be brought to book 24 years after the blasts.



The 1993 blasts represented a watershed moment in India's battle against crime. It marked the confluence of Mumbai's underworld gangs with cross-border terror. Erstwhile lines of demarcation disappeared, calling for more sophisticated policing. Unfortunately, more than two decades later it is apparent that many important lessons still haven't been internalised. India's criminal justice system looks dysfunctional and police investigation, which is its foundation, appears to be caught in a time warp.

Prosecution of the 1993 blasts case is yet to be completed. Not just victims but entire society is bound to be frustrated at the glacial pace of justice. An inordinate delay affects the quality of justice. Delay is also unfair for the accused person who was acquitted last week, after spending a decade in prison. The lessons from this case need to be internalised if India is to record greater success in combating organised crime. A weak criminal justice system provides an opportunity to organised crime, which will be eventually used as an instrument of subversion by terror groups. The most important takeaway is that India's safety is intrinsically linked to the efficacy of its criminal justice system.

You take a selfie, I'll tweet

PM Modi and President Trump meet for the first time this month. Extracts from a conversation that will not be

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Modi: Ah Donald, can I give you a tight hug like I gave my friend Barack? Barack and I used to hug each other.

Trump: I'd love to hug you Mr Modi but I got a problem with Indians who've had visa problems in the US.

Modi: Arre forget the past. I want to discuss this H-1B visa with you. Discrimination is bad. In India, there's no discrimination. We all live by my slogan sabka saath, sabka vikas.

Trump: My slogan is America first, Trump first and me first. I do my own isolationist thing.

Modi: But I hear you have a Trump tower in Mumbai and are outsourcing your name to Indian builders?

Trump: Hey, that's business, being a Gujarati I thought you'd know.

Modi: Talking of business, when will you demand that Pakistan hands over Dawood and Hafiz to India?

Trump: Dawood? Hafiz? Who're they, pal? I only know Osama and he's dead, right? In any case, am too busy bombing Syria and squeezing Qatar to worry about Pakistan.

Modi: What about taking a stand against China? I took the Chinese to Ahmedabad. We swung on jhoolas. But still they want to do with their own thing.

Trump: Ah China, now those guys are big business. You covfefe?

Modi: Donald, you make too many gaffes on social media. That's why I have more followers than you.

Trump: I am staying away from the Chinese because I have troubles with Russians at the moment. You know how the media are gunning for me because of my so-called Russia links.

Modi: Arre, I'm also a good friend of Vlad. And why you worried about media? Don't you have the CBI?

Trump: What's CBI? Like FBI?

Modi: Something similar. Except I control it.

Trump: Great! Now we're talking, Narendra. How about I send FBI to you and you send CBI to me?

Modi: No, CBI is a caged parrot, it can't go anywhere.

Trump: I hate the press. Bigly.

Modi: I do too, Donald. But now can we have a selfie please with the White House as background?

Trump: Sure and then let's tweet together at midnight! Deal?

The Immigrant Swansong

New Delhi must tactfully seek to expand freedom of movement for trade and commerce

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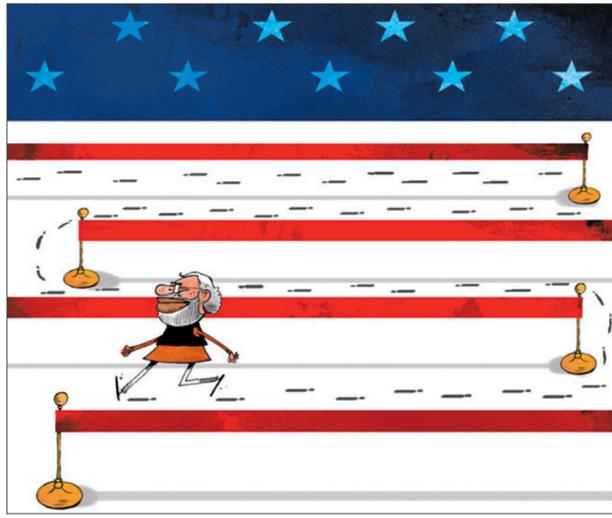
There's an old joke about the scene that greeted Neil Armstrong and co when they stepped on the moon: They saw an auto garage shop manned by an Indian Sikh; they drank chai at a tea stall run by a Keralite Malayali; and finally they checked into a motel managed by a Gujarati Patel.

Advancing the script, the first person to travel to Mars in the near future, who may well be of Indian origin, would apocryphally meet a 'sardar' managing the Martian branch of Tesla, a 'Mallu' (or Goan) running Mars's first Michelin-star restaurant, and a 'Gujiu' managing a five-star hotel.

Ethnic stereotyping aside, the legend of the Indian diaspora is immense. There are more than 30 million people of Indian origin across the globe, a population almost the size of Canada's. There is no country where they are not present, including remote island states such as Nauru in the Pacific and isolated outposts such as Barrow, Alaska. Their expansive emigration has allowed India to build bridges with countries and communities across the globe, giving New Delhi economic openings, a stake in the political stability and prosperity of resident countries, and geopolitical heft.

Such is the allure of its diaspora for India – in no small measure because of the nearly \$70 billion they remit annually – that New Delhi has now developed a template for community outreach whenever the prime minister travels abroad. Over the years, such community events have become bigger, brighter and more boisterous, as the Indian immigrants have found their voice on the strength of sweat and toil, smarts and savvy, embracing success like few other ethnicities have managed.

Slogans and cries of Bharat Mata ki jai now rend the air in arenas across the globe, from New York's Madison Square Garden to Sydney's Super Dome to Dubai's cricket stadium. (Even in as politically restrictive a country as Saudi



Arabia – temporary home to an estimated three million Indian workers – the Indian prime minister recently reached out to the country's toiling expats.)

Nowhere has the Indian diaspora grown and thrived as much as in America, home to nearly four million People of Indian Origin and Non-Resident Indians, now chronicled extensively as the wealthiest and best-educated community not just in the US, but arguably anywhere in the world. From architects to astronauts, from yoga instructors to zoo keepers, from law and politics to acting and entertainment, there is not a sphere of activity they haven't broken into.

With a median family household income of over \$1,00,000 and 70% of its adult population holding at least a master's degree (both way above the US average), this 'model minority' is the envy of other nations and, till recently at least, pride of the host country in showcasing its diversity and openness. Indeed, no country on earth has taken in as many Indians as

Next week, when Prime Minister Modi arrives in the US capital, he will meet the Indian community at a modest ballroom which is a far cry from Madison Square Garden in 2014 or SAP Center in 2015

its citizens as the United States.

There is a growing sense – and a few small indicators – that the historical mandate for openness and acceptance in what is fundamentally an immigrant society is being altered, if not subverted. Next week, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives in the US capital, he will meet the Indian community at the Ritz-Carlton in Tysons Corner in neighbouring Virginia, in a modest ballroom of 14,000 square feet that can accommodate some 1,500 people.

This is a far cry from the 15,000 plus

people who stamped into New York City's Madison Square Garden in 2014 and Silicon Valley's SAP Center in 2015, two events that set the tempo and provided the template for similar prime ministerial outreach across the world. Of course, it is possible that availability and security issues may have resulted in a distant venue, but scuttlebutt suggests there is more to this.

Mind you, the capital area's Indian-origin population is large enough to have merited the Walter E Washington Convention Center (which offers the city's largest ballroom at 52,000 square feet), or at least the Washington Marriott Wardman Park or Omni Shoreham, venues where Modi's predecessors Manmohan Singh and AB Vajpayee respectively addressed the community.

But this is not the time, nor the dispensation, with which you share or showcase the strength of the diaspora. In as much as previous administration officials and US lawmakers were awed by the Madison Square Garden spectacle (and said so publicly), and saw it as a celebration of the country's diversity, this regime is more likely to see it as a threat.

Already, the signs are not propitious – not just in the US but in many immigrant destinations abroad, including UK and Australia. From proposing ideological tests for potential immigrants to shutting down guest worker visas (which have led to US citizenship for many Indians) on the pretext of misuse, nativist boffins have begun to curtail immigration, initiating steps that have also put a hex on Indian students who venture abroad to study, on tourists, and indeed on businesses.

Of course, no country can afford to have open borders and every country needs to regulate inflow of immigrants; New Delhi shouldn't mind that. But what India should aim for is to secure and expand the facility of its people to freely travel for education and entertainment, trade and commerce – India's great strengths – while hoping both for its and America's sake that the nativist mood against globalisation is a temporary aberration. Immigration is not the issue; trade and commerce are.

'Pakistan is supporting IS-Khorasan in Afghanistan ... it is simply another tool in Pakistan's spoiler toolkit'

It has been a bloody Ramadan in Afghanistan, starting with a Taliban car bombing in eastern Afghanistan, the massive suicide bomb attack near the Indian embassy in Kabul's diplomatic area that killed over 90 people and last week's insider shooting of US military personnel by a renegade Afghan soldier in northern Afghanistan. Durham University's Srinjoy Bose, currently visiting research fellow at Australian National University, served as an international election observer during the 2014 Afghan presidential elections and spoke to Pratigyan Das about the country's changing security situation and what it means for India.



■ How badly has the political and security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated?

Afghanistan is in turmoil. Tension between the camps of Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai and CEO Abdullah Abdullah is palpable. In the recent past, Ghani's camp has tried to engineer Abdullah's dismissal. It was averted only because this was not supported by the international community. Many of Ghani's actions and policies have been criticised by Abdullah. Abdullah has even publicly declared that Ghani is "unfit for the presidency" but Abdullah's own camp is in turmoil with senior allies within his party base having lost confidence in his leadership.

Most of Kunduz province is now controlled by Taliban. Similarly, Taliban have made advances in Tirin Kot, capital of Urugzan province, and have taken

agencies with ethnic allies. Abdullah has done the same.

The perception of discrimination among Afghanistan's minority communities – Hazaras and Uzbeks – has contributed to a widening ethnic and regional divide. Political and ethnic partisanship has permeated the security apparatus, too, undermining the command structures of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. Some observers have even suggested

■ Observers point out that Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K) is becoming a stronger force in the region. Your take?

Their activities are certainly gaining more exposure. The most interesting corollary of their rise has been a view in Russian, Chinese and even Iranian quarters that the international community can and should negotiate with Taliban – the chief enemy is IS-K and Taliban can assist in this fight against the enemy.

First, the shift in Chinese, Russian views of Taliban may help the peace process progress but this legitimises Taliban and has certainly played into Pakistan's pro-negotiation rhetoric. Second, the Chinese and Russian position – if it eventuates in a negotiated peace – will reshape Afghan politics. IS-K will be defeated but everything from security to the constitution, national-level politics to local-level dynamics, will be renegotiated.

There is evidence that ISI is supporting IS-K. It is simply another tool in Pakistan's spoiler toolkit.

■ How do you see US Afghan policy changing under President Donald Trump?

Recent calls for a modest troop increase are evidence of a ramshackle strategy. How, and what, can a few thousand more troops achieve where 1,00,000 failed? The hullabaloo over dropping ordnance GBU-43/B, a 10-ton bomb, in Achin district on April 11, 2016, is further evidence that Trump is all about "show of force". There are sections within the Afghan administration and civil society who welcome Trump's rhetoric and show of assertiveness.

■ What do you make of the recent decision by Afghanistan and Pakistan to revive the Quadrilateral Coordination Group on Afghanistan?

The Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) – comprising the US, China, Pakistan and Afghanistan – process died in 2016 with the killing of Taliban leader Mullah Mansour. It was succeeded by the 2017 Six-Party Talks that included Russia, China, Pakistan, India, Iran and Afghanistan. Just as Moscow was excluded from the earlier QCG process, this time Washington was excluded from the consultative talks led by Moscow. Trump administration has sought to revive the QCG process.

A new Great Game is manifesting. This is bad news for both Afghanistan and India. It strengthens Pakistan's hand in the peace process. India will need to convince Russia and China that their overtures to Taliban are misguided.

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Yoga Sadhana And Progress Of Civilisation

Nivedita Joshi

Yoga has been defined as 'Chitta vritti nirodha', that is, 'stops all internal and external forms of thinking which may sprout with or without volition' – stilling the mind. Chitta stands for three things: mind, intelligence and ego. Mind has no discriminative power but has the power of gathering and feeling. Intelligence discriminates and reasons and comes to determinative knowledge. Intelligence is the tool to find the true Self, but the 'i-ness' interferes with intelligence and prides itself on being the true Self. Intelligence is the vehicle of the true Self whereas i-ness is the impostor of the true Self.

The human body has three layers: causal, subtle and gross. The causal body is the sheath of the soul; it is incorruptible and non-decaying. When you are not in this body, you lose your true state and dwell in the chitta. Then,

it is the subtle body or the physiological sheath. Senses of perception and organs of action are vehicles of gross body, dependent on mind, without which the outer body cannot function.

Gross and subtle bodies are inter-dependent. We use our senses to fulfil and enjoy the mind's demands and so get caught in the web of worldly desire. Like the spokes of a wheel, these enjoyments revolve between pleasure and pain. We become victims of circumstances, which create dual consciousness or personalities. This state is the seed of separation – vyogya, pain and dukkha, sorrow.

Practice of yoga sublimates the mind through conscious effort to obtain release from the web of pleasure and pain; it leads one to experience a state that is beyond pleasure and pain, as a pristine, pure

and static shuddha swaroopa.

Yoga gives us ways to develop harmony and balance and achieve holistic health. Patanjali says that it is possible to achieve these either by practice and dispassion or by total surrender to the Supreme. Since total surrender is difficult, even impossible for most of us, Patanjali insists on abhyasa, practice and vairagya, dispassion. When harmony is achieved, then abhyasa and vairagya, starting out as forced regimental disciplines, become a natural process and the practitioner continues them without any motive or desire. From then on, his sadhana becomes vairagya abhyasa. In this state, the practitioner develops stability in mind and steadfastness in intelligence. He has no more disparities within himself or his encasement, the body. His sadhana becomes all in one and

one in all, the true nature of oneself.

The practitioner of yoga, the yoga sadhaka, thus bridges the gap between body, mind and Self and becomes master of these three. The knower, the knowable and the known, become one. The journey of the seeker comes to an end. Through a constant process of evolving culture from yama to dhyana, he civilises himself and becomes kushal (adept), a true owner of the sacred body.

The light of wisdom dawns on him, like dharma meghas, a rain cloud of justice. As the dharma of clouds is to pour rain, the yogi's wisdom pours knowledge that is ever-pure, ever-green and continues to live for posterity. He becomes Krithartha, that is, his way of life reflects on humanity like the reflection of the mirror; and transforms it. Thereby, the culture of the yogi becomes the civilisation of the world. (A disciple of Yogacharya BKS Iyengar, the author teaches yoga in New Delhi.)

Sacredspace

My Priority

My priority is cricket. Everything that I get apart from it is a result of the effort on the field. Everything else follows. I am pretty aware of my priorities, and I don't really focus on things that are not as important to me as cricket.

Virat Kohli