https://telegram.me/TheHindu_Zone https://telegram.me/PDFEXAMS WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

A country's stages of evolution: Small power, Great power, Superpower, Hyperpower, Former power

IAN BREMMER, political scientist, author and professor; 305,000 followers on Twitter. Tagging a Fox News tweet about Donald Trump aide Sebastian Gorka saying, "We are now a hyperpower", and that Trump's message to North Korea is "Don't test this White House".

(From left) Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav, the JD (S)'s H D Deve Gowda, JD (U) leader Sharad Yadav, RJD supremo Lalu Prasad, and JD (U) chief Nitish Kumar at a meeting in New Delhi in November 2014. If Sharad splits from Nitish, each of these former Janata Parivar colleagues will have his own party. *Anil Sharma/Archive*

JANATA DIVIDED FAMILY

Splitting headache that won't go

Former Janata Dal (United) president Sharad Yadav has rebelled against his party chief Nitish Kumar for leaving the grand alliance in Bihar to join hands with the BJP. ANAND MISHRA summarises the journey of India's socialist leaders who are probably best known for going their separate ways.

FORMER JD(U) president Sharad Yadav's revolt against his party chief Nitish Kumar's decision to switch to a political alliance with the BJP adds the latest chapter to the history of fragmentation of the Janata Parivar, whose members are often seen as enthusiastic practitioners of the dictum, "Socialists come together only to part ways; they part ways only to come together".

While Indian socialist leaders have sought to explain every union and split in terms of ideology, most of these manoeuvres can, in fact, be read in the context of personal egos and power politics among them.

So, while Lalu Prasad is now egging Sharad Yadav on against Nitish, the last major split in the Janata Parivar took place in 1997, when Lalu and Sharad clashed over the presidentship of the erstwhile Janata Dal. Lalu broke away with the Bihar unit and formed the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), which he and his family have now led for 20 years.

Earlier, in 1994, it was Nitish who rebelled against Lalu's control of the Janata Dal in Bihar. He allied with George Fernandes to form the Samata Party, which became a partner in the coalition led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

After Lalu broke away, the Janata Dal disintegrated further — first with the Odisha unit charting its own course as the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) under Naveen Patnaik in 1997, and the Karnataka unit under H D Deve Gowda forming the JD (Secular) in 1999. Sharad's Janata Dal was left with J H Patel of the Karnataka unit, who backed the Vajpayee-led NDA. Sharad ultimately made peace with Fernandes's and Nitish's Samata Party to form the JD (United).

The JD, which was in power from 1996-98, had suddenly disintegrated into the RJD, BJD, JD (S) and JD (U). In each of these splits, egos of individual leaders and their desire to control regional fiefdoms played the major role.

Erstwhile Janata Dal leaders *(from left)* R K Hegde, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, S R Bommai, H D Deve Gowda, Ram Vilas Paswan, S Jaipal Reddy, Sharad Yadav. *Archive*

The Earlier Janata

The Janata Dal that disintegrated in the late 90s had come into shape a decade earlier when scattered factions of the Janata Party, which had ousted Indira Gandhi from power after the Emergency in 1977, came together.

Objecting to the dual membership of the RSS and Janata Party of leaders such as Vajpayee and L K Advani, the socialists walked out and formed the Janata Party (Secular) led by Charan Singh. This party, which also had stalwarts like Madhu Limaye, Raj Narain, Karpoori Thakur, Biju Patnaik and Fernandes, went on to become the Lok Dal. Raj Narain parted ways briefly, but returned to join Charan Singh.

But the Lok Dal faced a major crisis soon afterward. Charan Singh expelled Thakur, Patnaik, Limaye, Fernandes, Devi Lal and Kumbharam Arya, and the party split into Lok Dal (Charan) and Lok Dal (Karpoori) in 1982. Current JD (U) leaders Sharad Yadav and K C Tyagi were with the Lok Dal (Karpoori).

Limaye quit politics, and Patnaik and Fernandes joined the Chandra Shekhar faction of the Janata Party. On the other hand, ahead of the 1984 Lok Sabha elections, Devi Lal (from Haryana) and Karpoori Thakur (from Bihar) joined hands with Charan Singh (from UP) and Congress rebel H N Bahuguna to form the Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Party (DMKP). The DMKP was later renamed Lok Dal.

But this new Lok Dal too did not last. With Charan Singh incapacitated due to poor health, his son Ajit Singh came to head the Lok Dal (Ajit), while Bahuguna formed the Lok Dal (Bahuguna) with the rest of the flock.

The BJP and Lok Dal (Bahuguna) dealt a major blow to Rajiv Gandhi's Congress by winning 85 out of 90 seats in the 1987 Haryana Assembly elections. Devi Lal became Chief Minister. With the demise of Bahuguna, the reins of the Lok Dal (B) passed to Devi Lal, along with Mulayam Singh Yadav (in UP) and Karpoori Thakur (in Bihar).

After V P Singh emerged as a national figure on the back of his anti-graft campaign against Rajiv and the Congress, the Janata Party of Chandra Shekhar and Lok Dal of Devi Lal joined hands with Singh to form the Janata Dal on October 11, 1988. They stormed to power the following year.

The next crisis came as Chandra Shekhar walked away from the JD with Mulayam (in UP) to form the Samajwadi Janata Party (SJP) ahead of the 1991 elections. But they soon parted ways — Mulayam formed the Samajwadi Party in 1992, and Chandra Shekhar was left to be the only leader of his party.

Mulayam's exit, and his forming the government in UP without help from national leaders of the Janata Parivar, was followed by a trend of regional socialist strongmen establishing themselves in their states — over time, Janata disintegrated into Samata, RJD and JD (U) in Bihar, JD (S) in Karnataka, Indian National Lok Dal in Haryana, and BJD in Odisha.

The Latest Attempt

Like in 1977 and 1988, a fresh attempt was made to bring socialists together as a national alternative after the BJP led by Narendra Modi stormed to power in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. With the Congress floundering, Nitish took the initiative to approach Mulayam, Deve Gowda, Lalu and the Chautalas.

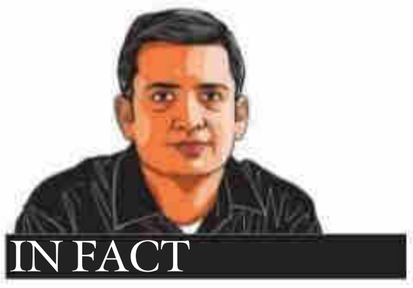
On April 15, 2015, six splinter groups of the erstwhile JD — JD (U), RJD, SP, JD (Secular), INLD and Kamal Morarka's Samajwadi Janata Party — announced their intention to merge, and set up a six-member committee to decide on issues like the name, flag and election symbol of the new party. They even said Mulayam would be their chief.

The entire effort, however, fizzled out ahead of the 2015 Bihar Assembly elections, when the SP decided to contest against the Lalu-Nitish-Congress alliance. After the *mahagathbandhan* won and Nitish became Chief Minister, his motivation to mobilise other socialists evaporated.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Monsoon Session ends today; only 9 Bills out of 25 passed by Houses

Disruptions reduced the time for deliberations; Session had its share of controversies as well



IN FACT

CHAKSHU ROY

SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS

THE 19-DAY Monsoon Session of Parliament concludes today. In this short session, both Houses were expected to pass more than 25 Bills on a range of subjects. The items on the government's priority list were four Bills to replace Ordinances promulgated by the President during the inter-session period. Three of these were related to the Goods and Services Tax regime; one was on the stressed assets of banks. Parliament, however, had limited time to scrutinise the government's legislative agenda, and to discuss significant national issues.

Disruptions of the proceedings reduced the time available for deliberation. Both Houses tried to make up for lost time by sitting beyond their scheduled hours, but still fell short. Lok Sabha worked for approximately 70% of its scheduled time, and Rajya Sabha for about 73%. The available time was also reduced due to the adjournment of both Houses in memory of sitting members who had passed away. Lok Sabha did not take up any business on two days (in memory of Vinod Khanna and Sanwar Lal Jat); Rajya Sabha did not function on the first day of the session as a mark of respect to Anil Madhav Dave, Minister of State for Environment, who passed away in May.

Lok Sabha spent 28 hours, Rajya Sabha 22 hours, discussing Bills. The government's legislative agenda sailed smoothly through Lok Sabha. Two Bills extending the GST regime to Jammu and Kashmir were among the 13 that were passed. The Lower House also passed a Bill giving the country's 20 IIMs the status of institutes of national importance and the power to award degrees.

Among the Bills that witnessed a spirited debate in both Houses was the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Bill, an attempt by the government to address the issue of rising corporate loan defaults. The Bill authorises the Reserve Bank of India to give directions to banks on recovering these loans. During the debate, MPs questioned the rationale of having RBI intervene in the day-to-day working of banks. Rajya Sabha passed the Bill on Wednesday.

In all, however, only seven Bills were approved by the Upper House. The government was also unable to secure the passage of a key clause in The Constitution (123rd Amendment) Bill, which gives the National Commission on Backward Classes (NCBC) constitutional status. As reported by this newspaper, the main clause of the Bill which dealt with the composition of the NCBC, had to be dropped due to the absence of enough ruling party members in the Upper House.

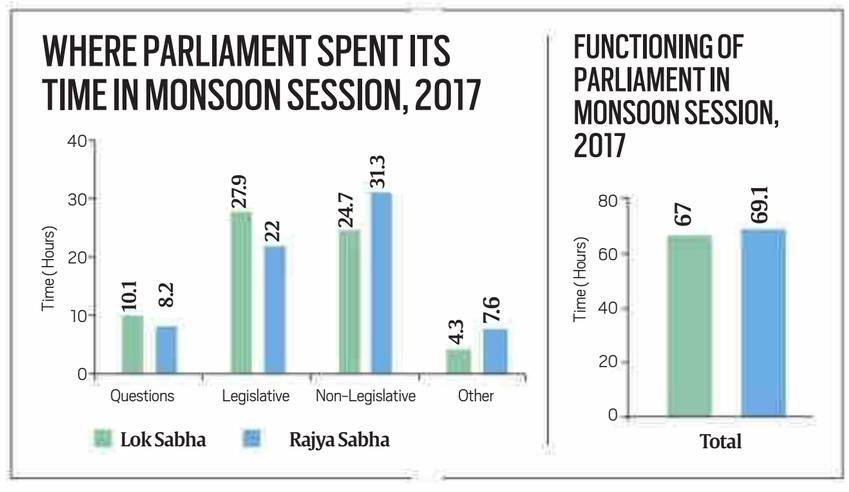
National issues also resonated in Parliament. Approximately 55 hours were devoted to discussing the agrarian crisis, suicides by farmers, floods, mob violence, lynching, and atrocities on Dalits and minorities in both Houses. Rajya Sabha also discussed for more than five hours the country's foreign policy and strategic ties with its neighbours. Question Hour was suspended in both Houses to discuss the 75th anniversary of the Quit India Movement. Both Houses passed a resolution pledging the building of a better India.

The Session has not been free from controversy. The Speaker suspended five MPs for persistently and wilfully obstructing the proceedings of Lok Sabha. Early on in the session, Rajya Sabha had to be adjourned because of lack of quorum in the House. On Wednesday, the government introduced the Code on Wages Bill at short notice and referred it to a Joint Committee of both Houses. This prompted protests from MPs who complained that they did not get the time to study the Bill, and that the reference to a Joint Committee would bypass scrutiny of the Bill by the Parliamentary Committee on Finance.

As the Monsoon Session ends and Parliament heads into an extended recess, the key takeaway remains slow legislative activity: of the 25 Bills listed, only nine could be passed by both Houses.

chakshu@prsindia.org

(Chakshu Roy is Head of Outreach at PRS Legislative Research)



In defeat of IS, a significant compliment for Iraq national unity

BEYOND THE NEWS

SAMEER ARSHAD KHATLANI

EXPRESS EDITORS INTERPRET

IRAQ APPEARED to have reached a point of no return when the Islamic State (IS) executed an estimated 1,700 Iraqi Air Force cadets, mostly Shia Muslims, at Camp Speicher near Tikrit in June 2014. The massacre, one of the worst among the IS's many atrocities, deepened sectarian faultlines, and laid the ground for a possible entrenchment of the terrorist group as the Iraqi state collapsed. It would have seemed farfetched at the time to imagine the scenes of pan Iraqi solidarity seen on the streets of Mosul three years later, on July 10, 2017, when Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared victory over the IS. Flag-waving civilians danced in the devastated streets amid chants of "by our souls and blood, we sacrifice for you, Iraq", and calls for Shia-Sunni brotherhood.

The unity Iraqis forged in the face of the existential threat is a less discussed aspect of the defeat of the IS. Not many had anticipated what Iraq expert and *The Guardian* columnist Jonathan Steele described as "a national sense of urgency [among Iraqis] which overcame regional, ethnic and sectarian disputes".

To be sure, it wasn't easy. Even in March 2015, a year before the Iraqi army's final push against the IS, tensions ran high at a meeting of 16 tribal leaders gathered at Baghdad's Babylon Hotel with the object of reconciliation. An important leader threatened to walk out at one point, after local tribes were accused of being complicit in the Camp Speicher massacre. But the facilitators persisted with their efforts, and tangible results followed.

The Babylon Hotel meeting was organised as part of efforts supported by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) since December 2014 "to forestall a new cycle of killing". Iraqi facilitators, officials, peacebuilders and NGOs led the talks to encourage engagements and counter calls for revenge. The USIP, a nonpartisan institute established by Congress in 1984 to "prevent, reduce, and resolve armed conflict around the world", drew on earlier mediation experiences in Iraq, and its experience of cultural norms and tribal traditions. Its efforts turned out to be crucial in facilitating the return of Sunnis to their homes in Tikrit, which they had fled for fear of reprisals once the city was liberated. Earlier, the al-Bu Ajeel and al-Bu Nasir tribes had promised to turn over anyone found to have been involved in the massacre. "Determined bridge-building" curbed the "powerful tribal impulse for revenge", defused calls for retribution, wrote Scott Peterson of the *Christian Science Monitor*.

A Yazidi shrine destroyed by the Islamic State is rebuilt in Bashiqa near Mosul earlier this week. *Reuters*

The engagements provided a template for reconciliation, and helped build the understanding that both sides had suffered from the IS's terror. It emerged that Sunnis had protected many Shia cadets and shepherded them out of IS-held territory. The two sides held the IS responsible for the atrocity without stigmatising Sunnis as a whole, and agreed to build a memorial to the massacre victims.

Iraq's top Shia cleric Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, whose June 2014 *fatwa* swelled the ranks of anti-IS volunteer forces, emerged as a key unifying figure. A year earlier, he had issued a *fatwa* prohibiting the shedding of Sunni blood despite a wave of targeted attacks on Shias by al-Qaeda. Iraq's Shia clerical establishment has worked hard at presenting a unified front, including inviting journalists from across the world to counter the sectarian projection of the anti-IS war. In 2016, a briefing of Sunni, Shia and Christian commanders of the anti-IS volunteer force was organised for Indian journalists in Baghdad to highlight the success of reconciliation efforts.

It has helped that the origins of sectarianism in Iraq are relatively recent. In a 2014 piece, Columbia University sociologist Musa al-Gharbi argued that the turmoil in Iraq resulted from a revolt against "very specific governmental policies — most of which have their origins in the US invasion and occupation". Iraq had ethnic tensions prior to the 2003 invasion, al-Gharbi wrote, but Saddam Hussein "did not allow overt sectarianism to flourish", and "Sunnis and Shias led a fairly well-integrated existence, especially in the larger cities".

Indeed, nearly a third of marriages in Iraq were inter-sectarian, and the country had other thriving minorities, al-Gharbi argued. Political affiliation was largely based on secular ideologies; Saddam's socialist Baath regime had a significant Shia presence. Even the insurgency, according to al-Gharbi, "was fairly broad-based" during the early stages of the occupation.

American diplomat Paul Bremer, who headed the post-Saddam Provisional Authority of Iraq, is often blamed for falling back on the colonial divide-and-rule policy to counter the broad-based challenge. Sunnis, who are around 40% of the population, suddenly found themselves excluded from positions of power. The army that predated the Baath party was disbanded, and Sunnis were purged from the military and bureaucracy in the garb of de-Baathification. The policy of mandatory declaration of sect for the issuance of documents, and the allocation of quotas in the governing council on a sectarian basis, pitted ethnic and religious groups against each other.

Iraq paid dearly as a result. While Prime Minister al-Abadi's inclusive policies, and the Shia clergy's farsightedness have helped, no one believes that the defeat of the IS is the decisive end of the war. Iraq could yet become a new battleground for regional powers and their deadly sectarian games. The Trump administration's policy of taking sides in the region is unlikely to promote the cause of peace.

sameer.khatlani@expressindia.com

https://telegram.me/TheHindu_Zone https://telegram.me/PDFEXAMS WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

WORDLY WISE

NO SCIENCE IS IMMUNE TO THE INFECTION OF POLITICS AND THE CORRUPTION OF POWER.

— JACOB BRONOWSKI

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

DO NOT TOUCH

Move to re-open debate on Article 35A is unwise — loose talk on J&K's special status will only deepen distrust

THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLY last month to the Supreme Court, saying that the questions raised in a petition challenging Article 35A require a "larger debate", has predictably stirred a hornet's nest in Kashmir. The Article was added by a 1954 presidential order issued under Article 370, the constitutional provision that mediates the relationship between the Union of India and Kashmir on conditions agreed upon during the state's 1947 accession. Article 35A empowers the state legislative assembly to specify permanent residents. The 1956 J&K Constitution defines a Permanent Resident as one who, apart from being an Indian citizen, was a state subject on May 14, 1954, or a resident of the state for 10 years, and owns immovable property in the state. The BJP-RSS aversion to J&K's special status is well known; one of the RSS's oft-stated objectives, reiterated by many in the BJP, is the abrogation of Article 370, which stands in the way of the demographic seen as the "permanent solution" to the problems in Kashmir. As the political party that rules India, and is in the ruling coalition in J&K, the BJP must ask itself if the new legal pro-activism against Articles 35A or 370 is in the national interest, or will lead to more alienation in the Valley.

Kashmiris are not far off the mark when they argue that had it not been for the steady erosion of Article 370 through the years, the situation in Kashmir would not have reached this pass. In the Valley, the government's reply on 35A is being seen as paving the way for moves to do away with Article 370 that excludes J&K from most laws enacted by Parliament, except through presidential orders that have the concurrence of the J&K Legislative Assembly. Indeed, the court has also asked the Centre to respond to a petition challenging Article 370. All this has served to strengthen suspicions that the Centre is using the legal route to bring about the changes that it wants. That Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti decided to bury the hatchet with a bitter political rival and knocked at the door of National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah for discussions to hammer out a common political position on this matter speaks to the urgency it holds in the Valley. Other parties in Kashmir are joining the effort. The PDP-BJP alliance, frayed already by the Centre's disdain for the painstakingly worked out Agenda for Alliance, can only come under more strain in the coming days, even though the BJP state unit appears to appreciate the importance of 35A better than its bosses in Delhi.

Chief Minister Mufti's grim warning that there will be none left in Kashmir to shoulder the tricolour if 35A is struck down should be heeded. As also the statement of National Conference leader Omar Abdullah that opening up 35A for debate is nothing less than questioning the accession itself. The government would be making an akratic choice if it went down this road any further.

SCIENTIFIC DISTEMPER

Government's rhetoric on science has shown limited understanding of its nature and purpose

ON WEDNESDAY, SCIENTISTS, students, educators and science enthusiasts marched in 25 Indian cities, demanding better propagation of the scientific temper — a fundamental duty listed in Article 51A(h) of the Constitution — and substantive funding for science and education. However, the government may not pay heed. By all accounts, while it values science for development and the national interest, it does not acknowledge adequately that research requires an open atmosphere untrammelled by political objectives.

The roots of discontent in the scientific community go back to two significant events in 2015. One was the prime minister's inaugural speech at the Tirupati Science Congress, in which he positioned science and technology as handmaidens of immediate developmental needs, and recommended that corporate social responsibility funds should be channelled towards scientific research. The other was the declaration following a *chintan shivir* organised in Dehradun, which essentially stated that labs should be development-oriented, partly self-funding and profit-making by 2017. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research was asked to raise half of its funds and laboratories were to report routinely about how their research advanced the economic and social goals of the NDA government.

Both these articulations exposed a problematic understanding of how science works, what it can deliver, and when. Good science needs the long haul. Periodic progress reports can be required of school students, not scientists. Fruits like Chandrayaan that Isro is reaping now have grown from seeds sown decades ago, when rocket cones were transported to the Thumba launch pad on bicycle carriers. Besides, the pressure to raise funds and to partner with industry would favour applied science, which industry can commercialise. This would be at the expense of fundamental research, which is the wellspring of all science. Materials research has fairly immediate outcomes, but it should not be promoted at the expense of astronomy, only because the output of stargazing is unquantifiable in the short term. Similarly, while the government is free to investigate the properties of dung and the benefits of yoga, it should not be at the expense of the funding of genetics or cosmic ray research. Besides, autonomous bodies like CSIR must now bear 70 per cent of the burden of the Seventh Pay Commission, and the impact may affect research budgets. More than before, scientists have reason to fear that the direction of their work may be set by external forces, and that the disinterested pursuit of science will become an even more difficult quest.

TWO JONGS

... don't make a right. Donald Trump is trying to out-shout North Korea and it isn't working

A WORLD LEADER with an unusual hairstyle, a penchant for self-promotion and a deep (self) love for the camera is threatening the "fire and fury" of nuclear war. His Asian rival is his mirror image — a man of unpredictable bravado with a dated haircut and his finger on "the button". Will diplomacy triumph over their irascible temperaments and save the world?

Apocalyptic scenarios are no longer just the stuff of Cold War-inspired Hollywood blockbusters. US President Donald Trump, speaking earlier this week, warned North Korea in language that does not befit the leader of a mature country, let alone a superpower. Worse, senior policy advisers have claimed that Trump's ultimatum was an "off-the-cuff" remark, and "fire and fury" is a phrase the president often uses in private. North Korea — whose leader, Kim Jong Un, was till recently unchallenged in his eccentricities and lack of diplomatic niceties — has not backed down. After saying that dialogue is not possible with Trump because he is "a guy bereft of reason", North Korea announced a detailed plan to launch Hwasong-12 rockets that will land off the coast of Guam.

North Korea's belligerence has increased since UN sanctions were intensified after it tested ballistic missiles earlier this year. A concerted global diplomatic effort is needed to keep its nuclear capabilities in check. That requires a mature US leadership to work with other powers in the region. Trump's approach seems to be to try and out-shout the rogue communist state, a strategy that doesn't seem to have been effective in bringing stability and guaranteeing peace. After all, two Jongs don't make a right.

A strange hybrid

Niti Aayog proposal for privatising public hospitals is ill-designed, driven by ideology more than welfare

K. SUJATHA RAO

THE CORPORATE HOSPITALS have been resting their gaze on public hospitals for long: Land, doctors and patients. Finally, in the Niti Aayog, they have found a sympathetic collaborator. As per media reports, the Aayog is all set to push states to privatise well functioning district hospitals in the Tier 2 and 3 cities like Pune, Baroda, Visakhapatnam, Madurai and so on. The proposed model consists of leasing out for 30 years a portion of the hospital to a private company to provide treatment for the three diseases — cardiology, cancer and pulmonology — that account for 35 per cent of mortality in India. It's a strange hybrid that has no precedent anywhere in the world and can be called strategic, bizarre or harebrained depending on which side of the equation you are on.

The intention of the proposal, to hive off 60,000 sq ft of the hospital and vacant land, if any, to a private investor, is to attract private capital through equity and venture funds to build the required infrastructure to world class standards. Accordingly, the "implementing authority" — the government — will hand over the site, facilitate early approvals and permissions, ensure continuous availability of water and power, provide viability gap funding, a share in all the common services, undertake all back-end office processes like collecting fees and keeping accounts, mobilise patients as per a plan to be approved by the investor, and reimburse expenses incurred on the treatment of such referrals. If costed, all this would account for close to half the price of service.

The private entity will have its own staff and personnel, laboratories, pharmacy, ambulances and common services like cafeteria and bookshops down to the ATM. It will have an assured market, access to all confidential records and information and freedom to charge user fees. Complicated cases will, however, be referred to bigger hospitals — their own or of government. Government reimbursements for patients referred to them will be on par with rates paid under the CGHS or the state-sponsored insurance scheme, if any. A grievance redressal mechanism is proposed. Overall accountability is confined to submitting some annual reports to the government. In case of any violation of conditions, the government will need to seek judicial relief.

A cursory glance clearly indicates the one-sidedness of the agreement, with the government bearing all the risk and the private partner running away with all the profits. Risk is unequally spread. The rationale for coming up with this hybrid model is the fact that these three diseases do account for almost 35-40 per cent of total mortality in the country. So attention to them is not misplaced. It is also a fact that three-quarters of the specialists, equipment and beds are in the private sector. Partnership with them is therefore inevitable. What has been eluding public policy is how to make both these sectors work for achieving welfare goals without financial stress to government or the patients.

A cursory glance clearly indicates the one-sidedness of the agreement, with the government bearing all the risk and the private partner running away with all the profits. Risk is unequally spread. The rationale for coming up with this hybrid model is the fact that these three diseases do account for almost 35-40 per cent of total mortality in the country. So attention to them is not misplaced. It is also a fact that three-quarters of the specialists, equipment and beds are in the private sector. Partnership with them is therefore inevitable. What has been eluding public policy is how to make both these sectors work for achieving welfare goals without financial stress to government or the patients.

India has a plethora of PPPs in health, starting with handing over free land and extensive custom duty waivers for imported equipment, to "strategic partnerships" under which public hospitals have been handed over to large corporates, outsourcing of diagnostics and dialysis units and so on. The largest PPPs are, however, under the government sponsored insurance schemes where treatment costs for eligible patients are reimbursed by government at agreed package rates, that have, however, witnessed steady increases as have premiums. None of these initiatives have to date been critically evaluated by any credible third party. Stray studies have indicated negligible impact on reducing catastrophic or out-of-pocket expenditure, though they have widened access to treatment. The jury is out on the welfare benefits accrued on account of such partnerships.

The challenge in the Niti Aayog hybrid model is its implementation. How do public and private managements coexist in the same physical space? A hospital is a living institution that cannot be dismembered. Salary streams, motivation levels, working methods, prescription practices, monitoring and accountability systems, work expectations, all vary. Everyday, there are instances of patients being denied treatment in private hospitals till payment is made or preferring paying patients to the government insured ones or levying additional charges in addition to the sum reimbursed. Private hospitals are also known to overcharge devices like stents and drugs that are the key revenue earning centres. How, then, will the government operate its low-cost generics aushadhi pharmacies alongside the private entity pharmacies? In other words, in such a model how will conflicts of interest be managed?

All countries normally come up with new strategies based on a thorough evaluation of the existing experience, since successes, and more importantly, failures provide insights and lessons. This is more imperative given the market failures in the health sector. Therefore, as a first step in these three years, the Aayog could easily have come up with a soundly argued, evidence-based white paper on the need for hospital reform, providing various options with fiscal implications. Secondly, the model does not provide any information on the pricing strategy and its impact on public budgets. The CGHS is an imperfect instrument to rely upon as the rates fixed under that programme are based on tenders. Prices quoted, therefore, include cost of capital, liabilities and profit. Since under the Aayog model, several "costs" are being subsidised, rates charged ought to be half of the CGHS rates.

Besides, in the absence of an unequivocal commitment to increasing health budgets, will payments under these programmes imply diversion from the more important public health programmes? As it is, infectious disease control programmes like TB are underfunded. Thirdly, will private sector accept government protocols? These are not standardised, with government hospitals tending towards more rational and conventional treatment styles as opposed to private hospitals that at times appear to be more influenced by compulsions of profit maximisation.

Clearly, the Niti Aayog proposal has a sound rationale but the design is fraught with adverse implications for the existence of public hospitals that are a refuge for the poor. In the absence of government as the monopoly purchaser, such a hybrid model will be a challenge. The protagonists of such schemes believe there are no alternatives or options. There are. Plenty. Niti Aayog has an obligation and a duty to consult, listen, collect evidence, analyse, understand and reflect, not prescribe based on the advice of the World Bank and a few interested corporate houses. In this case, it is clear that ideology, and not welfare, is the driving consideration.

The writer is former Union Secretary, Ministry of Health, and author of 'Do We Care? India's Health System'

THE NOT SO FREE VOTE

Rules on secrecy of ballot in RS polls are not in sync with free choice and consent

SHREENATH A. KHEMKA

DEMOCRACY HAS METAMORPHOSED into complex systems of representative politics. The *grundnorm* or basic norm for any democratic polity is the impartial and free exercise of "consent" or choice. The unraveling in Gujarat on Wednesday raises significant questions in this respect.

The Congress was able to joust its way into the Rajya Sabha by giving Ahmed Patel his fifth term as an MP from Gujarat. However, the real fight was not in the House but outside it. With an order from the Election Commission, the Congress was able to invalidate two votes cast against Patel. The controversy ensued when two electors from the Congress cast their ballots for Balwantsinh Rajput and showed the same to Amit Shah. As per the Conduct of Election Rules 1961, the procedure laid down for the Rajya Sabha elections calls for a ballot-in-secret. Secrecy under Rule 39A mandates that the elector cannot declare his ballot to anyone; any deviation results in the invalidation of the ballot by the presiding officer. But Rule 39A seems to be amiss of the *grundnorm* of a secret ballot.

Secrecy aims to protect the vote as it affords the right to the voter to keep silent over the choice of candidate. All electoral polling, either for the presidency, vice-presidency, Parliament, or state assemblies, is in essence a secret ballot. However, there are two means of executing such ends: The duty-based measure and the rights-based measure.

The rights-based measure provides the voter the right to keep his vote a secret. Such a right creates a correlative duty on the election authorities to afford voting facilities and procedures that do not disclose the vote. But the voter as the beneficiary under the right can choose to not opt for secrecy. The voter is given legal anonymity for the vote he casts, but he may choose to claim authorship.

The rights-based measure provides the voter the right to keep his vote a secret. Such a right creates a correlative duty on the election authorities to afford voting facilities and procedures that do not disclose the vote. But the voter can choose to not opt for secrecy. The voter is given legal anonymity for the vote he casts, but he may choose to claim authorship on the same. On the other hand, the duty-based measure imposes secrecy as a statutory duty not only on the election authorities but also on the voter. The voter even by his consent cannot declare his choice; doing so would invalidate his vote. Rule 39A creates secrecy in the nature of a duty-based measure, which creates pragmatic absurdities that weaken electoral practice.

An argument for the mandatory non-disclosure of the vote presses upon the need that the voter should not be given an option to declare his vote because the flexibility would allow others to pressure him informally into declaring his choice. Prima facie the argument lends credence, however Rule 39AA of the Conduct of Election Rules defeats this purpose. It mandates that an elector belonging to a political party must declare his vote to the party agent, if the political party has issued a whip regarding the vote. Refusing to do so is a violation of the election procedure and the vote stands invalidated. Essentially, all non-independent electors would have to disclose their choice in a secret ballot. Rule 39AA creates a party hegemony that assails the democratic consent of the elector. This allows for internal voter intimidation by parties. In such a case, it makes little sense to curtail the voluntary declaration outside the immediate party affiliation; rather it can be argued that a universal declaration eases political pressure that an elector might face.

Rule 39A applies only while the election process is underway. There is nothing in the Conduct of Election Rules or the Representation of People's Act which prohibits a voter from declaring his vote after the process is completed. This scheme lacks procedural merit because it cannot control the behaviour of the elector outside the ballot box. Therefore, the scheme of duty-based secrecy fails.

Ballot secrecy should be guided by the episteme of "consent" or choice; the means to adopt should be the rights-based measure. We may continue to apply the statutes and rules. But law is also a process which evolves with democratic values and electoral praxis.

The writer is a LLM candidate at the University of Cambridge

AUGUST 11, 1977, FORTY YEARS AGO

JP FOR CLASS STRUGGLE

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN CALLED for organising Dalits and the landless on class lines because "class struggle is inevitable". "Earlier I had disliked the idea of organising them on class lines. But now I am for class organisations. Class struggle is inevitable. The Sarvodaya movement went up to a point. After that it failed," he has said in an interview in the inaugural issue of a Hindi fortnightly, *Vrata*. JP urges youth associations to organise them for they are too helpless to organise themselves. While such class organisations are necessary, political and social organisations should make it a rule to have representatives of Dalits, women, Adivasis and backward communities on their committees, he says. About his relationship with the Janata government, JP says there has not been much consultation with him.

PLAN ON EDUCATION

PROFESSOR D. T. Lakdawala, deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, said that there were two crucial areas in education in which rapid strides were essential in the Sixth Five- Year Plan. These were: Universal education for children in the 6-14 age-group and eradication of adult illiteracy. Lakdawala, who was speaking at the Conference of Education Ministers, called for a "clear and deliberate shift in emphasis and approach to educational development" and said these two areas must get overriding priority in the allocation of resources. He said: "If we do not adopt this policy, our concept of egalitarianism will never be realised. Without a broad base of education, it is not possible to have the kind of social and economic change about which we have been talking."

WAR DETAINEES

PAKISTAN WILL SEND home 200 Indians detained since the 1971 Indo-Pak war as soon as clearance is received from the Indian government, a foreign ministry spokesman said in Islamabad. He said there were no officers among the detainees.

https://telegram.me/TheHindu_Zone
https://telegram.me/PDFEXAMS
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Donald Trump's warnings of 'fire and fury' will only make it harder to tackle the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear programme." —THE GUARDIAN

GST and the remapping of India

New tax regime could bring a shift in production and storage centres. It will require a nimble reading of where markets will grow, their logistical requirements

JUNAID AHMAD, RAKHI BASU AND PRAVIN KRISHNA

C R Sasikumar

THE COMING INTO force of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) will unify the nation into a common economic market, obviating the need for goods to be taxed each time they cross a state border. Much of the current discussion about GST has focused on the tax structure and the complexities surrounding the implementation of the new system. Less appreciated is the fact that GST, by changing all aspects of business, from the location of production and investments to logistical and supply-chain optimisation, could fundamentally alter the economic geography of India. To paraphrase the writer Pearl S. Buck, "In our changing world, nothing changes more than economic geography. "

Prior to GST, the internal movement of goods was subject to a number of barriers. First, and most directly, there were taxes on the inter-state movement of goods and cross-state differences in VAT structures. Second, there were cumbersome inspections, especially at state borders. A recent World Bank-funded study, undertaken by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, used GPS-time-stamped data of freight trucks (collected by the innovative Bengaluru-based logistics company, Blackbuck) to suggest that roughly 20 per cent of the transit time is spent at the border on verification of documents. Indeed, anecdotal evidence suggests that trucks have been taking longer and circuitous routes to avoid inefficient and sometimes corruption-laden border-crossings across some states.

GST will eliminate taxes on inter-state movement and harmonise the VAT structure across states (except for exempted goods). Border inspections should be significantly reduced — although, since inspections of cargo (to ensure GST compliance) and vehicles (for licences and compliance with technical standards, for instance) are still permitted, there remains a concern that harassment by inspectors and corruption may persist. That said, GST is expected to result in a significant increase in internal trade — by as much as 30 to 40 per cent, according to some estimates.

Beyond the increase in internal trade, other economic factors are at play that can significantly alter the economic map of the country. The work of economist Paul Krugman has shown that when the costs of producing a good are lowered with scale in production, there is an incentive to geographically concentrate such production. If additionally, there are large transport costs, production benefits by locating itself near the largest market to minimise transportation costs (the well-known "home-market" effect). In this setting, a reduction in transport barriers, as is the case with GST, can change the location of production within a country quite dramatically — away from the largest market to low production-cost locations, thus diluting the home-market effect. This also holds true in an international setting. Indeed, the relocation of production away from the United States to China in the last couple of decades was driven in significant part by the lowering of transport costs.

With the removal of barriers within India, another related outcome is the geographic centralisation of production and warehousing. This could mean that economic activity will increase in centrally located states such as Madhya Pradesh. Yet another possibility is the agglomeration of economic activity in the more productive states. Thus, with GST, the economic map of India will evolve — possibly in quite complex ways.

As economic corridors change, the demand for new investment in transport and logistics infrastructure will increase. Supplying this demand will require a nimble reading of where markets will grow and where new investments will be necessary. This is crucial as even prior to GST, Indian economic growth implied a near tripling of freight traffic over a decade, with transport infrastructure not quite keeping pace. The costs of inefficient logistics are not inconsiderable. The McKinsey study, *Building India: Transforming the Nation's Logistics Infrastructure*, estimated that logistical inefficiency in India amounts to around 4 per cent of the GDP — this could well increase as the GST intensifies logistical needs

Infrastructure is often identified as a "binding constraint" to growth. Perhaps nowhere is this truer than it is in India today. Much economic and political effort will be required to arrive at optimal investment choices — on the modal mix, the balance between road and rail, air and water, on the location of the vaunted multi-modal logistics "parks", on technology adoption and on the setting of standards (for instance, on containerisation) to support inter modal transport inter alia — and to achieve efficient funding.

India's economic destiny will crucially rely on its ability to anticipate, support and leverage its evolving economic geography. As China's economic trajectory could teach us, productivity and growth require intention and provisioning. They are never mere accidents, they never happen serendipitously.

With the removal of barriers within India, another related outcome is the geographic centralisation of production and warehousing. This could mean that economic activity will increase in centrally located states such as Madhya Pradesh. Yet another possibility is the agglomeration of economic activity in the more productive states. Thus, with GST, the economic map of India will evolve.

Ahmad is India Country Director, World Bank, Basu is Transport Specialist, World Bank, and Krishna is Chung Ju Yung, Distinguished Professor, Johns Hopkins University

140-character exceptions

Sushma Swaraj receives kudos for her medical visa diplomacy via Twitter. But personalised, ad hoc policy victimises the most vulnerable

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN

ON JULY 27, as Nawaz Sharif's prime ministership of Pakistan was unravelling, a young Pakistani woman who needed a medical visa tweeted her distress to External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. She pleaded that she could not meet a new condition for Pakistanis to be eligible for a medical visa — a letter from the country's foreign minister — because "my country has no government". Swaraj tweeted to the Indian High Commissioner: "Gautam Bamabawale *ji, inhen visa dey do*".

Issuing orders to the bureaucracy over Twitter may be the new normal, but issuing the medical visa selectively to some in this manner while denying it to others in equal or more distress does no credit to India's credentials. Earlier in July, Swaraj made a similar exception, granting a 24-year-old young man from Rawalakot in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, a medical visa for treatment in New Delhi. Osama Ali had been diagnosed with a massive tumour on his liver. His father, a lawyer, had consulted a doctor at a private hospital in Delhi. The doctor had asked them to come to Delhi for treatment, which includes a liver transplant. But they had come up against the same problem: The young man and his family members could not get a medical visa in the normal course because of a new rule that the applicant needed a letter from Sartaj Aziz, then then de facto foreign minister of Pakistan.

After Ali's case was published in this newspaper, Swaraj announced she was waiving the condition as he was a resident of PoK, territory that belonged to India. Predictably, there was plenty of applause from the galleries for her generosity, and much advice against showing kindness to "traitors". The father of the young man said he was profusely thankful to the minister.

The medical visa has been one of India's biggest instruments of soft power in the region, perhaps second only to Bollywood. Treatment at private Indian hospitals, at a fraction of the cost in Europe, America or South-east Asia, draws people here from other countries, especially from the neighbourhood, like a magnet.

Last month, Minister of State for Tourism & Culture Mahesh Sharma told the Rajya Sabha in a written response to a question that the number of foreign nationals arriving in India on medical/medical attendant visas was 1,84,298 in 2014; 2,33,918 in 2015; and 3,61,060 in 2016. Most of them are from South Asia, where none of the other countries have the tertiary healthcare services that India has, though some of them have better national health indices.

While Indian private hospitals have greatly profited from this inflow, India has basked in the reflected glory of the range of expertise Indian specialists provide to fee-paying patients, from treatment of cancers to cardiac diseases, obesity to knee replacements, even though the country itself lags terribly behind on many global health indices.

Last year in September, after a deadly bomb blast in Kabul targeting the Hazara community killed 80 people, many survivors arrived for treatment in Delhi. According to a report in The Wire, 53 of the victims were treated at three private Delhi hospitals, with the Hazara expatriate community shouldering the bills for most, and the Indian government also chipping in.

With Pakistan, the medical visa has been a useful way for India to convey that it separates the people from the state. It enabled New Delhi to show itself as helpful and considerate toward Pakistanis even while its relationship with the state teetered between bad and ugly. It was also a way to flaunt to the Pakistani establishment that many of its citizens were voting with their feet for services their own country had failed to provide.

On any given day in Pakistan, there used to be at least six to eight persons applying for a medical visa at the Indian High Commission. The number of medical visas issued could easily run into a couple of thousands a year. The applications were usually dealt with expeditiously, and visas given in a couple of days if the applicant had all the documentation — an Indian doctor's opinion, and a letter from the doctor saying s/he had accepted the applicant as a patient.

The new condition that the applicant must produce a letter from the foreign minister to the Indian High Commission was introduced in May. When the Indian High Commission began rejecting visas for medical applicants, the Pakistan Foreign Office summoned the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad, Gautam Bambawale, for an explanation.

Publicly, no reason has been given, though Swaraj has appeared to link it to Pakistan's refusal to give a visit visa to the mother of Kulbhushan Jadhav, sentenced to death by a military court in Pakistan. In a series of tweets on July 10, Swaraj criticised Aziz's failure to respond to her letter asking for a visa for Jadhav's mother, though she too drew no direct connection between the two.

Introducing a new obstacle for people in medical distress trying to access healthcare is not just cruel, it makes no diplomatic sense.

But it certainly is of a pattern established over 70 years of India-Pakistan failure to normalise relations: When Indian and Pakistani leaders can't find other ways to settle scores, they target the most vulnerable of each other's nationals. It used to be prisoners, now it also includes people needing medical treatment.

In truly feudal fashion, exceptions are made to the rule, which make individual actors in the system appear larger than life for their one-time generosity, or win them applause for scoring cheap political points.

"My son's heart beats for Madam Sushma Swaraj". Those words were spoken by the grateful parent of a four-month old. In truth, his gushing gratitude only highlighted how India has shut down this window for all the others who need it.

nirupama.subramanian@expressindia.com

THE *Urdu* PRESS

NAWAZ SHARIF'S EXIT

INQUILAB, IN ITS editorial on July 31, writes, "The decision of the Pakistani judiciary to disqualify PM Nawaz Sharif leading to his exit is an extremely courageous step and not applauding it would be against the tenets of justice... It should be remembered that the Panama leaks had revealed secrets about many countries. In most of these cases, no action was taken against those involved in corruption. But in Pakistan a very serious action has been taken. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Pakistani judiciary has been praised for this step at the international level."

Roznama Khabrein, in its editorial on August 4, notes, "It is being said that in Pakistan what the (military) establishment wants is done. The army there was not happy with the politics of Nawaz Sharif and his efforts for better relations with India. There has been slow progress in the legal action against other people whereas the judiciary showed extreme promptness in the matter relating to Nawaz Sharif." The paper adds: "Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has assumed the office of the interim PM supposedly to give way to Nawaz's brother, Shahbaz Sharif, who is currently the chief minister of Punjab. But it is possible that Abbasi may continue as the PM till the next elections as Shahbaz's quitting the Punjab post of CM may cause some problems for Muslim League (Nawaz) in that important state."

Rashtriya Sahara, in its editorial on July 29, writes, "Nawaz Sharif was the only Pakistani politician who had talked of better relations with India during his election campaign and the people supported him greatly leading to his becoming the prime minister. Presently, it is difficult to say what effect Sharif's exit would have on Pakistan's relations with India."

Siasat, in its editorial on July 29, writes, "In Pakistan, there is now the need for a systematic movement for bringing about transparency and cleanliness in governance instead of the promotion of the families of those in power. But the acute problems of Pakistan cannot be solved merely by the efforts of political parties. For a movement, the people in general would have to come forward."

INDIA-CHINA STAND-OFF

ROZNAMA KHABREIN, IN its editorial on August 8, writes: "China is not desisting from issuing threatening statements on the standoff on Doklam... External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj has very clearly stated India's stand on the issue in Parliament and the entire country is supportive of her view that wars do not solve problems. Even after a war, talks are imperative and dialogues are the only way implying, that India does not pay any heed to such threats. It is ready for talks but it would withdraw its forces only when China too does so. It will not act unilaterally in this matter... Yet China is continuously provoking India. In its new move, it has started wooing India's nearest neighbour and friend, Nepal. However, it is reported that Sushma Swaraj would visit Nepal next week, sensing China's intentions."

Inquilab, in its editorial on August 4, writes, "India's initiatives leading to the maturing of its economic, political and cultural ties with various countries and the strengthening of its own economy have not been digested by Beijing and it is trying to lower the image of India and contain these initiatives. We should not be swayed by our perceived nearness to Washington. In spite of occasional hiccups, the economic relations between Washington and Beijing are very deep. Thus, we should plan our strategy keeping in view our own interests and avoid confrontation as far as possible and resolve all sensitive issues through dialogue."

CROSS-HAIRS MYSTERY

HINDUSTAN EXPRESS, IN an editorial on August 4, writes: "The fear of the cutting of braids of women in a mysterious manner has spread to many parts of north and central India. In Agra, a barbaric crowd killed a 65-year-old Dalit woman on the charge of roaming around, cutting the braids of some women. But fact she had lost her way in the dark. However, the reports of such incidents of hair cutting have no coherence or uniformity. The only common thing that has come up is the victims losing consciousness before such an incident even though it cannot be said with certainty that it is actually true. It should also to be noted that all the victims are extremely poor and illiterate... Such cases place a question mark on our modern system and development of the society. Even today, cases of child-sacrifice and the existence of alleged witches are being reported. The local administration too is not in a position to say anything for certain about the hair cutting of women. All that is being said is that no heed should be paid to rumours."

The editor of *Inquilab*, Shakeel Shamsi, in his signed column on August 6, laments that even some Muslim women have started getting afraid of the rumours around women's hair cutting even though there is no place in Islam for the sort of ghosts and evil spirits that could be responsible for the types of incidents that are being reported. There is a need for us all to allay the fears and apprehensions of people."

Compiled by Seema Chishti

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

END THE INDIGNITY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'An intolerable toll' (IE, August 8). The death of three labourers due to suffocation in a Delhi manhole is a matter of concern. This was not an isolated case. Manholes have become a death traps for sewage workers, many of whom are the sole breadwinners of their family. The Swachh Bharat mission needs to focus on the safety of the worker.

Somya Buxi, *Buxar*

SOURCE OF POWER

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Hybrid route' (IE, August 9). The article talks about the need to shift from diesel and petrol vehicles to hybrid vehicles. But we need to think about the availability electricity for the recharging of batteries. Even battery production requires a sound manufacturing base. It will take a lot of time for hybrid vehicles to be successful in the Indian market. We should not ignore the threat from China. India should focus on indigenous manufacturing.

Vishwas Sonawane, *Aurangabad*

BABU CULTURE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The case for lateral entry' (IE, August 9). There are two hurdles that need to be surmounted before inducting outside talent into the bureaucracy. The new incumbents would have to cope with frequent political interference and learn to be tactful with superiors or face punitive postings. Secondly, they would have to adjust to a complacent work culture. Lateral appointees may not be able to dent this culture . In the past, the government has tried to revive some public sector undertakings like Air India and Indian Airlines by inducting people from the corporate sector and the army, but the experiment failed.

Y.G. Chouksey, *Pune*

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