

Only words may not be enough

No time should be lost to set up a House panel on Kashmir

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has finally held out some hope for the strife-torn Valley, which has been through one of its worst phases in recent years. Mr Modi chose Independence Day to reach out to the Kashmiris, saying a solution could be found by embracing them and not through 'gaali' or goli.' The call for compassion not coercion comes as a reminder for some, of Atal Bihari Vajpayee's famous 'jhamooryat and insaniyat' (democracy and humanity) remark. The prime minister's comments must be followed up with concrete action for them to have any meaningful effect.

It is important that words and intent go hand-in-hand. Mr Modi has changed his stance on the current Kashmir crisis once too often. When he first spoke, at a rally in Madhya Pradesh last year, he had borrowed from Mr Vajpayee's Kashmir policy of 'insaniyat' but within a few days of that, however, Mr Modi uttered the 'Balochistan' word, leaving Kashmiris wondering why they were being treated as pawns in a game that India wanted to play with Pakistan. Even at the time that the PM was delivering his speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort, the common Kashmiri was living through curfew and an Internet ban. For over a year since the killing of militant commander Burhan Wani in July last year, the Kashmiris have been living abnormal lives and have been rattled by the possibility of Article 35A – which guarantees a special status – being tweaked by the courts.

The 'no gaali or goli' line can be the much-needed balm provided it goes beyond rhetoric. Mr Vajpayee had followed up on his outreach by initiating a dialogue with different stakeholders. He had even sent his home secretary to Srinagar to open a channel with the Hizbul Mujahideen. Few expect Mr Modi to replicate Mr Vajpayee's model but a beginning can be made by setting up a panel of parliamentarians – a promise the government made last year, after home minister Rajnath Singh led an all-party delegation to Srinagar. Momentum is key and no time should be lost in setting up a panel that will carry the weight of Parliament. It is in India's interest to move to the next level in Kashmir.

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On Gorkhaland, Mamata is the clear winner

The Centre's refusal to back the stir is dictated by its plans for the 2019 polls

Did Sunday's meeting between Union home minister Rajnath Singh and the Gorkhaland Movement Coordination Committee signal the end of the road for a separate state of Gorkhaland, at least for now? Though politics is an art of the possible, it appears Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee, who has vowed not to allow a division of Bengal, is having her way.

Mr Singh has told the agitators to restore normalcy and go for talks with the state government. The Centre's stand has put its ally, Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, in a fix. While those campaigning for Gorkhaland were hoping for a tripartite meeting, the Centre washed its hands off by asking them to prepare for bipartite talks. The leaders of the hill parties have already withdrawn the fast-unto-death programme and are in extreme discomfort to announce the end of the indefinite bandh after the groundswell of opinion in support of their struggle. In short, it is an unqualified victory for Ms Banerjee. It is clear that her government will just not entertain any mention of a separate state. While the quest for a separate state is linked to the Gorkha identity and may not end here, the Centre's stance seems to mark an end to the current phase of struggle. What Mr Singh conveyed to the agitators on Sunday may not have been comfortable for the party itself that owes one of its two MPs in Bengal, SS Ahluwalia, to its alliance with Gorkha Janmukti Morcha and the party's declaration of a sympathetic consideration of the Gorkha aspiration.

But the BJP's position seems to be dictated by the consideration that it is eyeing a big share of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in the 2019 elections, and exploring a separate state may be politically suicidal in Bengal, where Ms Banerjee is already accusing the party of trying to divide the state. Bimal Gurung and his men will find it difficult, if not outright impossible, to raise the demand for a separate state in the near or medium-term future. There is no shoulder to cry on.

Job losses in one sector will be replaced by newer ones, but they will require other skill sets

RANA KAPOOR



The AI (artificial intelligence) revolution is well and truly upon us, and we are at a significant watershed moment in our lives where AI could become the new electricity – pervasive and touching every aspect of our life. While many industries including healthcare, education, retail and banks have already started adopting AI in key business aspects, there are also new business models which are predicated on AI.

With the global market of AI expected to grow at 36% annually, reaching a valuation of \$3 trillion by 2025 from \$126 bn in 2015, new age disruption is not only redefining the way traditional businesses are run, but is also unfolding as a new 'factor of production'.

However, the fear of what might happen once AI evolves into artificial general intelligence – which can perform any intellectual task that a human can do – has now taken centre stage with the ongoing debate between two tech titans – Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg. Similarly, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates had also voiced his views that in a few years, AI would have evolved enough to warrant wide attention, while Facebook has

ended up shutting down one of its AI projects as chatbots had developed their own language (unintelligible to humans) to communicate.

Beyond this, the common citizen wants to know if she should be worried about AI taking away her job? This calls for broader thinking, including the evolution of industry protocols, while making sure that the public is ready for these futuristic advancements.

The emergence of AI has seen criticism because of the probability that it could replace human jobs by automation. However, as we see the shift of AI from R&D stage to various real-life business prototypes, it seems evident that goal of most AI applications is to augment human abilities through hybrid business models.

According to McKinsey, AI would raise global labour productivity by 0.8% to 1.4% a year between now and 2065. I believe that both policy makers and corporates must recognise AI's potential to empower the workforce and invest in creating training programmes/workshops to help the labour force adapt to these newer models.

For instance, Ocado, the UK online supermarket has embedded robotics at the core of warehouse management. Robots steer thousands of product-filled bins to human packers just in time to fill shopping bags which are then sent to delivery vans whose drivers use AI applications to pick the best route based on traffic conditions and weather.

We must learn from the history of the industrial and technological revolutions



Commerce Bot is a robot that provides customer service with AI and voice recognition

REUTERS

over the last 500 years that jobs eliminated in one sector have been replaced by newer jobs requiring refreshed skill sets. As a corollary, countries such as Japan, Korea or Germany, which have the highest levels of automation, should have seen large scale unemployment over the past 4-5 decades. This is not necessarily the case.

Having said that, in the near future, every routine operational task is certainly likely to become digitised and AI could be running the back-office of most businesses. Over the next few decades, many middle skill jobs are also likely to be eliminated. However, AI is unlikely to replace jobs which require human to human interaction. Consequently,

fundamental human thinking skills such as entrepreneurship, strategic thinking, social leadership, connected salesmanship, philosophy, and empathy, among others, would be in even greater demand.

Further, till the point of singularity is reached, AI will not be able to service or program on its own leading to new, high-skilled jobs for technicians and computing experts.

Globally, policymakers and corporations will need to significantly revamp the education system to address technology gaps.

In India, this represents an enormous opportunity for policymakers to make better informed decisions, tackle some of the toughest socio-economic challenges, and address the woeful shortage of qualified doctors, teachers etc.

We need to immediately plan for state and nation-wide university hubs, and MOOCs (massive open online courses) built on the framework of DICE (design, innovation, creativity led entrepreneurship).

Curricula should be focussed on developing basic skills in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields, coupled with a new emphasis on creativity, critical and strategic thinking. Adaptive and individualised learning systems need to be established to help students at different levels work collaboratively among themselves as well as with AI in the classroom.

The National Skills Development Corporation will need to evolve into 'National Future Skills Development', as we as a civil society prepare to bring the future into the present!

Rana Kapoor is MD and CEO, YES Bank; and chairman, YES Global Institute. The views expressed are personal

GLOBAL VILLAGE



While India can benefit from technology transfer, overseas firms can gain from getting access to our vast, untapped markets

HINDUSTAN TIMES

Multilateral synergies can fire up the economy

India has benefited from globalisation, and it's imperative that we continue the move towards greater openness



ARUN M KUMAR

For India, the last seven decades have been enormously transformational. While India's current record as one of the fastest growing economies is top of mind today, it's worth remembering that soon after Independence, we had a promising start. It was a forerunner in development planning and achieved an average industrial growth of more than 8% per annum between 1954-55 and 1964-65. Since Independence, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has expanded more than forty-fold to exceed \$2 trillion today.

A key lesson to be learnt is that the country has gained from increasing its interdependence.

India has been a beneficiary of globalisation and it's imperative that we continue the move towards greater openness. Hence, greater regional and global integration must continue to be prioritised.

Going beyond bilateral collaboration, India could benefit from multilateral synergies. A

three-way collaboration of India-US-Israel holds economic promise. Likewise, promoting collaboration at the level of the respective country's states, between large economies like the US and India, will open new economic opportunities. While India could benefit from technology transfer and employment generation facilitated by foreign engagements, overseas firms will gain from having market access to India's vast, high growth market.

Well-designed collaborative efforts would go a long way in helping the country meet its aspiration to become a hub for high-tech manufacturing.

Just as we focus internally on the ease of doing business, ease of trade facilitation and associated logistics also warrant major emphasis to facilitate greater participation in global value chains. Hence, greater regional and global integration must continue to be prioritised.

India's economic prosperity will be driven by its global interdependence, in increasing trade and investments into and from India, helping drive GDP growth and prosperity for all Indians. We have an opportunity to build on the progress of the past 70 years to further advance the benefits of globalisation for India.

Arun M Kumar, is chairman & CEO, KPMG India

The views expressed are personal

UP needs a special law to fight organised crime

In the last 10 years, law and order has deteriorated in the state thanks to the politician-criminal nexus

PRAKASH SINGH



which are deadlier in impact and more expansive in their reach.

The United Nations views organised crime to be a large-scale and complex criminal activity carried on by group of persons for the enrichment of those participating and at the expense of the community and its members. Such crimes, it was said, is frequently accomplished through ruthless disregard of law and frequently in pursuance of political corruption. In the US, the Organized Crime Control Act was enacted in 1970.

The need for a law on the lines of MCOCA in Uttar Pradesh was felt as far back as 2007. The UPA at the Centre, however, did not allow the Act on the ground that it was likely to be misused. The law and order situation in the state has deteriorated sharply during the last 10 years, thanks to the patronage extended to criminals by the political class. Drastic steps need to be taken and the state must have a stringent law to deal with the organised criminals.

Actually, as observed by the Committee on Reforms of Criminal Justice System, "The time has come when the country has to give deep thought for a system of Federal Law and Federal Investigating Agency with an all-India Charter". Such an agency would have within its ambit "crimes that affect national security and activities aimed at destabilising the country, politically and economically."

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission headed by Veerappa Moily (2007) noted that the incidents of organised crime in India were on the increase. The Commission was of the view that there should be a central law on the subject with provisions for enhanced punishment, special courts, authorisation for interception of communication, special rules of evidence, circumstances under which confessions to police officers can be admissible in trials, protection of witnesses, forfeiture and attachment of property, presumption of offences, etc.

The Commission was, of course, conscious of the need to have "additional safeguards" in the central law so that the chances of misuse of its provisions were minimal.

It is disappointing that the government of India has not yet passed a central law to deal with the growing threat of organised crime. It is high time that the matter is taken up by the NDA government.

Till then, the states should be allowed to have laws to deal with the menace of organised crime.

Prakash Singh is former director general BSF, DGP Uttar Pradesh and DGP Assam. The views expressed are personal

(Tomorrow: Dushyant Dave on why UP does not need a special law to tackle organised crime)

GLOBALISATION HAS ENABLED CRIME SYNDICATES TO SPREAD THEIR WINGS. ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES NEED POWERS TO DEAL WITH FORMATS WHICH ARE DEADLIER IN IMPACT AND EXPANSIVE IN THEIR REACH

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POLITENESS IS A VIRTUE. BUT WE MUST ALSO BE FIRM WHEN REQUIRED



Dheeraj Kumar

According to former US President Theodore Roosevelt, "Politeness is a sign of dignity but not a sign of subservience." In my daily life, I prefer to be polite to everyone. But sometimes a few people actually take advantage of your politeness. In place of gratitude they oblige you with an exact amount of rudeness.

Sometimes while waiting in a queue I offer to let some people move ahead of me but thereafter I see other people trying to

push me out of the queue. This type of behaviour is really absurd and rude. And at that moment, I start questioning my politeness and then realize that in cities like these, politeness is unaffordable.

I am not saying that we should be polite only to a selective set of people because that would be selfishness. But, one should be judicious enough to realize where to show politeness and where not. We should maintain a level of neutrality.

Hindi author Munshi Premchand and former Prime Ministers Lal Bahadur Shastri, AB Vajpayee were polite in their real life, but when situation demanded, they never hesitated to be firm.

Being too polite can harm every level of society. A media that is too polite can never change the mindset of people. Sometimes we need to raise our voice, stand up for our causes and rights. But, in our day to day activities, we should be polite to each other.

Inner Voice comprises contributions from our readers. The views expressed are personal
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