

13 EXPLAINED



SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

Does Trump know how the Warsaw uprising ended? The “blood of patriots” did not save Poland.

ANNE APPLEBAUM, author, professor; 156,000 followers. In Warsaw Thursday, Trump said the West was saved with the blood of (Polish) patriots. In 1944-45, as the Warsaw Uprising collapsed, Hitler’s army sent civilians to labour camps, and entirely destroyed the city. 200,000 Polish civilians were massacred.

RECALLING 1995 GENOCIDE

In indictment of Dutch forces, tale of a larger failure in Srebrenica



BEYOND THE NEWS

BY SAMEER ARSHAD KHATLANI

EXPRESS EDITORS INTERPRET

FOR YEARS, Ramiz Nukic quarried human remains in the forests around Srebrenica, finding almost daily the bones of someone massacred here in July 1995. The little Bosnian town on the banks of the Drina river had a Muslim majority until Serb forces swooped on it — and butchered some 8,000 residents in a matter of days. They filmed their action, stopping the slaughter only when the camera batteries ran out.

Nukic, who lost his father and brother in the massacre — Europe’s worst since World War II — began looking for their remains after returning home in 1999. The bones he found had helped authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina identify 300 victims until July 2015, when *The Independent* profiled him 20 years after the massacre. On June 27, The Hague Court of Appeals ruled the Netherlands was “partially liable” for about 350 of the Srebrenica murders, largely upholding a lower court’s ruling from 2014, and underscoring the failure of the international community in preventing the massacre.

A Dutch UN peacekeeping contingent had fled in the face of a Serb attack on their base in Potocari, where the Bosnian Muslims had sought refuge. They were outnumbered as the Serbs hauled men and boys into buses and trucks. Around 2,000 people were executed immediately on July 11, 1995 — subsequently, another 6,000 were hunted down and butchered in the forests. Some were tortured to death, others shot or hanged; some were left to die with booby traps to kill those trying to save them. Piles of bodies were scooped up by bulldozers and dumped in pits. In Kravica, Serb general Ratko Mladic promised 1,000 Bosnian Muslims that they would be united with their families before executing them. *The Independent* quoted a survivor later recalling at The Hague war crimes tribunal that he “walked over dead bodies” to safety.

The Serbs had launched a campaign of genocide in 1992 for a “racially pure statelet” after Bosnia voted for secession from Yugoslavia. Eastern Bosnia bore the brunt of the campaign, where food embargoes and bombings forced residents out of their

homes. The Serbs besieged Srebrenica for three years before they overran it, as 15,000 Bosniaks fled to the nearby mountains. The rest sought refuge at the Dutch peacekeeping base. The invasion had caught them off guard — the UN had declared the town as one of six protected safe areas, and its population had swollen from 9,000 to 42,000 in 1993.

As the Serbs started shelling peacekeepers’ positions, pleas of the Dutch forces for air support went unanswered. This, despite a UN report warning in April 1993 of a “potential massacre in which there could be 25,000 victims if Serb forces were to enter Srebrenica”. In 2016, *The Observer* quoted Serb politician Radovan Karadzic of having promised the Bosnian Serb Assembly that there would be “blood up to the knees” if his army entered the town.

The Hague court found the Dutch peacekeepers to be ill-equipped and lacking in “strong leadership”. Presiding judge Gepek Dulek-Schermers noted that they “knew or should have known that the men were not only being screened”. The judge added that the victims were in real danger of being subjected to torture or execution, and “by having the men leave the compound unreservedly, they were deprived of a chance of survival”. Dutch soldiers, the judge said, had facilitated the separation of the men and boys among the refugees.

The Observer report spoke of the “mass of evidence” that indicated that the fall of Srebrenica constituted a part of a policy by Britain, France, the US and the UN leadership in pursuit of “peace at any price; peace at the terrible expense of Srebrenica”. It said western powers could not be said to have known the extent of the massacre that would follow — but “the evidence demonstrates they were aware — or should have been — of Mladic’s declared intention to have the Bosniak Muslim population of the entire region ‘vanish completely’.”

A series of events had been building up to the genocide. In July 1992, non-Serbs in Celinac were prohibited from moving around after 4 pm. *The Independent* reported that they were not allowed to swim, fish, and gather in groups of over three, and to sell or exchange apartments. The world sat on its hands as the situation degenerated with the emergence of concentration camps, mass rapes and killings that culminated into mind-numbing “scenes from hell” written on “the darkest pages of history”, according to a judge in The Hague.

Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic, whose idea of nationalism is blamed for the massacre, was prosecuted for war crimes and died in prison. He was among over 20 people indicted for their involvement. Mladic was put on trial in 2011.

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Bosnian Serb Gen. Ratko Mladic (left) has a drink with Dutch commander Col. Thom Karremans on July 12, 1995, a day before the UN Dutch peacekeepers evacuated Bosnian Muslims from their compound in Srebrenica. AP Archive



EXPRESS ECONOMIC HISTORY SERIES

Private to public to private: how civil aviation has come full circle

65 years ago, Nehru’s government nationalised JRD Tata’s airline, rejecting his plea for a ‘strong, efficient Indian air transport system’ and ‘justice for investors and staff’. The government has now conceded it can no longer carry the burden of Air India and its accumulated losses of Rs 50,000 crore, and wants to divest



IN FACT

BY SHAJI VIKRAMAN

EXPRESS EDITORS INTERPRET

IN NOVEMBER 1952, after a meeting with JRD Tata, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to the industrialist to assuage his feelings following the government’s decision to nationalise Air India — one of the world’s top airlines at the time — and Indian Airlines, which operated on domestic routes.

“I was very sorry to notice your distress of mind when you came to lunch with me the other day. You told me that you felt strongly that you or the Tatas, or at any rate, your air companies had been treated shabbily by the Government of India,” Nehru wrote. “Indeed, you appeared to think that all this was part of a set policy, pursued through years, just to do injury to your services in order to bring them to such a pass that the government could acquire them cheaply.”

“You were in such evident distress... that I did not think it proper to discuss the matter with you,” Nehru continued in the letter dated November 10, 1952. “Nor indeed am I writing to you... with any intention to carry on an argument. But I feel I must... try... to remove an impression from your mind which I think is totally wrong and is unjust to government, to me as well as to you.”

JRD, India’s aviation pioneer and its first licensed pilot, who had founded Tata Airlines in 1932, believed there was a conspiracy afoot to suppress Indian civil aviation and, in particular, his enterprise. Nehru went on to explain that his government was of the view that “transport services of almost all kinds should be state owned”.

“Indeed”, he wrote to JRD, “so far as the Congress is concerned, we laid down this general policy about twenty years ago. It is true that the policy could not be implemented for various reasons and we gave it no high priority. But the matter was discussed on many occasions. It was chiefly the lack of finances that prevented us from going ahead.”

The Prime Minister pointed out that after Jagjivan Ram became Communications

Minister in 1952, the matter of India’s airlines had come before the cabinet on several occasions, and the government had, after a thorough examination, decided to organise them together under the state. The government was mindful of the excellence of Tata Air Services and especially Air India International, Nehru said, but a committee appointed to examine the issue had recommended that it would be difficult to isolate Air India International.

“The purpose of my writing to you is to remove the impression from your mind that any policy has been pursued by us with the deliberate intention of acquiring them later after their value came down. Both from the civil aviation and the defence point of view, we have naturally been anxious to develop aviation in the country. Our eagerness to do so may have gone too far. A situation arose ultimately when we were driven to a certain conclusion,” Nehru concluded.

But JRD could not be persuaded. He was convinced that the Communications Ministry’s nationalisation scheme was not sound, and would not result in the creation of an efficient and self-supporting air transport system. “If as appears from your letter, the government has already decided upon the adoption of this scheme, I can only deplore that so vital a step should have been taken without giving us a proper hearing,” he said in a telegram to the Prime Minister. “[Russi] Mody and I were called by Mr Jagjivan Ram only to be informed of the government’s decision to nationalise the industry, although I told him that I had prepared and brought with me an alternative scheme which in my humble judgment was better calculated to achieve the government’s objective,” JRD wrote.

He mentioned that the Minister had sought his view only on questions of compensation and the like. “I beg you to believe that I am motivated by no self-interest in this matter,” he told Nehru. “My only anxiety is to see a strong and efficient Indian Air Transport system built up and at the same time to see justice done to investors and staff who have suffered heavily.”

JRD’s appeal went in vain. In 1953, the government nationalised all airline assets and established Indian Airlines and Air India International, which was later named Air India.



Well over six decades later, the wheel has come full circle. On June 28, the union Cabinet gave in-principle approval for disinvestment of Air India, whose accumulated losses are now over Rs 50,000 crore. Over the years,



(Top) JRD Tata with Jawaharlal Nehru and S Radhakrishnan; JRD with a poster of the Air India Maharaja in the background. Express Archives

faulty policies, manpower mismanagement, and competition from aggressive private airlines have resulted in falling passenger revenues. This March, a report of the Comptroller and Auditor General debunked Air India’s claim of an operating profit in 2015-16.

Twenty years ago, the United Front government appointed a committee headed by then Petroleum Secretary Vijay Kelkar to restructure Indian Airlines (then separate from Air India) which had been hit badly by the grounding of a large part of its fleet by the V P Singh government in 1990 following a controversy over its Airbus aircraft. Kelkar argued strongly for compensating the airline for the sovereign’s action — but the committee’s report and then Civil Aviation Minister Jayanthi Natarajan’s pleas to the Finance Ministry yielded little.

After talking to employees, the Kelkar committee recommended that Indian Airlines should go public — with the government controlling 40% and employees and trust, 11%, with the rest held widely as part of the restructuring. The committee indicated the solution should be market-driven, but saw no merit in a merger with Air India. By then, India’s skies had been opened up, and several private airlines were

giving Indian Airlines stiff competition.

In 2003, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government set up a committee headed by former Cabinet Secretary Naresh Chandra to assess the civil aviation sector, including the need for a government-owned carrier. The panel noted that half a century ago, privately owned Air India had held pride of place in global civil aviation — it may not, therefore, be appropriate to view the issue as one of ‘national prestige’, and any airline, public or private, which is an efficient carrier, ought to be just as much a source of national pride. In the US, the committee said, United Airlines and American Air had taken over the mantle of ‘national carrier’ from the erstwhile PanAm and TWA.

Deregulation and privatisation, the Naresh Chandra committee said, was the way forward in air transport services. It suggested a creeping denationalisation, moving gradually with the conversion of loans into equity, among several other recommendations. The committee’s final report was presented to the UPA government when Praful Patel was Civil Aviation Minister. RBI Governor Urjit Patel, who was then with IDFC, had a significant role in the committee’s work. In fact, Naresh Chandra and his colleagues on the committee, recognising the crisis in the state-owned carriers, had attempted to persuade Ratan Tata to consider looking at them, given the Tatas’ historical links with aviation. But they were disappointed.

The Vajpayee government also received the recommendations of the Disinvestment Commission headed by G V Ramakrishna, but balked at privatising the carriers — even though it did go ahead with other state owned firms. The UPA government merged Indian Airlines and Air India to form the National Aviation Company of India Ltd or NACIL, which was later renamed Air India Ltd. The merger is now seen to have accelerated the slide and destroyed value. The UPA remained disinclined towards privatisation of Air India, and instead approved a huge capital infusion plan in excess of Rs 31,000 crore.

Sixty-five years after JRD’s telegram to Nehru, it would be interesting to see whether the government’s decision on Air India leads to the strong and efficient industry, along with justice to employees, that the father of Indian aviation had hoped for. Justice, today, ought to include justice also for taxpayers, who have funded the carriers’ losses for long. As a Group of Ministers led by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley begins work on the modalities of disinvestment, it is sobering to note that Air India’s domestic market share is now a mere 13%.

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Will traders’ tendency to evade defeat GST’s purpose?

In goods, evasion can take place by under-billing quantity, quality and price. A manufacturer or dealer can show sales up to the tax liability of what he has already paid as tax and conceal value addition at his end, fully or partially, if he gets a retailer to collude with him. Under-pricing is almost impossible to prove. Declaration of inferior quality needs laboratory testing and suppression of numbers or weight can be checked only by physical verification. For physical verification you need skilled unloading staff and open premises. Do you think checkpoints will have to be reintroduced considering the evasion habits of Indian traders? In that case, the advantages of GST will be less than what is being advertised.

T GEORGE JOSEPH, NAVI MUMBAI

The entire GST system is based on the in-

Ask the EXPRESS

YOUR QUESTIONS ON GST ANSWERED

tegration of the value chain from raw material to retail. This ensures that duty is paid at every stage and tax credit is taken at the next stage. Undervaluation and under-reporting of taxation will not help anybody, but only hurt them because they will not be able to take full credit of input taxes, and also pass on the full benefits of tax credit. Compliance is also ensured by invoice matching in the GSTN system — and where buyers are not able to reconcile their purchase reported by the supplier, the tax credit loss will be borne by the buyer. There is also a system of compliance rating in the GSTN system which could debar unscrupulous elements.



‘GST will have salutary effect on Centre-state relationship’. Prem Nath Pandey/Archive

NEGATIVE OUTCOMES?

A lot has been said on what’s good about GST. What according to you could be a negative outcome of GST? VARUN SANDHU, PANCHKULA

The GST will have absolutely no negative outcomes, except in the transitional period when businesses will have to get used to documenting their transactions meticulously — especially outward supply — and get familiar with filing the returns on the unified portal created by the GSTN.

FOREIGN TRADE

How will GST impact inter-state relations in the long run? Will GST positively impact foreign trade? RAJESH KUMAR PRASHAR, CHANDIGARH

GST will have a salutary effect on the Centre-states relationship. It will strengthen cooperative federalism in the country by facilitating common policymaking for indirect taxation.

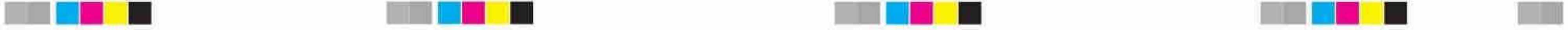
It will also have a positive impact on for-

eign trade, as exporters will get full refund on input taxes due to greater transparency. In the pre-GST period, actual incidence of taxation was not evident because of multiplicity of taxes and cesses, and the cascade effect.

TAX COMPLIANCE

How does GST makes our traders tax compliant? How will a steel or textile trader be made to comply, if his turnover crosses Rs 20 lakh? SHRISH MEWAL

A trader is made compliant because if he does not register himself for GST, he loses tax credits of central duties paid on input goods, input services, capital goods and imported goods. Hitherto, the trader was not eligible for credit on central taxes paid because the entire value chain was not integrated for the purpose of taxation.



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Crime and context

Lynchings draw upon the master narrative of cow protection promoted by the current political elites



ASHUTOSH VARSHNEY

IS INDIA'S PAST, so marked by communal riots, transmuted itself into an era of lynching? Of immense political significance, this question is now squarely in front of us all. How should we answer it? Let us start with some background.

When the NDA regime came to power in 2014, many asked if Hindu-Muslim riots would return. Since Independence, especially during 1977-1993, as I statistically demonstrated in my book *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*, communal riots, though unevenly spread geographically, had become a common feature of India's national life. But after 1993, though small incidents continued, big riots declined, a pattern broken only twice, first in 2002 in Gujarat and next in September 2013 in Muzaffarnagar. Because of its size and destruction, the latter raised alarms in 2013-14. Moreover, even as it exhilarated many quarters, the rise of Narendra Modi to power aroused anxiety in other circles.

Responding to the anxiety and using probabilistic reasoning, I argued that big riots were unlikely to come back (IE, October 30, 2014). Of the various reasons, two deserved registration. First, worldwide data show that at higher levels of income, which India has relative to 1993, rioting becomes highly episodic, as opposed to occurring repeatedly. Central tendencies, of course, don't apply to each case, but they are worth noting as correlations. Second, while Hindu-Muslim polarisation would be in the political interest of the BJP, widespread rioting was not. Riots would be too disruptive of order, likely to upset those who voted for the BJP for economics, governance and Modi's leadership, not for its Hindu nationalist ideology. According to Lokniti data, as much as a fourth of all BJP voters in 2014 did not vote for Hindu nationalism. That was too big an electoral bloc to antagonise via riots.

Thus, instead of riots, I argued, one should expect a standard transmutation of prejudice witnessed elsewhere, too: In particular, communalisation of the state's everyday practices on the one hand and hate crimes

committed by citizens on the other. What form hate crimes would take was unclear, but I certainly did not anticipate lynchings. It was too ugly and alarming a prospect. Social science defines hate crimes as mostly one-on-one hate-driven violence; lynchings represent perpetration of mob violence against one person or a few. There are countries where lynching, as a form of collective violence, is common, and has been studied. India was not one such country.

The larger literature points to two categories of lynching. The first aims at restoring routine order via mob violence. Studies of lynching in Indonesia show that until recently, most of it was aimed at punishing theft, hit-and-run accidents, rape, adultery and witchcraft (Bridget Welsh, *Journal of East Asian Studies*, September 2008). Instead of using the police, many Indonesians used mob violence as a disciplining mechanism. It had no ethnic or religious core.

The second category of lynching aims at enforcing a majoritarian ethnic/racial/religious political order. During 1880-1930, especially in the American South, white mobs lynched black Americans if they crossed a certain historically embedded hierarchical boundary (Marilyn K. Howard in *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, 2007). In her song, *Strange Fruit*, Billie Holiday immortalised the crushing pain of such violence. Its haunting opening verse was: "Southern trees bear a strange fruit/ Blood on the leaves and blood at the root/ Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze/ Strange fruit hanging from the poplar tree."

Is India going the Indonesian, or the late 19th century American, way? It is unquestionably the latter. To be sure, Muslims are not the only target of lynching. But they are its primary object. Recently constructed datasets on lynching show a qualitative increase in the incidence of lynching after the BJP's rise to power in 2014. The big new issue is not anomic, ordinary criminality, built around traffic deaths, robbery and theft, which India has certainly witnessed, though not as much as Indonesia. The new issue is beef and cattle trade, both explicitly connected to the Hindu nationalist project.

beef and cattle trade, both explicitly connected to the Hindu nationalist project.

Unlike blacks and whites, Muslims are not racially different from the Hindus. But the more observant Muslims can be easily identified by their dress, as in the case of Junaid Khan; intimate knowledge of where they live can also make mob attacks on Muslims precise, as in Dadri; and while beef eating or cattle trade in India is not confined to Muslims, they are among the biggest practitioners of both, and can be easily targeted as such, as the killings in Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Haryana show.

Some commentators suggest that routine criminals are the instigators, not Hindu nationalists. This statement may be partly right on the surface, but is awfully wrong at a deeper analytical level. Over the last two decades, the vast research on riots, to which I have been a contributor, and civil wars, whose best interpreter is Stathis N. Kalyvas (Yale University), has repeatedly argued that routine criminality, calculations and jealousies have often been inserted into the master narrative of riots and civil wars.

Correspondingly, if the master narrative of cow protection were not so systematically promoted by the current Indian political elite, regular criminals would not have that narrative to plug into. The larger ideological ecosystem enables them to go rampant.

Prime Minister Modi has spoken against lynchings only twice thus far. His social base also knows that he picked Yogi Adityanath as UP's chief minister. Adityanath created the Hindu Yuva Vahini, a vigilante force; led the campaign against "love jihad"; and formed "anti Romeo" youth squads. How would, then, Modi's base read his recent anti-lynching statement? The answers would be available soon.

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ON THE EDGE

Trinamool, BJP must share blame for communal polarisation in West Bengal — and the responsibility to stanch tensions

SINCE SUNDAY, PARTS of North 24 Parganas, a district in West Bengal bordering Bangladesh, has been roiled by communal violence. One person has died after a mob took to the streets after a Class XI student posted derogatory religious imagery on his Facebook page. Curfew has been imposed in the region and paramilitary forces deployed to restore law and order. However, the Trinamool Congress, the party in office in Kolkata, and the BJP, the ruling party at the Centre, have started a blame game over the violence. At a time when the two parties must work together to calm tempers and stanch tensions, their leaderships seem focused on attacking each other. This does not augur well for the state.

An incident that ought to have been settled quickly at the local *thana* has hit the headlines after state governor, Keshari Nath Tripathi, decided to speak with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee after a meeting with a team of BJP and RSS representatives. The details of the conversation are not public, but the transaction is unlikely to have been pleasant since an enraged CM called a press meet soon after, where she accused the governor of insulting her. She said Tripathi, once a senior functionary of the BJP in UP, spoke to her like a "BJP block president". The Trinamool has since demanded that the governor be recalled while the BJP wants President's Rule imposed in the state. The BJP has also announced that a party delegation will visit the violence-hit area and present a report to party chief, Amit Shah. Clearly, the parties seem eager to make political capital out of the incident.

This is a departure from the trajectory political parties in West Bengal have followed, by and large, over the years, to mobilise cadres. Even when the trauma of the Calcutta killings and the Partition was fresh, the Congress and Communist leaderships were sensible in not exploiting communal faultlines, though both parties did use violence as a strategy to target political rivals. Instead of building on the legacy of communal peace in West Bengal, the Trinamool and the BJP have sought to use religious affiliations to mobilise cadres. The numerous communal clashes reported from the state in recent times point to this disturbing trend. It threatens West Bengal's social fabric and communal peace.

HAPPY RASAGOLA DAY

The rosogolla should not be a cause for rancour, only sweet celebrations

THE WEST BENGAL-Odisha battle over the genesis of the rosogolla may never be settled. In gastronomy, such contests are rarely decisive. But the challenger seems to have a stolen a march on one count: When the two states went to war over the spongy syrupy pearly white cheese ball, two years ago, Odisha dedicated a day to the sweet. Yesterday was the third Rasogolla — oops Rasagola — Dibasa. The deities Jagannath, Balbadhra and Subhadra were given the sweet as bhog when they returned to their abode in the Jagannath temple in Puri after their nine-day long sojourn outside — Odisha's way of marking the rasagola's historical association with the 12th century temple. Sweet shops in most parts of the state offered free treats to people, many of whom went back home to renew their commitment to the two-year long battle — on social media — and researchers reproduced evidence to back Odisha's claim to the rasagola. Such effusion of sweetness was obviously not well-taken in West Bengal.

The Indian love for food has rarely found expression in dedicating days to especially reflect the country's culinary diversity. Germany has its Beer Day and Soup Day, Sweden its Mud Cake Day, the British have their Fish and Chips Day and the Sausage Day, Japan observes the Strawberry Day and the Sushi Day. The US has more than 150 days dedicated to food. The Idli Day in Chennai and the Undiyu Day in Gujarat are India's meagre contribution to this smorgasbord.

With the Rasagola Dibasa, the menu gets sweeter. It could also be much less stickier if Odisha and West Bengal give up their acrimony over rosogolla/rasagola and come together to celebrate the sweet. A caveat, though. The Rasagola Day follows the lunar calendar and it could be tricky if the day coincides with some of the commemorations in the Gregorian Calendar — the World Diabetes Day, for example.



VAPPALA BALACHANDRAN

THE BHARATIYA Janata Party has always been overly effusive over our security ties with Israel, as though such relationship did not exist before their regime in 1996. Although India recognised Israel in 1950, we maintained only consular relations due to geopolitical factors affecting our foreign policy. We developed full diplomatic relations only in 1992 with P.V. Narasimha Rao as our prime minister. But he was lucky to have been able to take the credit due to the drastically altered global political scenario after the 1990-91 Gulf war. In fact, moves towards establishing full diplomatic relations with Israel had started through secret channels even during Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's tenure, which was continued by Rajiv Gandhi.

There was high drama during the first Indian high-level official visit on June 14, 2000 by then Home Minister L.K. Advani. The conspicuous feature of his visit was that all his security chiefs like the home secretary, joint secretary (security) and the chiefs of the BSF, CBI and IB were in his entourage. Advani's visit to Israel was preceded by that of Russian interior minister Vladimir Rushailo. At that time Reuven Paz, noted Israeli counter terrorism expert, wrote a column mocking these visits saying that both these countries, which had earlier criticised Israel for fighting the Palestinian "freedom fighters", were queuing up to hurriedly learn from the Israeli experience on how to fight such "freedom fighters" in their own backyard.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's exhilarated welcome remarks, "We've waited

BEFORE THE PM'S VISIT

Much was gained by India and Israel, even before the two forged full diplomatic ties

for you 70 years", might sound delightfully dramatic for headlines. That does not mean that a prime ministerial visit is always needed to give substance to the bilateral relationship between India and Israel. Much was achieved in the defence, intelligence and security relationship even when we did not have full diplomatic relations. None of these details can be revealed even now.

In those days, every visiting Israeli security leader used to meet our successive prime ministers to discuss substantive security co-operation. I remember Nahum Admoni (chief of Mossad, 1982-89) telling me about his first visit to New Delhi in the early 1970s — when he was not yet the chief — and his close interaction with the legendary R.N. Kao and their meetings with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Subsequent chiefs like Shabtai Shavit and Ephraim Halevy also had the same access to Indian prime ministers like Rajiv Gandhi and V.P. Singh.

Conversely, our own security chiefs used to meet their prime ministers on our visits to that country. For example, this writer was part of our delegations to meet Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir (1986-1992) twice to discuss close intelligence and security co-operation. At that time, Shamir had quoted King Hassan II of Morocco to convey to us that even Yasser Arafat would not take it amiss if India established full diplomatic relations with Israel.

The period just before and after Operation Blue Star saw close cooperation bloom. We sought out their services success-

fully to plug every possible gap in our VIP security when our Western allies would not sell us modern equipment to counter threats from remote controlled devices. They helped us to discreetly counter aggressive Pakistani moves threatening our land and air security.

However, the only fly in the ointment even in those days was our constant suspicion that Israel had parallel secret contacts with both China and Pakistan. Foreign minister Khurshid Kasuri openly admitted on September 6, 2005 that Pakistan and Israel had "secret contacts with each other for more than 10 years".

More recently, *The Jerusalem Post* (December 1, 2010) quoted a Wikileaks document from October 7, 2009, saying that Pakistan's ISI chief, Ahmad Shuja Pasha, had alerted Israel "Regarding possible terrorist attacks against Jewish and Israeli sites in India". The document continued: "Pasha asked [the] Ambassador to convey to Washington that he had followed up on threat information that an attack would be launched against India between September-November" the cable read.

The report said: "A few weeks before the cable was written, the Israeli Counter-Terror Bureau had issued a travel advisory warning of possible attacks against Israeli sites in India". We still do not know the veracity of this cable. It is for the present leadership to investigate.

The writer is a former special secretary, cabinet secretariat



JUNE 30/JULY 7, 1977, FORTY YEARS AGO

PNA TALK PROPOSALS THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT was studying proposals from the Opposition for a settlement of the four-month old political crisis. Finance Minister and Pakistan People's Party leader Abdul Hafiz Pirzada said talks between the two sides would start soon. But a spokesperson for the nine-party Pakistan National Alliance repeated the Opposition's insistence that the proposals were final. He described the plan as reasonable and said the PNA would agree only to minor amendments. He added that the PNA would otherwise resume militant action if it did not have a positive reaction from the government soon.

BHUTTO'S PRESS MEET PRIME MINISTER Z.A. Bhutto agreed to look at the proposals only because he was told the proposals were negotiable. The government, he said, would not yield to any ultimatum. Bhutto told a news conference that he would accept the PNA's demand to hold fresh general elections under an impartial machinery. Bhutto said both sides had agreed in principle to hold fresh election on October 7 under the auspices of the judiciary and the army. The government had also proposed establishing a joint committee to supervise the elections with disagreements being referred to the Supreme Court. Bhutto accused the Opposition of trying to enlarge the

Committee until it would become a "Super Government" with all-embracing powers.

CHEQUE FRAUD A FRENCH WOMAN nabbed in connection with the disappearance of blank travellers' cheques amounting to Rs 60 lakh may be just one chain in the French connection. There appears to be many missing links in the case. Brigitte told the police that she was paid one rupee for every dollar of the stolen cheques encashed. She had already encashed some 2,000 dollars from four banks, two of them in Goa. The man who approached her with the deal is a mysterious "Frank", a French man for whom a state-wide alert is on, police said.

15 THE IDEAS PAGE

The promise of a chosen people

There exists an idea of Israel which is an alternative to the past and present of the Jewish-Palestinian relationship — and an augury of a different future



SHAIL MAYARAM

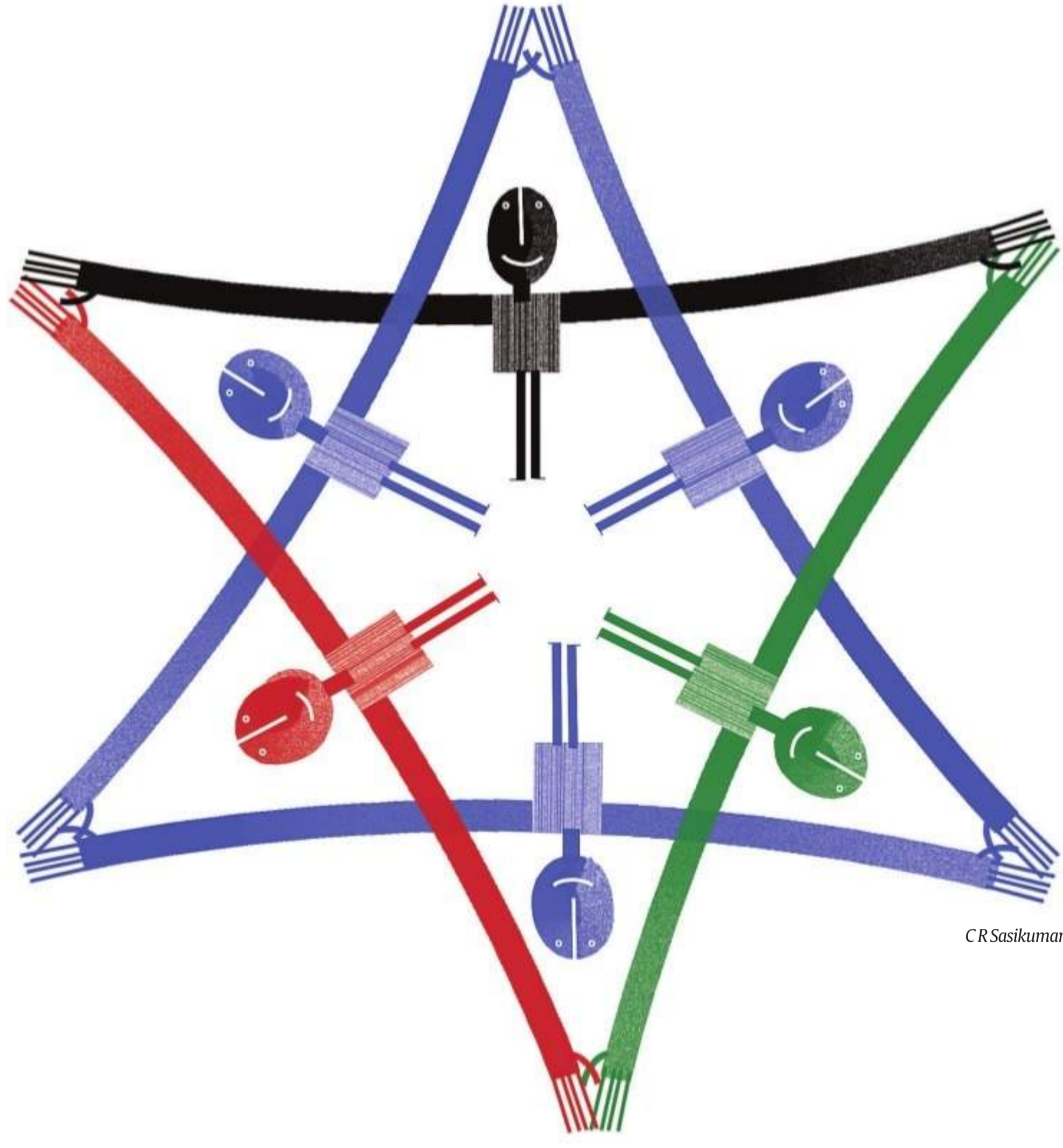
THE INDIAN STATE sees Israel in terms of security, productive of an alliance against "terror" defined exclusively in Islamist terms, ignoring evidence that the modern state worldwide is much more a source of terror. Civil society, in contrast, identifies Israel as a state of unconstrained impunity, which it indeed is, given its treatment of Palestinians in arenas of public policy such as land, water, housing, knowledge, language and institutions.

There have been, however, different voices on state and nationalism in Israel, which posit an alternative to the past and present of the Jewish-Palestinian relationship and augur a different future.

On the one hand was Theodor Herzl, the V.D. Savarkar of the Israeli nation, among whose followers were Chaim Weizmann and David Ben Gurion. Herzl's book, *Altneuland* (Old New Land), was much like Savarkar's manifesto, *Hindutva*, both products of the Europeanisation of the world and bearing the imprint of the Enlightenment's vision of history. The dissenting position that eventually became marginalised was held by persons such as Judah Magnes. He responded to the 1929 Arab revolt by calling for a bi-national solution and opposed the idea of a Jewish state. Magnes's emphasis on the need for Arab consent in a negotiated settlement was very close to Gandhi's pronouncements on the Jews who, he maintained, were the untouchables of Christianity. Magnes was one of the founders of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and its chancellor-president, and a keen supporter of a multilingual state. He was against entering the promised land, as he put it, "in the Joshua way, but bringing peace and culture, hard work and sacrifice and love, and a determination to do nothing that cannot be justified before the conscience of the world".

The theorist Hannah Arendt's preferred option was for a federated state, based on Arab-Jewish cooperation rather than an exclusively Jewish sovereign state produced from a partition. Arendt decries the idea of chosen people as meaning "nothing other than that by nature they are better or wiser or more rebellious or salt of the earth. And that would be, twist and turn it as you like, nothing other than a version of racist superstition". The publication of her *Eichmann in Jerusalem* was at the cost of her friendship with Gershom Scholem, who saw her as betraying Judaism and the Jewish people. Arendt saw Eichmann as a state functionary who represented the banality of evil, about which there is nothing deep or great, a figure out of Kafka's *The Trial*. As her student, and theorist, Judith Butler points out, Arendt critiques both Fascism and Zionism as relying on a nationalism that creates massive statelessness and destitution.

There are several persons and groups that are sources of dissent in contemporary Israel. For instance, the journalist, Anat Kamm, who was tried for stealing and leaking 2,000 documents including 700 classified ones, during her period of compulsory military service. The website, *Soldiers against Silence*, carries heartrending testimonies of former soldiers and their violations of human rights. One wishes that former Indian soldiers might be inspired to give testimonies such as these after serving in Kashmir or



CR Sasikumar

Manipur. But in the Indian case, the testimonies have been exclusively societal, whether in the case of Ashis Nandy's mammoth Partition project or those of the Manipur mothers.

Let us envision, however, a different future for this troubled land, in which the great western powers continue to play another Great Game.

A Jewish friend had sent Gandhi a book called *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization* by Cecil Roth, a record of the Jewish contribution to the world's literature, art, music, drama, science, medicine, agriculture. Gandhi's statement holds good even today in its urging of Jews to "command the attention and respect of the world by being man, the chosen creation of God, instead of being man who is fast sinking to the brute and forsaken by God. They can add to their many contributions the surpassing contribution of non-violent action".

Add to the idea of a non-violent Israel the political design of Johann Galtung, who has argued for a seven-state solution urging Israel, the Arab states, Turkey and the Kurds to come together in an European Union style arrangement. This would have regimes for water equity, arms control, and refugee return, the free flow of goods/services, persons and ideas and a truth and reconciliation process combining fact-finding, joint textbooks, healing and closure.

The celebrated Jewish theorist, Emmanuel Levinas, asks the question: How

The Palestinian intellectual Edward Said had argued that the memory of dispossession for both Jews and Palestinians could become the basis of a common polity in the Middle East. Žizek draws on both Arendt and Said when he writes, 'What if they were to come together on this ground: Not on the ground of occupying, possessing, or dividing the same territory, but of both keeping their territory open as a refuge for those condemned to wander?'

to philosophise out of this gaping hole, this abyss that left Martin Heidegger cold? Levinas advocates living Otherwise than Being, emphasising that "Hitlerism and Stalinism, Hiroshima, the Gulag, and the genocides of Auschwitz and Cambodia" mark an "end to theodicy" and impose an obligation on humanity to deny ourselves any further indifference to "useless suffering".

The Palestinian intellectual Edward Said had argued that the memory of dispossession for both Jews and Palestinians could become the basis of a common polity in the Middle East. Slavoj Žizek draws on both Arendt and Said when he writes, "What if they were to come together on this ground: Not on the ground of occupying, possessing, or dividing the same territory, but of both keeping their territory open as a refuge for those condemned to wander? What if Jerusalem became not their place, but a place for those with no place? This shared solidarity is the only ground for a true reconciliation: The realisation that in fighting the other, one fights what is most vulnerable in one's own life."

There is much that Israel has to give to the Arabs, from whom it has received the gift of the state. It is up to the Jews of Israel to fulfil God's promise of being the "chosen people".

Mayaram, professor at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, is the author of *Israel as the gift of the Arabs: Letter from Tel Aviv*

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Perhaps the Indo-Israeli embrace has provided an opportunity for Pakistan to highlight the Kashmir issue with Iran and others."

—DAWN

A community's missed chances

India's Muslims must ask themselves some hard questions. And acknowledge that education and economic empowerment is the way out



FAUZAN ALAVI

AS A community, we have been in the eye of the storm globally ever since 9/11. We have been justifying our stand as good Muslims — but is it actually making any difference?

I write this piece to Muslims in India. Several commissions and reports have found that, as a community, we are the worst off on a lot of social parameters and indices. Who is to be blamed? All the governments since Independence till date? If not, then I want to know which government and party took us to a different level apart from providing Urdu teachers and funding for madrasas and the yearly, symbolic *iftars*.

How many times have we sat and thought about the future — of coming generations — without playing victim?

What have we done to take our youth out of the madrasas and bring them to the mainstream?

A graduate from a respectable madrasa is not even paid a salary of Rs 10,000. We should understand the real meaning and motive when the Quran speaks of giving *zakat*. The Quran is asking us to earn a respectable living not only to support our respective families but also to provide financial assistance to the poor and downtrodden.

Now imagine a student from a madrasa who began his education with an amount raised through *zakat* and ends up earning his livelihood through *zakat*. I personally know of several madrasas in Delhi who, due to the delay in payments from various boards, call and ask for help. Is this the society we want to make?

The importance of a Hafiz-e-Quran (one who remembers the Holy Quran by heart and implements it) is mentioned with the highest honour and reverence in both the Quran and Hadiths. Now, what is the average salary of a Hafiz — not more than Rs 10,000 plus food through tiffins.

Is this right? What have we done to change the status of the madrasa student who became a Hafiz?

The Prophet (PBUH) has spoken about

cleanliness but one can see the condition of Muslim neighbourhoods from afar. It is the same case when it comes to the respect and equality of women. Recently, we made a mockery of ourselves on the issue of triple talaq. The Quran does not prescribe it, so why could we not say it's wrong and the *nikahnama* (marriage contract) can be modified? Instead, our so-called intellectuals suggested a "social boycott". But just how does the board propose to enforce a social boycott in this day and age? Will they cancel passport/Aadhaar/PAN? Or will they prevent people from entering a marketplace?

Now, to education and becoming a part of the mainstream. There are schemes worth many hundred crores available for the education of minorities. How many of our leaders have gone and made sure that these are availed of? We say the ruling party has been instrumental in keeping us in the dumps. Agreed, but would they have been able to do so without the help of our leaders and the clergy?

After Maulana Azad, I wonder if there has been a mainstream Muslim leader with a selfless agenda. Our so-called leaders in the so-called "secular" parties are there for everyone to see. What are their contributions in the real sense except playing politics and securing their seats? And the 2017 Uttar Pradesh election has made matters worse. The BJP's 312 seats have made us electorally insignificant. All the maulanas who support their favourite parties must take a minute to reflect. We Muslims were supposed to be the king-makers in UP, West Bengal and Assam but has any "secular" party made a member of the community home minister or deputy CM?

There are still many Muslims from humble backgrounds, who, instead of playing the victim card, choose to work hard. These people pray and observe Ramzan as well.

It is time for us as a community to sit together and introspect on what has gone wrong — be it the education system, triple talaq or modernisation of the madrasa system and many more issues.

Only then will the government or the larger society give us what we rightly deserve. Education and economic empowerment is the only way forward. Let us follow the teachings of Holy Quran and the Prophet (PBUH) before we blame PM Modi or CM Yogi.

The writer is a director of Allansons Ltd

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

ENFORCED MORALITY

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Rules against the law' (IE, July 6). The Centre's notification is a classic example of how the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Compassion is a great virtue. But morality and values are more in the domain of society than government. Any forceful implementation of morality will attract more resentment, especially if it has religious connotations. The Union government's heart may well be in the right place, but its recourse to the law, that too in a manner that appears to be encroaching on federalism, is undesirable. Hence, there should be a consensus before cattle slaughter is discouraged by the government.

Satya Brat Tiwari, New Delhi

RIGHT LAW

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'One question for the road' (IE, July 6). The authors have rightly pointed out that the menace of drunk driving can only be curbed by having a stringent law, proper strategy and resources to implement it. Unlike the Supreme Court order of the 500-metre ban, the Motor Vehicle Amendment Act will serve the purpose of reducing the number of road fatalities, without harming or putting a burden on the economy.

Pranav Mahashabde, Pune

GOVERN-WAR

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The same governor' (IE, July 6). The whimsical political appointments, without security of tenure, makes governors partial and subservient in discharging their onerous and duties in sensitive situations as the head of a state's executive. A statutory process for their selection and appointments with the participation of the opposition and a fixed tenure may cure the malady.

M.N. Bhartiya, Goa

ABOUT POLYGAMY

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The

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

polygamy myth' (IE, July 6). The article was eye-opening and removed many mental cobwebs for readers. It showed, through census figures, the prevalence of polygamy in all Indian communities. In fact, Islam should be given its due for being the originator, in some ways, of what is now the modern concept of family planning.

Mohan Singh, Amritsar

AVOID LOBBIES

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Importance of being simple' (IE, July 6). One Nation One Tax is a radical step forward to stop the cascading effect of multiple taxes. The GST council must not entertain exemption requests from different state lobbies and bring into ambit all the items which have been originally not taxed. This will ensure that every state pulls its weight and competes, rather than being dependent on handouts from the governments.

Bholey Bhardwaj, Mumbai



RANA KAPOOR

Coins for thought

Cryptocurrency has the potential to galvanise social development

WITH OVER \$22.4 billion in market capitalisation, cryptocurrency is rapidly emerging as the new-age disruptive technological currency, transcending itself as a new "medium of exchange" and "store of value". Not only is it challenging the global economic order, it is also forcing nations like China to develop its own cryptocurrency based on blockchain technology which could be used in the future as an alternative to fiat currency.

The application of blockchain-based cryptocurrency is not just limited to the financial sector, but also has the potential to galvanise the social development landscape. A new age ideology in this field with a strong focus on pursuing social impact is the ideation of Social Development Coins (DevCoins), a possible solution addressing the predicament of effectively funneling potentially large investments in order to maximise grassroots development.

Utilising the methodology of cryptocurrency, DevCoins can be mined by undertaking social development activities approved by the government. In order to operationalise it, the government can launch a social challenge with a set of quantifiable objectives and outcomes. Upon completion of the desired

task and its subsequent evaluation by a monitoring body, the implementing organisation would receive a fixed number of DevCoins from the government, which can then be sold to individuals and corporations who would be looking to make their contribution to such social impact initiatives.

In the future, the potential of DevCoins is much broader, encompassing and enabling efficiencies for both the private and public sector.

Firstly, DevCoins being based on a "pay for success" model, would lead to the efficient utilisation of social investments and thereby deliver maximum impact. As the implementer is rewarded with DevCoins only once the pre-determined outcomes are achieved, it shifts the risk of implementation and desired impact from the government to the private or non-profit investors. The success of such a model could lead to the adoption of evidence-based solutions to serve the public interest in the long run.

Secondly, it creates an alternate mechanism to channelise private capital in the social impact space. Globally, individuals are consistently seeking opportunities to catalyse on-ground implementation activities

with the intention of contributing to society. By purchasing DevCoins these individuals have the benefit of steering their wealth into projects and initiatives that are positively transforming the social development landscape.

Thirdly, global policymakers are incentivising private capital channelisation towards social development. A case in point is the Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR) system in the UK, which allows individuals making an eligible investment to deduct 30 per cent of the cost of their income tax liability. The incorporation of a similar policy initiative in the framework of DevCoins could help trigger the necessary financial impact, including possible modifications to the CSR guidelines to allow the flow of capital in DevCoins.

Lastly, the scalability of DevCoins as a citizen-centric initiative can effectively promote social entrepreneurship. They can be used as incentive mechanisms, attracting individual citizens to become entrepreneurs driving social change. The Global Citizen Festival in Mumbai last year was a highlight in promoting this idea. It was based on the fundamental concept of social

change through entertainment, where if citizens accumulated enough "social points" through a verified social work, they could potentially win tickets to watch Coldplay perform at the festival.

The ethos of DevCoins based on blockchain is that of transparency and accountability, implying that the reward system is available on the accomplishment and evaluation of the designated outcomes. Furthermore, its conceptualisation could lead to further innovative developments in the impact space such as a "Development Exchange" which can act as a secondary market facilitating the trade of DevCoins between miners and corporations.

The next wave of growth and, more importantly, equitable growth, will come from technological disruptions based on revolutionary platforms and innovations like Blockchain, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, which have led to the emergence of new age "innovation-oriented models" characterised by DICE — Design, Innovation and Creativity led Entrepreneurship.

The writer is MD & CEO, Yes Bank, and chairman, Yes Global Institute