

14 THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE
CENSORSHIP IS THE HEIGHT OF VANITY.
— MARTHA GRAHAM

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Beyond Rashtrapati Bhawan



CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT

A Dalit will be president. But decline of BSP, rise of cow politics, has made Dalits more angry, less hopeful

THE NEW PRESIDENT of India will be a Dalit, but not an Ambedkarite. That was also the case when K.R. Narayanan was elected head of state in 1997. But at that time, the BSP was on the rise. The BSP had governed Uttar Pradesh as a coalition partner and initiated major schemes such as the “Ambedkar village”. Today, the situation is very different. The BSP is in crisis, after winning only 19 seats in the UP elections and failing to have even one MP in the Lok Sabha. More importantly, Dalits are at the receiving end.

Certainly, there is the legacy of a long history of oppression and dispossession. The 2016 report of the Centre for Equity Studies (CES) showed that the rate of landlessness was highest among Dalits, at 57.3 per cent, against 52.6 per cent for Muslims. And those who had land had very little: 2.08 per cent of the Dalit households own more than two hectares of land. Another indication of the Dalits’ condition is reflected in their over-representation in Indian jails — next to Muslims, at 21.6 per cent (compared to 16.6 per cent in the population). In some states, the over-representation is even more striking: In Madhya Pradesh, where the Dalits account for 15.6 per cent of the population, they form 22.2 per cent of the jail inmates. In Gujarat, the gap is even more significant, with, respectively, 6.7 per cent and 17 per cent.

Scheduled Caste members benefit from reservations and tend to join, therefore, the neo middle class in the metropolis, but these quotas represent a very small proportion of the total Dalit population, partly because they remain unfulfilled and partly because they are shrinking in the era of liberalisation. In any case, a few *jatis* corner most of the reserved jobs (there is no creamy layer system for the SCs) and these “winners” continue to be affected by stigma, evident from the processes of ghettoisation.

But these structural issues have been accentuated by a series of events over the last three years. First, the suicide of Rohith Vemula and the subsequent controversy about his caste identity has shaken Dalits across the country. Second, the flogging of Dalits in Una has made a significant impact, evident from the mass mobilisation in Gujarat and beyond.

Third, the cow protection movement and correlative laws have badly affected the leather industry, in which crores of Dalits work. Fourth, “atrocities” continue to hit the headlines, as even a random sample of reports from 2017 will show: “MP: Well used by Dalits contaminated with kerosene for playing ‘band baaja’ at wedding”; “Dalit beaten up in Rajasthan for riding mare on his wedding day”; “90-year old Dalit man burnt alive for trying to enter temple in UP” etc. Fifth, the government has alienated sections of the Dalit intelligentsia by stopping funding of “centres for the study of social exclusion and inclusive policy” established in 35 universities in the course of the 11th and 12th five-year plans.

Last but not least, the UP elections have been a trauma for many Dalits. Not only has the BSP been defeated, but the new assembly, as shown by the Trivedi Centre for Political Data, consists of more than 44 per cent upper castes, 12 percentage points more than in 2012 and the highest proportion since the early 1980s. The government of Yogi Adityanath appears to represent this upper caste ethos. Yogi Adityanath ordered for “shuddhikaran (purification)” of the chief minister’s office in Lucknow. Subsequently, Dalits made a point to offer him soaps, as protest. He made the cow protection movement stricter by closing down illegal slaughterhouses and encouraging gau rakshaks.

The Saharanpur violence broke out in May, when Dalits objected to the procession of Maharana Pratap through the temple of Ravidas. The Rajputs conducting the procession allegedly attacked Dalits, burning their houses. In May, three people died, casualties being on both sides. About 5,000 Dalits demonstrated peacefully at Jantar Mantar in reaction to this violence, and some of them converted to Buddhism.

The organisation sponsoring this mobilisation, Bhim Army, was created in 2015, in Saharanpur by a Dalit lawyer, Chandrashekhar Azad, 30, who was accused by the UP police of the Saharanpur violence, and finally arrested in June. He had made a surprise appearance in the Jantar Mantar demonstration to say (in Hindi): “Don’t be under the illusion that we are quiet because we

are weak. We are quiet because we are following the Constitution”.

The Constitution is sacred to Dalits because of the role of Ambedkar in its making. That they have formed an “army” does not mean they will resort to illegal means. After all, Ambedkar himself had created a self-defence force in 1927, during the Mahad satyagraha, the Samata Sainik Dal (Social Equality Corps). But today, Dalits articulate a deep sense of anger that has been echoed by the Union minister of Social Justice & Empowerment himself. In April, Thawarchand Gehlot declared (in Hindi): “You get a well dug by us, but when it becomes yours, you dug us from drinking its water. When a pond has to be made, we are made to labour. At that time, we spit in it, sweat in it, and even urinate in it. But when we get a chance to drink water from it, you say that the water will become impure. You install idols in temples amid chanting mantras, then the doors are closed to us. Who will set things right? We made the idol, although you may have paid us for our labour, but at least let us have a darshan, and touch it”.

This viewpoint is not really in tune with the philosophy of *shuddhikaran*. In fact, the Sangh Parivar may face a new contradiction due to the Dalits’ claim for their rights. More importantly, the government probably needs to engage them to defuse tensions. Till recently, the BSP offered an antidote to radicalism, as a constitutional alternative, simply because of the hope of returning to power that it embodied. This prospect has gone, but the Dalits’ anger has increased. Will the election of the NDA candidate be enough? Possibly for the Dalit neo middle class, but others may look for another sense of direction. Other repertoires are still available, like the Dalit Panthers’ *modus operandi*. After all, even Ambedkar declared that he would like to burn the Indian Constitution in the early 1950s.

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BY A THOUSAND CUTS

CBFC culls in a documentary on Amartya Sen reflect a sobering pattern — of the curbing of argument, intolerance of dissent

UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP of Pahlaj Nihalani, the Central Board of Film Certification is going where no censor has dreamt of going before. From being a habitual objector to allegedly lurid images and bad language, it has graduated to being affronted by everyday words and phrases. It has demanded the removal of terms like “Hindu India”, “Gujarat” and “cow” from *The Argumentative Indian*, a documentary on Amartya Sen. The organisation, set up to protect the public from the excesses of potboiler cinema, now presumes to cull the thoughts of one of India’s foremost public intellectuals.

The CBFC’s censoring of “Gujarat” and “cow” is the stuff of stereotypes about banana republics, but its presumption is no laughing matter. Presumably, it enjoys government support. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting selects the board members and the chairman, and Nihalani’s appointment has been controversial. Immediately after assuming office, he had expressed profuse admiration for the prime minister, and board members had resigned en masse on account of his apparent proximity to the ruling party, the BJP. “Gujarat” is not the first place name that the board has objected to, and tried to scrub out. Nihalani had earlier issued a list of banned terms which included “Bombay”. The arbitrariness had caused the CBFC much embarrassment when the list was leaked. The board, under him, ordered multiple deletions in *Udta Punjab* including references to “Punjab”.

The bizarre demand for surgery on a documentary could be seen as part of a general phenomenon which is narrowing the spectrum of thought and expression by a thousand cuts. This government has been seen to be impatient with its critics, and the effects have been visible from the time of the “award wapsis” of 2015, when many in the creative community rejected state recognition. It has allowed a disabling environment to develop which favours authorised versions, and in which the curbing or trashing of alternative opinions has gone unchecked. In the creative domain, the hounding of authors and filmmakers has been damaging for democracy. Nihalani himself has shown an unhealthy enthusiasm for censoring rather than certifying, which is the statutorily defined purpose of the CBFC. This has a stifling effect on creative expression in cinema, reflecting the attenuation of the public discourse. He, and his board, would be well advised to consider Sen’s warning in *The Argumentative Indian* — the book, not the documentary: “Nor let us be resentful when others differ from us... Their right is our wrong, and our right is their wrong.”

A BOOSTER SHOT

There is clear evidence of an economic slowdown. The case for a sharp rate cut by the RBI is strong

TWO SETS OF data released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) on Wednesday confirm the worst fears about the current health of the Indian economy. The first has to do with industrial growth, which, at 1.7 per cent in May, was even below the 2.8 per cent year-on-year figure for the previous month. Even more revealing is production of capital goods — a proxy for investment activity — where the growth numbers stood at minus 2.9 per cent in April and minus 3.9 per cent in May. And all this comes on top of GDP growth, which has been falling for the past five successive quarters from January-March 2016 to January-March 2017. The latest industrial output data for April-May points to the possibility of a sixth consecutive quarter of decline. If the likely disruption from the GST, even if temporary, is also factored in, that could well translate into the seventh in a row.

This clear evidence of slowdown is reinforced by the latest CSO data on consumer price inflation, which has eased to a record low of 1.5 per cent in June. True, this has been largely on account of retail food prices falling 2.1 per cent. But even “core” inflation — price increase stripped of its volatile food and fuel components — is now down to 3.9 per cent. That, and overall retail inflation ruling below the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) medium-term target of 4 per cent for the last eight months, is proof of entrenched disinflationary pressures in the economy. We may not be in deflation territory yet, though price declines are noticeable today in many sectors from agriculture to real estate. The chief economic advisor, Arvind Subramanian, is probably right in noting that there is a “paradigm shift” to low levels of inflation. This is something the RBI, in particular, may not be picking, given how the central bank has been consistently “overachieving” its inflation forecasts in the last many months. The case for a sharp cut — at least 0.5 percentage points — in the RBI’s “repo” or overnight lending rate cannot be stronger today.

The gloomy short-term outlook for the economy shouldn’t, however, take away from the many positives that should yield results a few quarters from now. The GST will result in a substantial lowering of transaction and logistics costs, apart from providing a much-needed boost to formalisation and tax compliance. The implementation of the newly enacted insolvency and bankruptcy law will have a similar impact, in terms of improving the overall ease of doing business in India. But the economy needs a booster shot in the immediate run as well — in the form of lower interest rates, which will do more good than harm.

MITHALI RAJ, SUPERSTAR

Her journey and achievements mirror the evolution of women’s cricket

THAT IT TOOK a statistical accomplishment to applaud the value of Mithali Raj speaks volumes of the relative invisibility of women’s cricket. She has been playing for 18 years and has fashioned some of India’s most famous wins — but it hardly seemed to matter. Now that she has become the highest run-getter and the first to score 6,000 runs in women’s cricket, it’s time she got some well-deserved spotlight. It’s also the right moment to put her feat in perspective, and not view it through the prism of men’s cricket.

In case you can’t resist the temptation to compare her record with men’s cricket, she would have been the 13th fastest to the 6,000-run mark, and achieved it at a faster clip than M.S. Dhoni, Yuvraj Singh and Virender Sehwag. But it’s more instructive to see how women’s cricket in India has evolved with her. When she made her debut, back in 1999, women’s cricket wasn’t as competitive as it is now, and India was far from a competitive side. Their wages were at best modest, representing the country just gave pride and little else materially, and they tracelessly vanished after a few years. There, of course, were fine cricketers like Anjum Chopra and Neetu David, and before them Purnima Rau, Anju Jain, Diana Edulji and Shanta Rangaswamy. But none perhaps was as influential in capturing the imagination of a generation as Mithali.

India’s first Test series win over England in 2006 is memorable but more importantly, she drilled into her teammates a self-belief that charted India’s transformation from underdogs to competitors. In her own remarkable way, she inspired a generation of young cricketers too — no wonder then that most of her teammates in the team swear that she’s their idol, mentor and confidante. They find their collective voice in her. So does, metaphorically, women’s cricket in the country. For all these reasons, she is India’s first superstar woman cricketer. Her statistical feat should be celebrated for more reasons than one.

HEALING THE SEA

India must learn from Sri Lanka’s ban on bottom-trawling



JOHN KURIEN

THE SRI LANKAN Parliament’s unanimous amendment of its Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act last week to ban trawling is a bold step from both political and ecological perspectives. It will have an impact on the conflict between Indian Tamil fishermen and the fishermen of Northern Sri Lanka who fish in the Palk Bay, a highly productive but spatially limited marine ecosystem.

During the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka’s northern districts, Colombo had prohibited all coastal fishing in a bid to curb the LTTE’s naval prowess. The Indian fishermen in the Palk Bay took advantage of the cessation of fishing on the Sri Lankan side and expanded their trawler fleet. They also made risky fishing ventures into Sri Lanka’s Exclusive Economic Zone. Their clashes with the Sri Lankan Navy often resulted in the impounding of trawlers, arrests and jail terms for fishermen. The civil war in Sri Lanka ended in 2009. When the fishermen of northern Sri Lanka set out to restart their lives, they found the coastal ecosystem significantly damaged. It was attributed to incessant bottom trawling by Indian fishers. Requests were made to their Tamil brethren in India to stop this manner of fishing. Negotiations yielded little in terms of a sensible compromise from the Indian side. Politicians and fishermen were unwilling to give up trawling due to large profits.

However, from a marine ecological standpoint and socio-economic and justice perspectives, trawling must be banned in coastal

waters of all tropical Asian countries.

Trawling — more specifically bottom-trawling — is a fishing technique where a heavy bag-shaped net is dragged along the sea bottom using a mechanically powered boat. The technique, originally applied in fishing nations in the temperate waters, was introduced in Asian tropical waters on a commercial scale after World War II. In India, it was popularised in the late 1950s by the Indo-Norwegian Fisheries Project in Kerala to take advantage of the demand for prawns in the international market. During that time trawling was banned in Norwegian coastal waters.

Small-scale fishermen in Asia catch prawns using selective fishing nets during the season when the prawns moved up to the surface waters. Trawling, a more efficient and active technique, could “plough out” prawns from their marine habitats at the sea bottom, resulting in a manifold increase in output.

The bonanza from this “pink gold” rush resulted in another sea change in Asian fisheries. The need for large investment and the huge profit potential of prawn exports saw new capital entering marine fisheries in Asia. Foreign exchange earnings from prawns meant that trawlerisation got state support. In India, prawns was the top commodity in our foreign trade basket during the 1970s and ‘80s in terms of net foreign exchange earnings.

Extensive trawlerisation engendered conflicts in Asian waters. In Indonesia, conflicts took racial overtones as trawlers were owned

In tropical marine waters, there are thousands of species, exhibiting phenomenal inter-species interactions, but each in limited quantities. Trawls used in such an ecological milieu tend to damage the ecosystem. In fact, trawling of the sea bottom is akin to clear-felling of tropical forests.

JULY 14, 1977, FORTY YEARS AGO

HM ON EMERGENCY

HOME MINISTER CHARAN Singh said there was no question of forgiving anyone for sins committed during the Emergency. He said Article 352 of the Constitution, which empowers the government to declare an Emergency, should be removed. Singh was forthright in his condemnation of the Congress regime and Mrs Gandhi during the Emergency. He referred to Hitler and said he had brought in his dictatorship for realising his grandiose plans for boosting his country’s prestige and influence.

CONSENSUS PRESIDENT LEADERS OF ALL political parties joined

hands to file the nomination paper of Neelam Sanjiva Reddy for the presidential election ensuring his victory. Among those who proposed Reddy’s name for the nation’s highest office were Prime Minister Morarji Desai and the leader of the opposition, Y.B. Chavan.

NO PADMA AWARDS

PRIME MINISTER DESAI announced in the Lok Sabha that his government has decided to discontinue the institution of civilian awards like Bharat Ratna and other Padma awards. The PM said the government had the question examined whether the institution of civilian awards was in conformity with

Article 18 of the Constitution. The Attorney-General advised that on a harmonious interpretation of the word “title” in clause one of Article 18 as well as clause 2 and 3 thereof the awards would fall within the prohibition of grant of titles and would be “contrary not only to the letter, but spirit of 18(1)”.

URANIUM FROM US

TWELVE TONNES OF enriched uranium, to be used as fuel at the Tarapur atomic reactor, arrived in Bombay by air from the US. Chairman of the Atomic Power Authority, J.C. Shah, said the consignment would be taken to Hyderabad by road where it would be fabricated for use at the Tarapur station.

15 THE IDEAS PAGE

Anger isn't enough

We need to look at corruption through the lens of law, economics and psychology. The design of corruption control mechanisms is important



CORRUPTION IS AMONGST the most debilitating economic illnesses that afflicts large parts of the world. It damages the quality of life for ordinary people, destroys the moral fabric of society, and slows growth. The reason we see less corruption in high-income countries than in low and middle-income ones is not that those countries are innately more moral, but countries that manage to combat corruption are the ones more likely to progress.

Transparency International provides us with data on corruption across nations and over time. Of the 142 countries it ranks in terms of the perceived levels of corruption, Denmark and New Zealand tie for the first position, and Mauritania is at the other end, with the highest corruption. The two big emerging economies, China and India, had the same score in the most recent table and are ranked 79th. In both China and India, data shows that corruption has not only been high since 2000, but it has been increasing fairly steadily. This raises the question: Why is corruption so persistent?

To control corruption, we need determination and passion, but we also need analysis and a modicum of understanding of economics, law and psychology. My belief is that it is the deficiency of the latter that allows corruption to flourish and persist. The anger and agitation against corruption that we often see in the streets are genuine. But the reason this does not translate into less corruption is because anger is not enough.

Let me give two examples of insights that can come from analysis.

There are many examples from around the world of strong leaders, like Xi Jinping of China, who genuinely wanted to banish corruption when they first came to power, but did not do so. From the logic of political economy, it is not hard to see why this happens.

All political leaders rely on overt loyalty. Further, the so-called strong leaders tend to have an aversion to public criticism. It is not hard to see that for such leaders, nothing is as advantageous as pervasive corruption. When that happens, it becomes easy for the leader to silence dissent and encourage public display of loyalty. This is because when there is pervasive corruption, the leader has the option of arresting almost anyone on corruption charges. This gives the leader the capacity to arrest those who publicly oppose him, not for the criticism, or at least not openly so, but on the grounds of corruption. If this is done systematically, then criticism can be stopped and public display of loyalty can be engineered, since people know that if they oppose the leader they will be arrested for corruption.

The ubiquity of corruption gives a political leader a leash to curb dissent without having to openly say he or she is curbing dissent.

For the second example on the power of analysis, I want to return to a suggestion I had made in 2010 and unwittingly stirred up controversy. Nothing came of my proposal but I do think it ought to be considered by any government serious about controlling corruption, especially bribery.

The idea in a nutshell is the following. Let us call a bribe a "harassment bribe," when a



C R Sasikumar

person has to give it to a bureaucrat or police in order to get something that she has the right to receive. If after you pass the driving test, the official who takes your test asks for a bribe, then that is a harassment bribe.

To curb bribery, India's Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 asks for severe punishment for anybody caught in a bribe exchange with the punishment for the bribe giver and the taker being the same. This well-meaning law is, however, founded on weak logic. What the law does is to unify the interest of the bribe giver and the taker, once the bribe has been paid. Both the giver and the taker have an interest in colluding to hide the fact of bribery.

My proposal to break this collusion, at least in the case of harassment bribery, was to amend the 1988 law and declare the act of giving such a bribe legal but the act of taking the bribe illegal and maybe to increase the punishment for the government servant who takes the bribe. With such an amendment, the bureaucrat trying to take a bribe will know that, after the bribery, the bribe giver will have much less hesitation in admitting to having given a bribe. And this fear will make it less likely that the bureaucrat would ask for the bribe in the first place. This is called backward induction in game theory.

I had proposed this based on pure reason and had little evidence to offer, one way or the other then. But evidence has come in in many forms since. First, laboratory ex-

The so-called strong leaders tend to have an aversion to public criticism. It is not hard to see that for such leaders, nothing is as advantageous as pervasive corruption. When that happens, it becomes easy for the leader to silence dissent and encourage public display of loyalty. This is because when there is pervasive corruption, the leader has the option of arresting almost anyone on corruption charges. This gives the leader the capacity to arrest those who publicly oppose him, not for the criticism, or at least not openly so, but on the grounds of corruption.

periments done by Klaus Abbink, Utteeyo Dasgupta, Lata Gangadharan and Tarun Jain, published in the *Journal of Public Economics*, shows that while my argument is not without caveats, asymmetric punishment does tend to curb bribery.

More recently, there are some fascinating findings from China. Three researchers, Maria Berlin, Bei Qin and Gianca Spagnolo, discovered that in 1997 the Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China was changed in ways that altered the criminal responsibility for bribery between the bribe taker and the bribe giver. Interestingly, they also find that there is sharp decline in bribery after 1997 in China. The results are not without ambiguity but this break in the law creates the possibility of empirical work that we did not have earlier.

My aim here is not to make a case for a particular reform but to stress, first, that the main culpability for corruption lies with not ordinary citizens but government officials who are supposed to enforce the law; and second, the importance of data and analysis in designing corruption control. If the anger citizens feel against corruption can be matched with expertise and design, we may be able to make a dent in the incidence of corruption, the major economic malaise of our times.

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WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The Trump administration has not been as tough on China as expected. This annoys those who wanted to see Trump display more of his personality in his ties with China."

—GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

The night Amarnath yatra was attacked

The assault wasn't on the pilgrims alone, but on all Kashmiris and our ethos



IT WAS QUARTER past eight in the evening on July 10 when we heard a commotion. We were playing with our toddler inside the house. At first, we did not know what made the loud, cracking noises. It sounded like a truck backfiring on the highway. Almost immediately, a person came rushing inside, puffing to catch his breath. "There is firing going on outside at a bus," he said. In a couple of minutes my husband, Syed Abid, who is the deputy commissioner of Anantnag, made phone calls and went out to take stock of the situation. The spot where the bus carrying pilgrims to Amarnath was attacked is a stone's throw away from our residence. Not knowing exactly what had happened, I went out in the mayhem and found an acquaintance, a local from Anantnag, who looked shocked. I could feel his agony as he said, "What had these people done to them? Why are they ruining everyone's lives? Things are going to be very bad. They shouldn't have done this."

Such killing of innocent people, who were visiting Kashmir during their holy month to perform religious duties, cannot serve any cause. What is it that the attackers were trying to prove? That they can use violence brazenly, against anybody and everybody? Or have they sown the seeds of their own destruction? No Kashmiri can associate with this bloodshed and violence.

I returned home, shaken to the core. How many have died, how many are injured? I couldn't help thinking of my parents who had just returned from *umrah* the week before, after the holy month of Ramadan. I kept thinking how tragic it would be for the families of these yatris back home to hear that they would never be able to see their father, mother, sons or daughters. They would have seen them off with the hope that they'll pray for all their wishes to come true when they reach the holy cave.

I switched on the TV to find that news of the attack was already out. Just then, I received a call from my brother in Jammu to make sure I was okay. Within 10 minutes, I started receiving calls from everyone I know to confirm that I was safe.

We were physically unharmed. But are we, all of us, really safe? As the mother of an infant, I shudder at the thought of the

next generation not being safe from the growing hatred, animosity, the feeling of otherness among communities and an environment of fear and suspicion. In Kashmir, we are seeing each day, our young ones increasingly getting pulled into the quagmire of violence.

I collected myself and decided to call my husband to check on him and the situation on the ground. He was at the district hospital attending to the injured and sounded extremely upset. The victims were innocent civilians, many of them women, who had travelled all the way to pray at the *shiv-aling* at Amarnath. As a young IAS officer posted in the restive South Kashmir for the last two-and-a-half years, he is a witness to the violence in the region.

As someone born and brought up in Kashmir, with values of hospitality, humanism and tolerance, he could barely accept the course of events. What and who could possibly comfort a human being who had just lost a family member while on a religious journey in the land of the Sufis?

Likewise for me, as a Kashmiri, the fulcrum of our socio-cultural existence has always been multiculturalism, tolerance, compassion, accommodation of the other view point and a syncretic inter-faith existence. The attack delivers all these values a body blow. It brings a bad name to our collective existence, the much fabled *kashmiriyat*. It exposes the violence that knows no boundary of race, religion, creed, colour or the human cost it involves.

But this incident also made me realise that all of us in Kashmir stand together in unequivocal condemnation of the violence. Across the board, everyone I knew was aghast and lost no time in expressing it on social media groups. The civil society, media, trade bodies, doctors and political organisations — mainstream or otherwise — were quick to state that the attack wasn't on the pilgrims but on all Kashmiris and our ethos. The attackers had managed to murder the yatris but the attack also brought us all together to raise our voice against the pathological mindset that targets innocent non-combatants.

As a daughter of the soil, I can't reconcile with the fact that guests, pilgrims no less, had come to my home state and were killed in cold blood.

I was overwhelmed by this deep sense of guilt and shame. I couldn't sleep the whole night. At 4 am, I saw dawn breaking and I told myself that the darkest hour was just before sunrise. I reminded myself that this is neither our culture nor our religion. The perpetrators of this heinous crime are not Kashmiris or Muslims or perhaps even human.

The writer is an IAS officer of the 2013 batch

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

ROAD CASUALTIES

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Clearing the view' (IE, July 13). The tendency of the rich to show off their expensive cars on roads and highways needs to be tackled. Corruption and absence of preventive procedures, right from the issue of driving licences, certifying road worthiness of the vehicles and checking traffic violations are more potent reasons for road casualties than the availability of liquor by the highways and roadside shops.

M.N. Bharatiya, Goa

MALABAR CALLING

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Making waves' (IE, July 13). The Malabar exercise has strategic and geo-political implications. It showcases India as a stabilising state in the high seas. It also provides exposure to the Indian navy and boosts India's ability to check the growing Chinese assertiveness not only in Indian Ocean, but also in the South-China Sea. The exercise has potential to fill the gaping vacuum created by US's retreat in the region. The group can be further strengthened by the addition of new members — the participation of Australia in 2007 and its subsequent and abrupt withdrawal in the next year poses many questions. The ASEAN, especially Indonesia, would do well to increase their footprint in surrounding waters.

Abhishek Kumar Anshu, Patna

THE NEW COACH

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Don't play it again' (IE, July 13). Though Ravi Shastri has been appointed the Indian cricket team's head coach, the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) reportedly had a tough time in picking a suitable person because of rumbblings within. Since Kohli would have nobody other than the easy-going and jovial Shastri, the CAC "legends" were made to look like lame ducks. Of course, though Shastri is con-

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

sidered a "player's man", he is a disciplinarian. Both Zaheer Khan and Rahul Dravid are well-respected former players with a voice of their own and the experience of being mentors and coaches at various levels. Were they brought in to clip Shastri's wings? Has Shastri been effectively reduced to a "father figure" or a "mentor" whose main role is to cajole the young team?

Ganpathi Bhat, Akola

PETTY POLITICS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Politics after protests as Kashmir hunts for killers' (IE, July 13). A political blame game has been broken out over militant attack on Amaranth pilgrims. The political discourse must rise above such pettiness, especially after a terrorist attack.

Maqsood Khan, via email

THE Urdu PRESS

PM IN ISRAEL

PM NARENDRA MODI'S visit to Israel has been discussed widely. *Akhtar-e-Mashriq* (July 7) writes, "PM Modi's visit to Israel has been successful and there have been positive results from all angles... There would be a new... turn in India's foreign policy and both countries would come closer... Many agreements were signed between the two countries during his visit, including significant agreements in the fields of defence and security. Vital steps have been taken regarding partnership in water and agriculture... However, PM should not have forgotten Palestinians completely during his visit to the region, something that has been criticised by the secular sections, particularly Muslims of the country".

Inqilab, in its commentary on July 9, writes: "The bond of love between Modi and Israel is very old. This was the first visit of any Indian Prime Minister to Israel but this was Modi's second visit to Tel Aviv. When there were restrictions on Modi's visit to the US and Europe following the Gujarat riots, Israel had welcomed Modi, who was then the CM of Gujarat... According to a tradition, when any leader of a country visits Israel, he also meets leaders of the Palestinian Authority. President Donald Trump also spoke to Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas on his visit to Israel in May last. Modi did not follow this tradition... Every foreign guest expresses his desire

for a peaceful solution to the Israel-Palestine problem and for the establishment of an independent and sovereign state of Palestine. Trump too had done so. Regrettably Modi did not speak even a few formal words for the establishment of a Palestinian state."

Sahafat's editorial of July 7, notes: "With the agreement on collaboration in defence, there may be many new ways of cooperation and India may have to spend less on this account in future... Israel can benefit a lot from India's space programmes."

Hindustan Express's editorial of July 6, writes: "It is not entirely true that BJP is pro-Israel and opposition parties are friendly to Palestine. When India established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992, the Congress was in power and not the BJP."

IN COW'S NAME

JADEED KHABAR'S editorial of July 4, writes: "The President has emphatically asked the people to unitedly face the *gau* terrorists. Mobs of *gau* terrorists have been targeting and killing innocent young people in various states of the country. The PM has also spoken about such cases. But it seems that more than expressing grief over the loss of human lives, he tried to emphasise on *gau raksha*. The anxiety shown by President Pranab Mukherjee reflects the gravity of the situation. He

has said that when a mob becomes uncontrollable, the foundations of society get affected and there is need for people to get conscious to protect the fundamental values of the society."

Roznama Khabreïn, in its editorial on July 1, writes: "It is regrettable that even those under the control of the PM (*taabedaaar*) are not willing to lend their ears to his exhortations and warnings... Following the lynching of Akhlaque and, more recently, Junaid, and despite the incidents having shaken the Indian conscience, it seems the so-called *gau rakshaks* have gone out of control or, may be, they are sure that no one has the courage to stop them... The ineffectiveness of the PM's statements lies in the fact that there is no force of action behind his words."

Akhtar-e-Mashriq's July 1 editorial notes: "The *gau rakshaks* are not going to be controlled by the prime minister's exhortations. Only the whip of law is the solution of the problem."

INDIA-CHINA BORDERS

COMMENTING ON the tension between India and China, *Rashtriya Sahara* (July 10) writes: "China has been consolidating its infrastructure in the border regions of India for a long time. It had started preparations for a network of modern roads near the Indian border long ago. It has

also constructed some small airports for possible military use... India has indicated many times that the issue of soldiers posted in Doklam can be resolved through diplomatic talks. But China is taking an aggressive stance."

Roznama Khabreïn, (July 4) opines: "It would be suicidal for India to get involved in a war-like situation with China. Our relations with Pakistan are extremely tense and the door for talks is closed. The situation in Kashmir is quite grave. A war-like situation is not in India's interest. But an extremely strong response to the aggression is imperative for the protection of the country's sovereignty. China, on its part, would probably not commit the mistake of engaging in an intensified confrontation with India, because its relations with the US are uncertain at the moment. New windows are being opened by the US, India and Russia. Anyway, it is better to control the fire before it spreads and efforts should be made to resolve the border issues through dialogue."

Inqilab, on July 5, comments: "Chinese leaders are very bitter about Bhutan's close ties with India. Therefore, they are creating tension on the Bhutanese borders. Perhaps it is igniting a new fire in South Asia to divert people's attention from the misdeeds of its friend, Pakistan."

Compiled by Seema Chishty



What now at Sikkim trijunction?

Indian and Chinese troops have stood face-to-face on the Dolam plateau for nearly a month now. Neither side has seemed willing to back off. Where can things go from here? There are six possible scenarios.



SIMPLY PUT
BY SHUBHAJT ROY
EXPRESS EDITORS INTERPRET



At a press conference on June 29, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lu Kang released these labelled pictures, which he said "clearly show that the Indian soldiers and vehicles have overstepped the crest which is defined as the boundary and entered Chinese territory". http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfja_eng/

THE STANDOFF began on June 16, when Indian soldiers moved on to the Dolam plateau to prevent Chinese soldiers from constructing a road through the area. This area, adjacent to the trijunction of the borders of India, China and Bhutan, is strategically important for India. Over 300 Indian soldiers have pitched tents opposite the slightly smaller Chinese military unit, with some 100-150 metres separating the two armies. What does the future hold?

SCENARIO 1: INDIA WITHDRAWS, CHINA BUILDS THE ROAD

This is what the Chinese have been demanding aggressively. Their argument is that Indian soldiers are in Chinese territory — the Indians contend that it is Bhutanese territory — and should withdraw from the area before any talks take place. But having spent almost four weeks in the area, and realising the threat the Chinese road will pose to the Jampheri Ridge, there is little chance that India will withdraw unilaterally. There are no problems of logistics, supply chains or turnover of soldiers for India, which can force it to back off. A unilateral withdrawal will also mean a loss of face for New Delhi. **UNLIKELY.**

SCENARIO 2: CHINA WITHDRAWS UNILATERALLY, INDIA STAYS

This is the Indian demand — that China must stop building the road and withdraw from the area unilaterally. But the Chinese have turned up the rhetoric, and do not appear keen to walk away now. That they are only two kilometres short of Jampheri Ridge, and already south of the Batang La pass, which India claims is the trijunction of borders, seems to have emboldened them. In any case, if the Chinese were to withdraw unilaterally, there would be no reason for India to stay on in Bhutanese territory. But then, a unilateral withdrawal would mean a loss of face for China now. **UNLIKELY.**

SCENARIO 3: NEITHER SIDE WITHDRAWS, STALEMATE CONTINUES

Both armies could choose to stay on until something gives. This means *status quo* — with a prolonged stalemate of the kind that happened in 1987, when the two sides were face to face for several months in the

Sumdorong Chu valley in Arunachal Pradesh. But the deployment then was over a large frontage — and India now has much better infrastructure and resources to sustain a small body of troops for a long time on Dolam plateau. The Chinese could do the same — and assuming Bhutan does not change its stance, the two sides could be in for a long haul. **POSSIBLE.**

SCENARIO 4: DIPLOMACY WORKS, BOTH SIDES WITHDRAW

India and China haven't fired a shot on their border for half a decade, and most standoffs have been resolved by diplomatic means. This is how the Chumar incursion was resolved in 2014, as was the Depsang incident in 2013. However, in neither of those cases had the two sides resorted to rhetoric of the kind that is being heard now — nor did the Chinese lay down preconditions for talks as they have now. While this does make it difficult for both sides to back off now, creative diplomacy can find answers to even the most vexed of problems. **LIKELY.**

SCENARIO 5: ESCALATION BY CHINA, A LIMITED CONFLICT

India's limited aim is to prevent the Chinese from building the road to the Jampheri Ridge, and it has no reason to escalate the conflict. Even *status quo* achieves India's goal; for China, however, the goal could be different. But an escalation by the Chinese on the Dolam plateau itself would be suicidal, as Indian forces dominate that area. It is for this reason that the Chinese forces have not even tried to resume road construction after the Indians stopped them. However, the Chinese could, in theory, escalate in some other area, i.e., initiate a limited conflict, perhaps in Ladakh or the Northeast. But as Defence Minister Arun Jaitley said, 2017 is not 1962. The Chinese know that as well. **LESS LIKELY.**

SCENARIO 6: A FULL-FLEDGED WAR

One thing: nuclear weapons. **UNLIKELY.**

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SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

Home printers are incredibly irritating. Why has nobody started this business: "Upload a PDF, we print it and post in next-day snail-mail"?


BEN GOLDACRE
British physician and science writer, author of the books *Bad Science* and *Bad Pharma*; 487,000 followers on Twitter.



A photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency on Tuesday shows a ship carrying Chinese military personnel departing a port in Zhanjiang in south China's Guangdong province for the Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti. AP

600 YRS AFTER ZHANG HE, FIRST BASE OVERSEAS

Reading signals from China's new military base at Africa's Horn



IN FACT
BY SHUBHAJT ROY
EXPRESS EDITORS INTERPRET

IN THE first quarter of the 15th century, the great Chinese admiral Zheng He sailed the Indian Ocean, leading seven expeditions to Indonesia, Southeast Asia, India and as far out as the Horn of Africa. Medieval Chinese records say his massive 1405 expedition consisted of 27,800 men and a fleet of 62 treasure ships, supported by approximately 190 smaller ships. Zheng He's voyages are considered to have come earlier, and been bigger than the expeditions of Christopher Columbus.

China's great maritime tradition was, however, stopped by the *hajjin*, or sea ban, imposed by its imperial rulers as part of the defence against pirates in the South China Sea. This week, as Beijing sent personnel to Djibouti, its first military base overseas, it marked the formal return of Chinese maritime expansionism — and sent a few shivers of concern in capitals around the world, including in New Delhi.

"In recent years, the government and the PLA have sponsored a campaign to promote a sense of ocean among the civilians. The country is now portrayed both as a Continental power and a Pacific power. Against the traditional view of yellow culture, which glorified China's heartland history, China's scholars are now keen to introduce a concept of blue culture (ocean culture) to its population," You Ji, a lecturer at the School of Politics at the University of New South Wales, Australia, wrote in the book, *China Rising: Nationalism and Interdependence*. (Ed. David S G Goodman and Gerald Segal: Routledge, 1997)

In the chapter 'A Blue Water Navy, Does it Matter', You, currently a Professor and Head of the Department of Government and Public Administration at the University of Macau, recalled Zheng He's legendary blue water voyages: "The message is clear: if China had developed a sense of ocean 600 years ago, it would have long been a superpower. And if China still sticks to its yellow earth policy, it will never acquire its rightful place in the world."

As two Chinese Navy warships left the military port of Zhanjiang in Guangdong for Djibouti on Tuesday with an undisclosed number of military personnel on board, an editorial in the state-run *Global Times* focussed on the strategic importance of the new facility at the mouth of the Red Sea.

"Certainly this is the People's Liberation Army's first overseas base and we will base troops there. It's not a commercial resupply point... This base can support Chinese Navy to go farther, so it means a lot," said the paper.

However, the *Global Times* also said, the main role of the base would be to support Chinese warships on anti-piracy and humanitarian missions in the region. "It's not about seeking to control the world," it said.

But for many of those watching China's maritime ambitions, the setting up of the overseas base in eastern Africa suggests a fundamental shift in Beijing's stated policy of no "forward deployment". It also raises the possibility of "forward deployment" at India's doorstep — at Pakistan's Gwadar port, where the deployment currently is intended only to "protect" Chinese workers at the facility. In any case, a few officials in South Block pointed out, Djibouti is only about 1,525 nautical miles from Gwadar — a distance that can be covered in about 6 days at sea.

Writing in an Observer Research Foundation publication, *Emerging Trans-Regional Corridors: South and Southeast Asia*, Darshana Baruah, a research analyst at Carnegie India, observed: "Beijing is making headway in port development in the region, providing an insight into Chinese ownership of these ports in other territories. While the debate about turning these ports into bases could be regarded as hawkish, the possibility of an increase in Beijing's military facilities in the region is not far from reality. It is true that a military base does not serve the same purpose as a military facility, especially during times of war; however these facilities can serve immense strategic leverage in a world where nations are looking to project influence while avoiding armed conflicts. It would be naive to consider that Beijing has not calculated the strategic leverage the MSR would provide, if it materialises. (China's MSR: A Strategic View from India)"

As China moves quickly into the Indian Ocean, the appropriate Indian response would have to revolve around the building of stronger naval capabilities. While encouraging investments to build India's maritime infrastructure, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said at the Maritime India Summit, 2016, "This is the right time to come to India, it is even better to come through the sea."

India will be hoping the Prime Minister's call gets an enthusiastic response.

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Move over hard drives, storage in DNA is here



In 1959, Richard Feynman (left) proposed that DNA could be used for storage. Eadweard Muybridge's 1878 film has now been encoded in DNA of a living cell. [Wikimedia Commons](#)

GINA KOLATA

IT WAS one of the very first motion pictures ever made: a galloping mare filmed in 1878 by the British photographer Eadweard Muybridge, who was trying to learn whether horses in motion ever become truly airborne. More than a century later, that clip has rejoined the cutting edge. It is now the first movie ever to be encoded in the DNA of a living cell, where it can be retrieved at will and multiplied indefinitely as the host divides and grows. The advance is the latest and perhaps most astonishing example of the genome's potential as a vast storage device. Scientists already have managed to translate all of Shakespeare's sonnets into DNA. George Church, a geneticist at Harvard and one of the authors of the



PAPER CLIP
FLAGGING INTERESTING RESEARCH
GENOMICS
A FILM IN BACTERIA
Published in *Nature*, July 12, 2017
AUTHORS: G M Church, S L Shipman and Others

new study, recently encoded his own book, *Regenesis*, into bacterial DNA and made 90 billion copies of it.

With the new research, he and other scientists have begun to wonder if it may be possible one day to do something even stranger: to programme bacteria to snuggle up to cells in the human body and to record what they are doing, in essence making a "movie" of each cell's life.

When something goes wrong, when a person gets ill, doctors might extract the bacteria and play back the record. It would be, said Dr Church, analogous to the black boxes carried by airplanes whose data is used in the event of a crash.

Physicist Richard Feynman had proposed half a century ago that DNA could be used for storage in this way. That was long before the molecular biology revolution, and decades before anyone could sequence DNA — much less edit it. **NYT**

Why Lula's conviction could give Brazil its own Trump

THE GRAFT conviction Wednesday of former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, a frontrunner for next year's presidential election, opens the door for an outsider to take power in Latin America's largest country.

Lula, 71, who led Brazil from 2003 to 2011, has said he wants to run for President again. But if his nearly 10-year sentence is upheld on appeal, Lula, a founder of the leftist Workers Party and a giant of Brazilian politics, would be barred from seeking office for eight years, beginning after any jail time is complete.

Lula is among a raft of Brazilian elites toppled by an epic corruption scandal that has battered the nation's economy, engulfed every major party and deepened public cynicism about politics. It's a toxic mix that has enraged voters, who are searching for someone to lead them out of the political and economic wilderness.

"Brazil is now as polarised as the US, it really has been for years," said Carlos Melo, a political scientist with Inspira, a Sao Paulo business school. "But if Lula is absent it would unquestionably open the space for an outside, very emotional leader, a bit like US President Trump."

Lula's lawyers say he is innocent. "This politically motivated judgment attacks Brazil's rule of law, democracy and Lula's basic human rights," his defence team wrote in an emailed statement. "It is of immense concern to the Brazilian people and to the international community."

Recent surveys from the respected Datafolha polling institute show that in a second-round runoff next year, Lula would beat all contenders with the exception of the environmentalist and two-time presidential candidate Marina Silva, with whom he is in a technical tie.

But if Lula cannot run, and with roughly 20% of the electorate undecided on any candidate, the election is up for grabs. While



Lula after being convicted, in Sao Paulo, on Thursday. Reuters

Silva has polled well, political watchers doubt that the soft-spoken, environmental expert could win, in part because her campaigns have lacked the fiery speeches and dramatic flair needed to engage many voters.

The public's thirst for showmanship and anti-establishment candidates, Melo said, could give a boost to two outsiders: Ciro Gomes, a tough-talking former governor, federal minister and congressman; and Joao Doria, a millionaire media mogul and former star of Brazil's version of *The Apprentice*.

Gomes is a rough-and-tumble politician who could easily position himself as an anti-government candidate. Loud and politically incorrect, Gomes called unpopular President Michel Temer the "captain of the coup" that led to the impeachment of former President Dilma Rousseff last year.

Doria, who had never held elected office before, stunned the political establishment last year when he won the mayorship of South America's largest city. He is loved by the business community, and he has caught the public's attention with stunts such as donning a sweeper's uniform and spending days cleaning streets. **REUTERS**

'What if traders split businesses into under Rs 20-lakh units?'

How will the tax laws stop a businessman from splitting his Rs 1-crore business into five businesses of under Rs 20 lakh to be exempt from the GST regime? Also, what is the approval process for mapping merchandise to HSN codes? What stops businesses from mapping them to lower tax brackets?

VIKRAM N KETKAR, PUNE

Is there a GST component to payments for fuel, and to purchases by debit card or credit card? If so, does this amount to double taxation, as GST is already paid by vendors?

MOHAN PURANDARE, VADODARA

Ask the EXPRESS
YOUR QUESTIONS ON GST ANSWERED

(iii) Is it true that each and every purchase bill and sale bill has to be submitted or uploaded with the monthly return? (iv) Will the assessment be monthly or annually?

KAMAL PRASAD SONI, KOLKATA

an internationally accepted trade classification, and can go up to 10 digits. In the GST, they have been restricted to four digits. The use of such codes is extremely helpful as they are understood by businesses all over the world.

(iii) A wrong impression has gained ground that invoices have to be physically uploaded. All that taxpayers have to do is upload the details of outward supplies by the 10th of every month. Invoice details have to be provided only for transactions that are in the nature of business-to-business transactions. The HSN code can be given against the summary of monthly transactions.

(iv) A system of monthly self-assessment (to be done by the taxpayers themselves) has been put in place. The verification of compliance can be done through a scrutiny of returns for smaller units, and audits for larger units.

In the wake of implementation of GST, many small-town retailers have embarked on a mild profiteering spree by raising prices of most loose, non-

packed products, citing "GST impact". Consumers have no way to check the veracity of their claims, or to ascertain whether that particular trader is within the GST bracket. How and which provisions of the anti-profiteering legislation can prevent this sort of exploitation of the situation by tail-end traders?

BIBHUTI DAS, CACHAR, ASSAM

GST has only just begun to be implemented. The government has initiated a number of measures like demanding that all retailers display prominently their GSTN number, and the prices of their products. A five-member team headed by a Secretary-level officer will be constituted to entertain individual complaints. This will be an effective deterrent against unscrupulous traders. The government has also given wide publicity in the news and print media to the pre-GST and post-GST rates of many essential products that are consumed by the poor. Vigilant consumer bodies can act as a countervailing force against unscrupulous traders.



V S KRISHNAN
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Krishnan is answering questions on GST on the readers of *The Indian Express*. A selection of questions and answers will be published in these columns.

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