

13 EXPLAINED



SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

You stand with no one but y[ou]r own self-indulgent, trumpet-blowing, over-privileged ego, Susan "Clinton's more dangerous than Trump" Sarandon

HADLEY FREEMAN, columnist, 114,000 followers. Quoting a tweet in which the actress said "I stand with #Dreamers who make our country stronger." "Dreamers" are undocumented immigrants who came to the US as children, whose protection from deportation has been sought to be removed by the government.



PAPER CLIP

FLAGGING INTERESTING RESEARCH

NEUROLOGY

TEARS AND MESSAGES

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Anita Kunz/NYT

Message from baby's wailing: it's crying out for its survival

A NORMAL human baby, according to psychologists, will cry about two hours in a day. It turns out that infant crying is not only as natural and justifiable as breathing — the two acts are physically, neurologically, and primarily intertwined. Scientists have discovered that the small cluster of brain cells in charge of fast, active respiration also grant a baby animal the power to cry.

The scientists have shown that infant mice stripped of this key node — a mere 17,000 neurons located in the evolutionarily ancient hindbrain — can breathe slowly and passively, but not vigorously or animatedly. And when they open their mouths to cry, nothing comes out. As a result, their mothers ignore them, and the poorly breathing pups quickly die. Amazingly, the mother could see and smell the pups, but if they didn't vocalise, it was as though they didn't exist.

The new study is just one in a series of recent reports that reveal the centrality of crying to infant survival, and how a baby's bawl punches through a cluttered acoustic landscape to demand immediate adult attention. The sound of an infant's cry arouses a far quicker and stronger response in action-oriented parts of the adult brain than do similarly loud or emotionally laden noises, like a dog barking or a neighbour weeping.

Scientists also have shown that the cries of many infant mammals share a number of basic sonic properties.

Susan Lingle, a biologist at the University of Winnipeg, has conducted field studies in which she broadcast through loudspeakers the amplified *creche* cries of a panoply of animals, including a baby bat, a baby eland, a sea lion pup, a baby marmot, a kid goat and a domestic kitten. No matter the infantile source of the SOS, the reaction of a mother deer grazing nearby was the same: she would bound at top speed toward the speaker as though to her own fawn in distress.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

In Constitution, a range of 'special provisions' for states other than Jammu & Kashmir, too

Part XXI of the Indian Constitution, 'Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions', includes, apart from Article 370 — Temporary Provisions with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir — special provisions for 11 other states, listed under Articles 371, 371A-H, and 371J. None of these are as far-reaching as Article 370, however. **MUZAMIL JALEEL** summarises the main points of these provisions



Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti met Home Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi last week. Mehbooba has said the special status of J&K is under serious threat, and has reached out to arch rival Farooq Abdullah of the National Conference to prevent the dilution or abrogation of Article 35A. PTI

THE SANGH Parivar has long argued that the special status accorded to Jammu & Kashmir in the Constitution has prevented its "full integration" into the Indian Union. Prominent among the "special privileges" available to J&K, the only Muslim-majority state in the country, are the ban on non-residents from acquiring property in the state and voting in the legislative Assembly elections, both of which are under challenge in the Supreme Court in a case against the constitutional validity of Article 35A.

However, Jammu & Kashmir is not the only state for which special provisions have been laid down in the Indian Constitution — a wide range of safeguards are available to as many as 11 other states, listed in Articles 371, 371A to 371H, and 371J. Art 371I deals with Goa, but does not include any provision that can be termed 'special'.

SIMPLY PUT

In 1947, Jammu & Kashmir negotiated the terms and conditions of its entry into the Indian Union. It acceded to the Union on Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communication, but wanted its own Constitution, to be drafted by its own Constituent Assembly. Art 370, which determines the contours of J&K's relations with the Centre and exists as the constitutional cord between J&K and New Delhi, was introduced in the Indian Constitution after Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and J&K Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah negotiated it for five months between May and October, 1949.

Art 35A, which empowered the J&K Constitution to define "permanent residents" of the state, is an offshoot of Art 370 of the Indian Constitution. It was added to the Constitution through The Constitution

(Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 1954, issued by the President under Art 370.

While the special provisions laid down in Art 371, 371A-H, and 371J are not as far-reaching as Art 370, the existence of these provisions shows that other princely states, too, negotiated the terms and conditions of their entry into the Union, or sought special constitutional protections in view of their unique needs and conditions. Each of these constitutional provisions is, in fact, rooted in historical reasons.

One important difference between Articles 370 and 371, and Articles 371A-H and 371J, is that while the latter set of provisions were incorporated into the Constitution by Parliament through amendments under Art 368 (which lays down the "power of Parliament to amend the Constitution and procedure therefor"), Articles 370 and 371 have been part of the Constitution from the time of its commencement on January 26, 1950.

MAHARASHTRA & GUJARAT

(ART 371)

"Special responsibility" to Governor to establish "separate development boards" for "Vidarbha, Marathwada, and the rest of Maharashtra", and Saurashtra and Kutch in Gujarat; "equitable allocation of funds for developmental expenditure over the said areas"; "equitable arrangement providing adequate facilities for technical education and vocational training, and adequate opportunities for employment" under the state government.

SIKKIM

(ART 371F, 36TH AMENDMENT ACT, 1975)

The members of the legislative Assembly of Sikkim shall elect the representative of Sikkim in the House of the People. To protect the rights and interests of various sections of the population of Sikkim, Parliament may provide for the number of seats in the Assembly, which may be filled only by candidates from those sections. Governor shall have "special responsibility for peace and for an equitable arrangement for ensuring the social and economic advancement of different sections of the population". All earlier laws in territories that formed Sikkim shall continue, and any adaptation or modification shall not be questioned in any court.

ASSAM

(ART 371B, 22ND AMENDMENT ACT, 1969)

President may provide for the constitution and functions of a committee of the Assembly consisting of members elected from the tribal areas of the state.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

(ART 371H, 55TH AMENDMENT ACT, 1986)

The Governor has a special responsibility with regard to law and order, and "he shall, after consulting the Council of Ministers, exercise his individual judgment as to the action to be taken". Should a question arise over whether a particular matter is one in which the Governor is "required to act in the exercise of his individual judgment, the decision of the Governor in his discretion shall be final", and "shall not be called in question...".

KARNATAKA

(ART 371J, 98TH AMENDMENT ACT, 2012)

There is a provision for the establishment of a separate development board for the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, the working of which will be reported annually to the Assembly; there shall be "equitable allocation of funds for developmental expenditure over the said region"; and "equitable opportunities and facilities" for people of this region in government jobs and education. An order can be made to provide for reservation "of a proportion" of seats and jobs in educational and vocational training institutions and state government organisations respectively in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region for individuals who belong to that region by birth or domicile.

ANDHRA PRADESH & TELANGANA

(ART 371D, 32ND AMENDMENT ACT, 1973; SUBSTITUTED BY THE ANDHRA PRADESH REORGANISATION ACT, 2014)

President must ensure "equitable opportunities and facilities" in "public employment and education to people from different parts of the state"; he may require the state government to organise "any class or classes of posts in a civil service of, or any class or classes of civil posts under, the State into different local cadres for different parts of the State", and allot them. The President has similar powers *vis-à-vis* admissions in any university or state government-run educational institution. Also, he may provide for setting up of an administrative tribunal outside the jurisdiction of the High Court to deal with issues of appointment, allotment or promotion in state civil services. [Art 371E allows for the establishment of a university in Andhra Pradesh by a law of Parliament. But this is not really a 'special provision'.]

MIZORAM

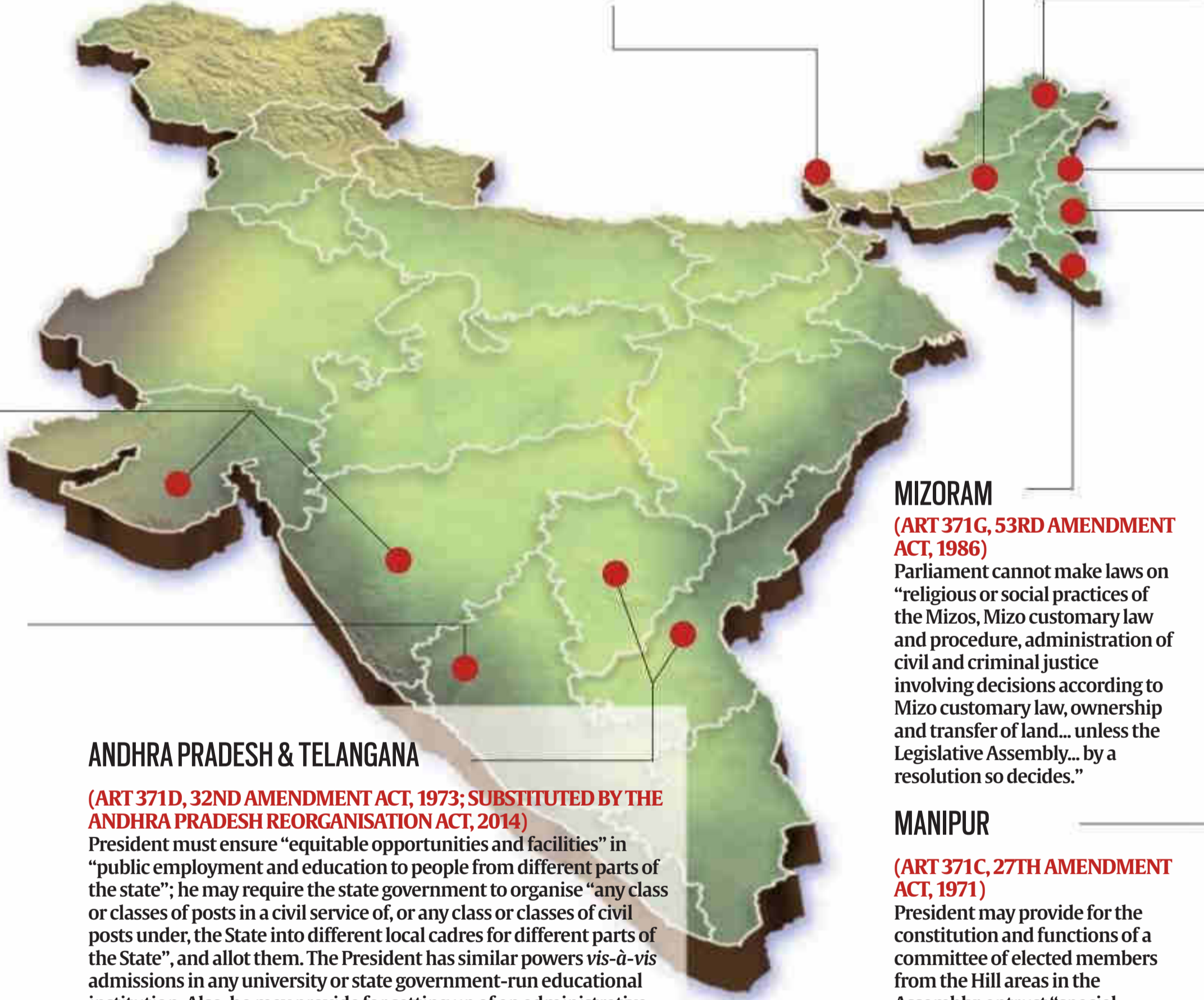
(ART 371G, 53RD AMENDMENT ACT, 1986)

Parliament cannot make laws on "religious or social practices of the Mizos, Mizo customary law and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Mizo customary law, ownership and transfer of land... unless the Legislative Assembly... by a resolution so decides."

MANIPUR

(ART 371C, 27TH AMENDMENT ACT, 1971)

President may provide for the constitution and functions of a committee of elected members from the Hill areas in the Assembly; entrust "special responsibility" to the Governor to ensure its proper functioning. The Governor has to file a report every year on this to the President.



In climate change simulation, oceans send conflicting signals

Some Antarctic marine animals doubled their growth when water was warmed slightly; some that thrived on the warmth crowded out other species

CLIMATE CHANGE will dramatically alter life in the oceans, scientists say, but there's so much still to learn about marine ecosystems that it's hard to know exactly how.

Last week, researchers with the British Antarctic Survey offered a glimpse of that future with the results of an unusual study years in the making.

The scientists heated a patch of the sea floor off the coast of Antarctica and tracked the effects on a few local species. Some animals responded by doubling their growth, stunning the researchers. At the same time, there was evidence that animals that thrive on warmth might crowd out less resilient species.

The cold, dry ecosystems on Antarctica itself can't support anything bigger than an insect. But the Southern Ocean swirling around the continent paradoxically teems with life.

A rich supply of nutrients fosters a food web that includes single-celled algae, bottom-dwelling worms and other animals. This ecosystem ultimately supports such predators as fish, penguins and whales.

Climate change is a big concern here, because heat-trapping gases like carbon dioxide are having their biggest impacts near the poles. Computer models predict that in 50 years the Southern Ocean will warm by about 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit (1 degree Celsius), and by 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit (2 degrees Celsius) within a century.

Trying to predict those changes, scientists have been gathering various sorts of clues. Some look at the natural ranges of Antarctic species, observing the highest temperatures they tolerate. Others put animals into laboratory tanks and manipulate the aquatic environment.

But these experiments have shortcomings of their own. Control is a weakness in itself, said Rebecca L Kordas, a marine ecologist at Imperial College London who was not involved in the study. "Too much control may yield unnatural responses."

In recent years, scientists like Dr Kordas have attempted another kind of experiment — heating the ocean itself. The research typically involves putting heated panels underwater, close to shore, and then observing



An undated handout photo shows researchers with the British Antarctic Survey prepare concrete slabs that would support the heated panels dropped into the Southern Ocean off Antarctica. Gail Ashton via The New York Times

how the temperature increases affect the growth of tiny animals on the seafloor.

Scientists previously used this method off the coasts of British Columbia and Australia. The British Antarctic Survey researchers picked a much tougher site: about 45 feet deep in the Southern Ocean, off the coast of the Antarctic Peninsula.

The scientists sailed offshore and then dove underwater to set the panels on concrete footings on the ocean floor. To power the panels, they ran 600 feet of cable to a station generator on shore. The experiment began in January 2014, but before long the cables were severed. They started again in June 2014; this time they kept the project running until March 2015.

Each panel warmed the water, but just a thin layer eight-hundredths of an inch deep. One set of panels had enough power to increase the temperature by 1.8 degrees F; another set heated the water by 3.6 degrees F. For control purposes, a third set of panels was left unheated.

At the end of the experiment, the scientists hoisted the panels from the seafloor,

and inspected the marine life under a microscope.

One species of worm grew 70% faster on a panel heated by 1.8 degrees F, compared with its growth on unheated panels. Filter-feeding animals called bryozoans doubled their growth on heated panels, crowding out other species that seemed to fare well on unheated panels. The scientists say they don't yet know what drove this growth — they are now investigating whether higher temperatures might switch on a special set of genes that speeds up development in some species.

The results on the panels heating water by 3.6 degrees F were even more puzzling. On some, animals grew more; on others, less. Even within each species, the scientists found that individuals varied a lot in how well they fared.

During the experiment, an abundant supply of algae fuelled the growth of the bryozoans. But when the whole ocean gets warm, the algae may suffer, too, leaving the bryozoans to starve.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

14 THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE
AIRPLANES MAY KILL YOU. BUT THEY AREN'T
LIKELY TO HURT YOU.
— SATCHEL PAIGE

The Indian EXPRESS
FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA
BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

It's not madness

Getting a bomb is insurance, it is North Korea's strategy. The world will have to live with it



PRAVEEN SWAMI

IN THE SPRING of 1953, with the war in Korea bogged down in a stalemate, hundreds of soldiers dying in battles of no conceivable tactical gain, 16 men gathered in a room at the Pentagon to discuss what might next be done. "Future Courses of Action in Connection With the Situation in Korea", prepared by civilian consultants for the National Security Council, wasn't — as its bland title might have suggested — a road-map for then-ongoing peace-talks, which would culminate in an armistice that summer. It was a radical proposal to break the military impasse, by using nuclear weapons.

General Omar Bradley, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, made the case for the use of nuclear bombs, as he had often done during the war. "Because of the casualties that will be involved in any stepped-up ground action", he argued, "we may find that we will be forced to use every type of weapon that we have".

There was just one problem: The Soviet Union's own nuclear bomb, which it might use if its communist allies were attacked. "The Commies, scattered over one hundred and fifty miles of front, and well dug in, don't present nearly as attractive a target to us as we do to them", cautioned James Lawton, the US army chief.

For the first time in history, two sides had nuclear weapons — and deterrence had worked. Korea was partitioned, and the war ended.

Everything has a context, and the context to the unfolding North Korean nuclear-weapons crisis is this: It isn't the first one, by some decades. In the summer of 1950, nine MK4 fusion bombs were ready to be delivered had General Douglas MacArthur's brilliant amphibious assault at Inchon not cut North Korea's supply lines, recaptured Seoul, and rolled on to Pyongyang and the Yalu river. In April, 1951, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered nuclear retaliation if Chinese troops or Soviet bombers massed in Mongolia began operating in Korea.

During 1950-53, North Korea was taught what regime destruction meant: The US' strategic bombing campaign levelled 75 per cent of Pyongyang, all of Sinanju, 95 per cent of Sariwon, 80-85 per cent of the industrial hubs of Hamhung and Hungnam, and 80 per

cent of the port of Chinnampo 80 per cent.

North Korea set about trying to acquire nuclear weapons in 1991, as its superpower patron, the Soviet Union, collapsed — depriving the regime of its survival guarantee. The plans for its weapons are now well known to have been supplied by Pakistani nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan in a cash and missile-designs trade.

Efforts to bribe the North Korean regime out of its nuclear pursuit began soon after. In 1998, South Korean president Kim Dae-jung initiated the reconciliation process that became known as the "Sunshine Policy", injecting billions of dollars into the North's economy — and, credible accounts have it, into the personal accounts of Kim Jong-il.

The effort was doomed. Less than a year after the ink dried on Kim Dae-jung's Nobel Prize citation, North Korean and South Korean troops clashed. In the wake of 9/11, the US declared North Korea part of the "axis of evil." North Korea responded by calling off talks — and four years later, tested the first of its nuclear weapons.

It is important to understand why North Korea acted as it did. For one, the country's leadership drew lessons from the fate of one of the Khan network's other clients, Libyan despot Muammar Qaddafi. In 2003, Qaddafi gave up his nuclear ambitions in return for diplomatic normalisation, only to end up shot by rebels backed by his new Western allies. Saddam Hussein, who gave up his own weapons of mass destruction programme, met a similar fate in 2006. North Korean leaders would also have watched the fate of Ukraine, which gave up its nuclear weapons in 1994, after receiving security guarantees from the US, UK and Russia — all of which proved worthless.

From the point of view of North Korea's ruling élite, thus, getting a bomb isn't madness, but life insurance. Kim Jong-un fears an East Germany-style regime collapse, with his citizens choosing to merge into the richer South. The dictator also worries that his neighbours might sponsor an internal insurrection, or that the US might attack.

The US, we know, has considered that option since at least 2011, when the former US Defence Secretary warned North Korea was just five years away from being able to target

his country. But President Barack Obama's government was deterred by the fact that, while North Korea could be destroyed, its conventional artillery could level Seoul, home to 50 million people.

Now, any plan to militarily eliminate North Korea's nuclear-weapons capabilities has to contend with the fact that it has the demonstrated capability to deliver a fission bomb, with a yield of 50-100 megatons, to the US or Australia.

Is there another way? The heretical possibility is simply to learn to live with a nuclear North Korea. The theorist Kenneth Waltz, writing in 1981, postulated that when it came to nuclear weapons, "more may be better". This, he went on, was because "In a conventional world, one is uncertain about winning or losing. In a nuclear world, one is uncertain [only] about surviving or being annihilated".

North Korea, thus, can use its nuclear weapons only in the complete certainty that it will invite utter annihilation in return — something a regime, no matter how crazed, is unlikely to do.

Accepting that North Korea won't give up its weapons opens the door to pragmatic negotiations that acknowledge the realities. For example, the North Korean government could be offered some economic incentives and diplomatic recognition in return for capping its arsenal.

Normalising North Korea will have costs. It might push other states to also seek nuclear weapons. Each new nuclear state raises the odds of nuclear weapons use, either by accident or design. But as nuclear weapons become easier to manufacture — an inexorable consequence of technological progress — these are outcomes the world will have to grapple with. Ever since the US tested the first nuclear bomb in 1945, it was certain that its rivals, and its rivals' rivals, would do so too. The bomb, the North Korean case has made clear, cannot be kept in the hands of a small club.

This is the stuff of nightmares. It is a nightmare we have built for ourselves, though — and we must now learn to inhabit it with eyes open, trying not to sleepwalk towards apocalypse.

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MOVING PAST DOKLAM

Reminder at BRICS: Stakes are high and China and India have a great deal to gain from cooperation

THE MEETING BETWEEN President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 9th BRICS Summit in Xiamen, China, is a welcome sign that the leaders of Asia's two principal powers see the importance of building a durable security architecture for their increasingly fraught relationship. For weeks before the summit, the world was transfixed by the spectacle of troops of two nuclear-weapons states facing off on the Doklam plateau. The issue, however, is far wider than Doklam. Ever since the 2013 Daulat Beg Oldi crisis, tensions along the China-India frontier have become ever more frequent and intense — and taken longer to resolve. Leaders, though happy to harvest political capital from resurgent nationalism in both countries, know they cannot afford for these crisis to erupt into conflict. The hard work of giving content to high-level understanding, of course, begins now. The BRICS declaration on terrorism, naming the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad along with China-focussed East Turkestan Islamic Movement and Central Asia-oriented Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, reiterates agreements arrived at during the Heart of Asia summit in 2016. It is, however, an acknowledgment of the fact that Asia's powers, their differences aside, face common threats which can form the basis for a common understanding.

Both President Xi and Prime Minister Modi also know the stakes are high: Their countries' border disputes distract from business of true global consequence, which is making their countries affluent. Even if commentators in their own countries have been too polite to call them out, world leaders are beginning to wonder if the bright, shiny clothes the BRICS economies promised to show off actually exist. India's economic growth has slowed to painful levels; rising poverty levels and capital flight have hit Russia hard; experts fear China's failure to tackle bad debt could trigger a serious crisis. Inside BRICS itself, there are serious differences of opinion, on everything ranging from tariffs to intellectual property rights, that member-states have been unable to resolve. Though the grouping has built some institutions, like the BRICS Bank, its members have been unable to agree on a real road-map for reforming the global economy.

Even on issues where BRICS members share common interests, like ensuring stability in West Asia, its members have been able to do little tangible to further their common interests. China and India have a great deal to gain from cooperation — and even more to lose if they allow their strategic aims to be derailed by ultimately petty feuds. President Xi and Prime Minister Modi both know this. To translate this knowledge into policy will be, perhaps, the most important test by which history will judge their leadership.

THE TRASH CRISIS

Over-stressed landfills are no solution. Cities should work out ways to segregate waste at source

ON MONDAY, THE National Green Tribunal pulled up the Delhi government and the East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) over the Ghazipur landfill collapse that killed two people on September 1. The EDMC told the green court that it had moved a plea seeking allotment of land to develop landfills to handle municipal solid waste. The municipal agency's response does not inspire confidence. Delhi generates more than 10,000 tonnes of garbage every day, most of which stacks up in ugly hills, posing environmental and public-safety hazards. Finding new landfills would mean merely relocating the problem.

The Ghazipur landfill that crashed last week was more than 50 metres high — almost as high as a 15-storey building or two-thirds the height of the Qutub Minar. Another landfill at Bhalswa in northwest Delhi is as high — it has been shut down in the aftermath of the Ghazipur mishap. The 33-year-old dump yard at Ghazipur should have been shut down years ago, or at least immediately after the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, came into force. The rules stipulate that a landfill should not be more than 25 years old. Delhi's two other landfills, at Okhla and Narela-Bhawana, are also past their saturation point. But the problem is not restricted to Delhi. Dump sites in most Indian cities are handling much more waste than they can hold. Last year, the then environment minister Prakash Javadekar said that the country generates more than 60 million tonnes of garbage every year — more than double the amount generated at the beginning of the century. Most urban agencies are at sea when it comes to dealing with such large amounts of waste. Mumbai's landfills, for example, are stretched beyond their limits. Last year, large parts of the city were engulfed in smog after the 55-metre high Deonar dump caught fire.

It would be wrong to have an one-size-fits-all solution for the waste problems of urban India. But it is well-established that garbage management becomes a difficult proposition when recyclables, organic wastes and toxic wastes are all dumped together. Segregating waste at source holds the key to effective waste management. Some Indian cities are working out mechanisms for such decentralised systems. The Mysuru City Corporation, for example, has focused on segregation of trash at source, door-to-door collection, recycling and involvement of non-profits and educational institutions in public awareness campaigns. Similar initiatives are also underway in Panaji and Alappuzha. Delhi, Mumbai — most Indian cities — could begin by emulating these cities in getting their basics right.

STANDING ROOM ONLY

Economy is 'cattle class' anyway; having to fly bolt upright can't add to the pain

THE TERM VTOL (vertical takeoff and landing), which the Harrier Jump Jet uses to dispense with airstrips, is taking on new meaning with airlines proposing tantalisingly cheap flights in which passengers travel standing up. Not completely upright, though, because international regulations require seat belts, which require seats to attach themselves to. "Standing" passengers get a little barstool-like projection to perch on.

VivaColumbia is the latest airline to propose "vertical seat" flights to the South American country, which is becoming a hot tourist destination. For real tourism, not to experience *Narcos* in real life. Earlier, Spring Airlines of China and the Irish pioneer cheap carrier, Ryanair, have thought out loud about getting passengers to rise to the occasion and buy criminally cheap standing-only tickets. However, regulators in several countries have grounded the idea on safety considerations, though it is now understood that the only way to survive an air disaster is to take the train instead. Passengers also protest that standing flights would take the romance out of flying, though it was blown away long ago by terrorism. There is nothing romantic about standing in long queues in order to be stripped naked by X-ray machines and felt up by security, so that you can board aircraft packed like the slave galleys in *Ben Hur*. On short-haul flights, no one really misses the free peanuts and personal entertainment system. And only the deeply masochistic look forward to airline meals, which have always tasted like freshly microwaved tyre-tread washed down with watery industrial wastes cunningly mislabelled "tea" and "coffee".

For the majority in economy, jetliners are like cattle wagons anyway. Having to stand like cattle will not alter this reality. Dreamed up by Airbus in 2003, the "vertical seat" has had to stand down for too long. But now, its time seems to have come.



YOGINDER K. ALAGH

I HAVE BEEN urging serious discussion of the prospects of the Indian economy and suggesting that the performance will be way below the recent trend rate of around seven per cent. The CSO release of the quarterly GDP results and growth rates around five-and-a-half per cent as well as the pattern of delayed kharif sowing only confirms matters. That this is a bad year is a foregone fact. The real question is how much can we salvage.

The claim of a "normal monsoon" simply leads to a comfort zone which is fictitious. The meteorological "normal" hides agricultural droughts. The highly irrigated Northwest and high rainfall, rainfed East have, and are showing, surpluses. But the drought is in the Deccan and Central India. That's where the rain leads to large fluctuations in output. Southern and Central India have been seriously hit with erratic rains. Sowing was 10 per cent of the kharif average. The last bout of rain helped a bit, but the southern peninsula until mid-August was deficient by a sixth and Central India by a tenth. We must discuss our plans for these vulnerable areas. Then Niti Aayog vice-chairman Arvind Panagariya mentioned the problem but relinquished his post before it is solved. Not much can be done anyway now for the monsoon is moving to its last phase ending mid-September.

In the recent past, year-to-year variations in growth in bad years have ranged between

DISTRESS SIGNALS

Falling growth, lack of jobs, erratic rains are grim portents

0.7 to minus 0.2 per cent. We must do our best to keep it above half of one per cent rather than let it fall in the negative range with unfortunate consequences for all of us. Manufacturing refuses to pick up. So our hopes for growth around six per cent — and not five — rely on the fact that as long as Urjit Patel keeps up a non-performing high interest rate we will continue to get inflows. Besides, the services sector is still holding out. From the global angle, this seems a strange macro policy. A poor country finances pensioners in rich countries by taxing its poor. Even there we have our critics and so the venerable Nomura sagely announces that growth in India will go towards five rather than six per cent this year. The stock market responds by shedding much fat in one of the biggest falls in recent months and years. The Chief Economic Adviser had announced many times that a public investment revival will give the much needed boost, but his advice is falling on deaf ears. Meanwhile, coal, fertiliser and cement clock negative growth. The finance minister steadfastly resists a revival plan. At least the new deputy chair of the Niti Aayog has the decency to say that a revival is difficult but can and should be attempted. The RBI governor is attacked for keeping up a high interest rate and thank God, he has a thick enough skin to take the drubbing for all we need now is a run on the rupee.

SEPTEMBER 6, 1977, FORTY YEARS AGO



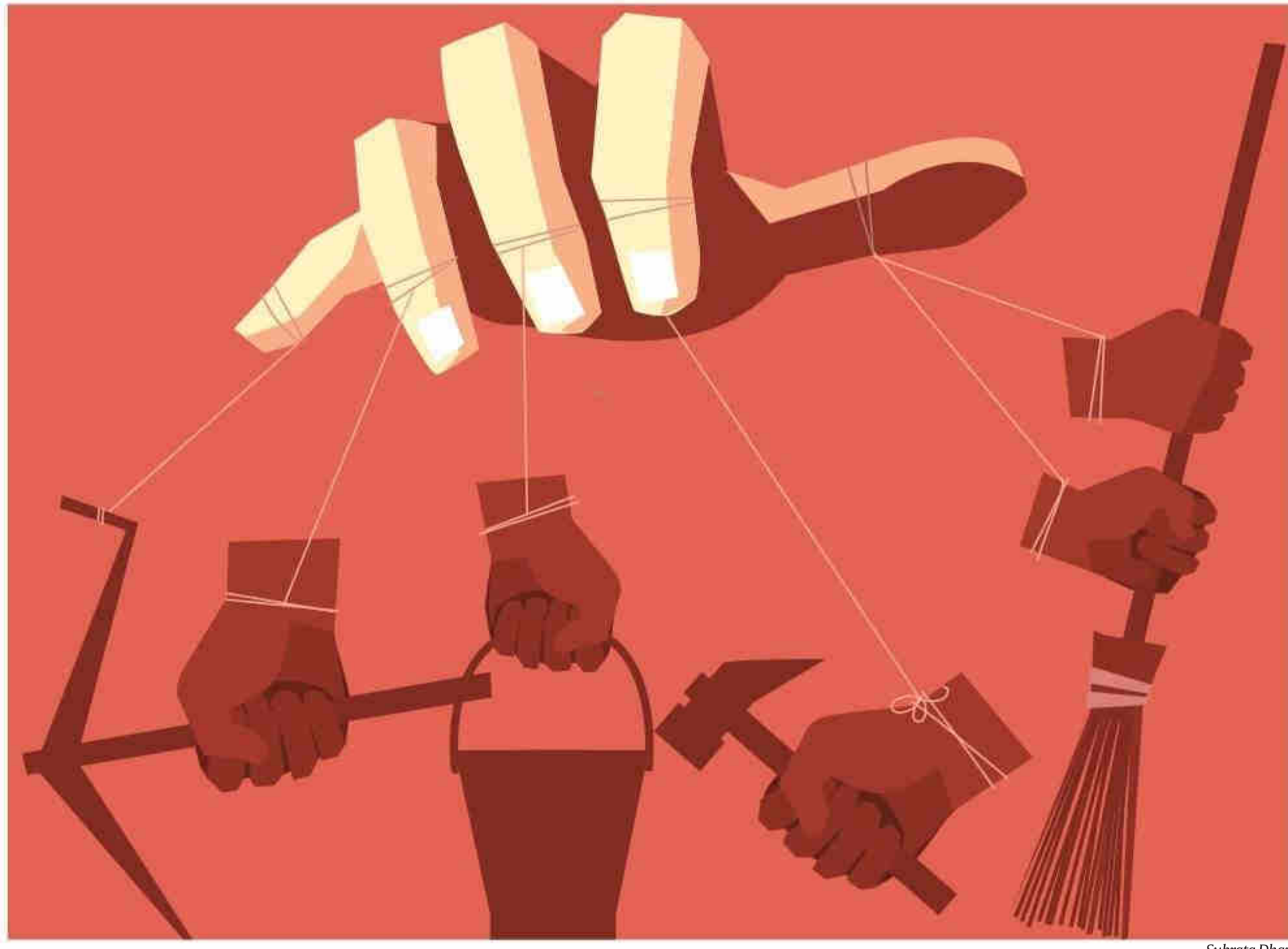
INDIRA'S OFFENSIVE
INDIRA GANDHI SAID she was not afraid of being arrested. Addressing public meetings at the BHEL and Bahadurabad, near Haridwar, Mrs Gandhi launched an attack on the policies of the Janata government. She ridiculed some "Janata leaders' claim to greatness" and said, "they are afraid of a woman like me". She called upon Harijans to fight fearlessly against every kind of excess. Mrs Gandhi said the people should fight against poverty. "If the fight requires shedding blood, it would be shed to establish socialism as blood was shed to win freedom," she added. The Jana Sangh and the RSS would emerge on top of the Janata conglomer-

eration and that would be a sad day for the country, Mrs Gandhi said. The RSS was trying to infiltrate the police, military and government services, she added.

BHUTTO PETITION
THE SINDH HIGH Court dismissed a petition seeking the release of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. After a preliminary hearing, the court ruled against the petition, saying that Bhutto had been taken to Lahore, which was outside the court's jurisdiction. The petitioner, Habibullah Some, a member of Bhutto's People's Party, had filed a constitutional petition asking a withdrawal of the detention order.

POLL FUNDS
THE GOVERNMENT HAS decided to ask the CBI to inquire into massive contributions made by a large number of companies to the Congress party funds before elections and launch necessary prosecutions for violation of the company law. The government's decision, which can have far-reaching consequences, envisages prosecutions not only against who made the donations to Congress funds under the cover of advertisements for so-called souvenirs, but also against those who took part in the conspiracy to raise money and abet violation of the company law. This was disclosed by the law minister, Shanti Bhushan.

15 THE IDEAS PAGE



Subrata Dhar

Invisible hands do dirty work

Caste biases have instilled a disdain for all forms of manual work. From there, the dots can be connected to the lack of quality and safety in public works and services



MRINAL PANDE

A FEW YEARS ago, while visiting home in Uttarakhand, Shanti, whose family has had a long association with mine, came visiting with her mentally-challenged son. "I am getting old, the land is turning barren, so you must get my son a *sarkari* job with a pension," she rasped in her unvarnished local dialect. "He will be a good *chaprasi* (peon) in any *sarkari* *daftar*," she said.

But he will need some qualifications, a school leaving diploma at least, I said.

"Nah. I took him to a vocational school. But when I saw they teach only manual work I brought him back. My son is a Brahmin and will not train and use tools sitting with sons of carpenters and copper-smiths. Listen, get him in just any government office. He will get to wear a *sarkari* uniform and sit on a stool outside his *sahib's* room. I promise you he will stand up and salute whenever the *sahib* comes."

Before you chuckle, dear readers, do realise that the illiterate Shanti, as a shrewd strategising mother fighting to help her vulnerable child survive, has unwittingly diagnosed the three main reasons for Indians' deep hankering for *sarkari* jobs. These involve maintaining a passive watch from a stool or a chair, keeping the boss happy and a steady pension after retirement.

For 70 years, most of India's marital matches — and democratic governments — have been formed after factoring in the cleverly divided and sub-divided caste lines. Since caste, when well-protected, demands exclusion of manual labour from the lives of the privileged, from Bihar to Tamil Nadu,

manual work of the most degrading kind is subcontracted by governments and private companies to unskilled but cheaply available invisible hands through a vast network of contractors.

As global workplaces increasingly fragment and turn hyper competitive and Donald Trump whittles down outsourcing and H1B visas, India's skilled ones (mostly from upper castes or privileged families of a few upper class SC/STs) are increasingly opting for public sector jobs and the less-skilled are being steadily pushed out, losing the agency they once had as a large organised workforce. From among these invisible and unorganised freelancers, desperately in need of cash, come all those unprotected ones willing to stand for hours in farms, planting, weeding, spraying toxic weed killers, carry bricks and mortar up rickety bamboo steps at construction sites, dive into 18-foot deep pools of excreta to unclog drains, collect and sort hospital garbage with ungloved hands, patch up our neglected railroad tracks without any of their formal contractors and mandated supervisors on site. All of them are expected to use the cheapest and most basic tool — a pair of human hands.

We are not being anecdotal here. Recent research has thrown up plenty of data on shining India. A placement statistics study of IIT Mumbai reveals that 45 per cent of their B.Tech students choose to migrate to finance and consulting related jobs. Only about 22 per cent of them continued with engineering and technology-linked jobs. Data also confirms how MBAs, doctors and commerce graduates who have either failed to find lucrative jobs abroad or in the private sector will prefer a government job rather than opt for start-ups. The Railways, like the Public Works Department or the government-run educational and health-care bodies, today have whole queues of trained graduates waiting to join.

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Since government jobs have caste quotas, caste biases run deep in the system, including a Brahminical disdain for all forms of manual work or physical contact with greasy tools and machines. This guarantees a woeful neglect of acquiring necessary machines and maintaining vital safety standards for the contractual labour called in to perform their dirty jobs for daily wages. Delhi alone reported 10 deaths of sewer cleaners in the past one month. All were working on a contract and all of them died after inhaling toxic gases from manholes they were lowered into without safety equipment or masks.

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Then, there are the invisible female cultivators. A study (NFHS3 and 4) reveals that over a quarter of them (in the age group of 15-49) remain alarmingly underweight and over 54 per cent of them are anaemic. The reason? Overwork, work-related health hazards and malnutrition. Then there is Gorakhpur, where 70 infants died within a week in an ill-maintained government hospital. The cow-loving chief minister, when he finally visited the city hospital, laid the blame squarely at the doors of the people who will not keep the hospital premises clean and, of course, mosquitoes.

If media reports on the recent Khatauli train disaster are true, a gross human negligence caused the disaster that killed 23 and injured some 200. Recordings of conversations among the old staff, revealing the reluctance of the "over-qualified" young supervisors and junior engineers to go out in the field and inspect the railway tracks as mandated and hired gangs working unsupervised, have gone viral on media. A Niti Aayog report traces 61.1 per cent of train accidents to staff failures.

Have you ever wondered how India's state, tweeting through a million members, even as it struggles with vast problems in healthcare, education, railway track maintenance and sanitation, has speedily demonetised currency, added lakhs of new taxpayers and made Aadhaar linkages?

The writer is a Delhi-based journalist and former chairperson of Prasar Bharati

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Persecution of Rohingyas adds Myanmar to the long list of countries where Islam appears to be the religion of the persecuted and the outcast, and to frame the justification for their own violent and intolerant revenge."

—THE GUARDIAN

An honour killing

What happens when a community turns against the writer who speaks for and about them?



AMRITA DUTTA

IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, Khattamshud, the enemy of imagination and the ruler of the Land of Chup, tells us what he knows about stifling stories. "To ruin a happy story, you must make it sad. To ruin an action drama, you must make it move too slowly. To ruin a mystery, you must make the criminal's identity obvious even to the most stupid audience. To ruin a love story, you must turn it into a tale of hate," he says. In today's India, where pockets of Chup proliferate everywhere, we could add one more ingredient: To ruin a story, you must turn it into a matter of honour.

The honour of Gounder women was invoked in a campaign against Perumal Murugan's novel, *Mathorubhagan*, in Namakkal two years ago. Just recently, the Jharkhand government has banned Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*, a collection of stories published in 2015, on the charge that it dishonours Santhal women. In doing so, the government legitimised an old and vicious online campaign by a section of people in Jharkhand — both tribal and non-tribal — which railed at Shekhar for writing "porn". The Santhal writer, who is also accused of misrepresenting his own indigenous people, has also been suspended from his job as a government doctor in Pakur.

The wise men and women who sit in angry judgement over books have not been known to read before reaching for the gun. Still, it might surprise you to know that the story for which Shekhar was pilloried on Facebook — "Semen, Saliva, Sweat, Blood" — was written for a 2012 anthology of erotic stories. It is not even a part of the book that has been banned. It might surprise you further to know that six of the 10 stories in *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* feature women protagonists, some of them unforgettable characters.

One of the most striking works of Indian fiction in English in recent times, *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* is not an anthropological study of dancing noble savages. Shekhar would rather tell the story of the inhabitants of a mineral-rich land, left powerless by state and big capital. His characters are flesh-and-blood people, following their desires and compulsions against the indifference of a coal-blackened landscape.

The Adivasi does not lust, his critics seem to suggest in their prim horror at the sex in his writing. Nor does the Adivasi woman make difficult choices, involving her body and survival, it would seem from the cries of dishonour that rang in the state assembly over a three-page story. "November is the Month of Migrations" is inspired by the annual journey of many Santhals in search of work to the paddy fields of Bardhaman in nearby Bengal. Its unsentimental account of the choice one

such migrant makes — sex for money and food — is as much a story as a punch in the solar plexus.

Shekhar's women lust and hunger, sometimes with terrible consequences for themselves. Life throws everything at them: Illness and starvation, leering men and allegations of witchcraft. But they survive, as rice-mill workers and prostitutes, as unpaid maids and battered mothers.

The year-round celebration of literature and writers might make you think otherwise, but the backlash against Shekhar and Murugan underlines the essential loneliness of the writer, especially she who lives away from metropolitan literary salons and networks. When I spoke briefly to Shekhar, on the day his effigy was burnt in Pakur and before the government swung into action, he had just returned from treating patients with dengue hemorrhagic fever in Sangrampur village, 5 km away. "I am not afraid, and I cannot afford to be afraid," he had said.

As a proponent of the Ol-Chiki script, Shekhar, a follower of the Sarna religion, suggested he might have angered that section of Santhals who write their language in the Roman script, the legacy of a Norwegian Christian missionary. The BJP state government, headed by a non-tribal chief minister, aims to champion the Adivasi cause by endorsing the witch-hunt against Shekhar. It is, at the same time, ramming through an anti-conversion bill that is being bitterly opposed by Christian groups in the region. In this electoral calculus, the rights of a lone writer are easy to discard.

What happens when a community turns against the writer who speaks for and about them? That abandonment is a special wrench when it comes to writers like Shekhar, who are nourished by the deep roots they have struck in their land. And yet, the writer owes his community nothing but the truth, as perceived by his imagination.

The campaign against Shekhar, which sprouted and took on an ugly, beastly life on Facebook, also shows how easily technology now allows the state and the community to intrude into what was once a relationship between writer and reader. All someone has to do is post a screenshot of a page that "offends him" to rally the mob in a mission of hate. In a more autarkic time, it was possible to retreat into the space opened up by a writer's imagination, without having to deal with the hectoring voice of the community. Reading, too, was an act of solitary renewal.

Last year, when P. Murugan resurrected the writer Perumal Murugan after a Madras High Court order dismissing a ban on his book, he spoke of the censor that now sits within, testing every word he creates. But he also spoke of the silence and solitude that he hoped would eventually replenish the wellspring of his fiction. "Please do not ask me to speak. Let me be quiet. And write. I shall speak to you through my written words."

The question remains: Will Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar be allowed to find a way out of his silence?

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

NUCLEAR MATTERS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Energy needs inspiration' (IE, September 4). Apart from renewable energy, India must harness its nuclear stock for meeting energy requirements. India has a fourth of the world's thorium reserves. If a technology is developed for exploiting this huge stockpile, the country can meet its energy requirements for several decades without causing any damage to the environment. Several nations extract a substantial part of their energy requirements from nuclear energy.

Vinay Rana, Gurugram

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Energy needs inspiration' (IE, September 4). The author has not mentioned nuclear energy as an alternative to fossil fuels. Radiation hazards and fears of accidents could be behind his decision to write-off nuclear energy. This energy is, however, the only alternative to fossil fuels which is non-polluting, does not cause global warming and can be used on a sustainable basis.

Subhash Athale, via e-mail

MORAL FETTERS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Beyond good and evil' (IE, August 26) and 'Skimming the shallows' (IE, August 29). Morality inasmuch as understood as a sense of the right and wrong embedded is a part of the human consciousness and any sincere expansion of the latter cannot be at the cost of the former. However, to let consciousness be dictated by morality will meant restricting its potential.

Charu Vaid, Lucknow

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

DILUTING AN ACT

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'It's lonely on the ground' (IE, September 4). The proposed amendments to the RTI Act make approaching the information commission cumbersome. They would mean the withdrawal of an RTI application in the event of the applicant's death. Even in civil courts, proceedings continue after the applicant's demise. The option to take back an application should lie with the deceased's heirs.

Pawan Pathak, Etawah



VIEW FROM THE RIGHT

STANDING WITH DERAS

THE EDITORIAL IN *Organiser* comments on the recent "unprecedented media attention" to religious sects, "especially from the Hindu fold". Admitting that "there can be no ground for defending any act of criminality", it adds that "such inhuman acts" are "covered up in Semitic, Abrahamic religions".

Spiritual figures "have long played a critical role in shaping the Hindu way of life". Some follow "the idea of Sadhana", and are called "Yogis". Some are "Swamis (spiritual masters), Rishis (seers), and Sanyasis (renunciates) who are knowledge seekers through experimentation". "Sadhus (mendicants) and Gurus (those who dispel spiritual darkness) live in (the) society, having their personal lives but still practicing and propagating the ideas invented by Yogic Sanyasis," the editorial argues. Since such "traditions and Dharmic insti-

tutions" were "crushed by external aggression and colonial legal systems", the "Baba Cult" emerged as an outcome. "Globalisation and rising material aspirations" have "created a spiritual void in our society", it says, underlining that "Bharatiya values are under threat and individuals are looking for something to hold on". The Deras "do not provide them with just spiritual solace but also offer them a sense of identity and dignity". "Reinventing our ancient knowledge systems and institutions in tune with the time is the need of the hour," it says.

SMELLING A CONSPIRACY

THE COVER STORY OF *Organiser* is on the GM crops that can "demolish the Bharatiya agriculture". India has become a "battleground for global corporate agriculture lobbies" as "multinational biotech companies have built a nexus with Indian regulatory bodies in an attempt to unleash 'bio-terrorism' in the country", according to the report.

The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) "touched an hornet's nest" when it "gave a green signal to GM mustard" in May, "despite the fact that there was shocking evidence on how these crops lead to health

and environmental catastrophe". The anti-GM crops lobby, which includes Swadeshi Jagran Manch and Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, has sent a representation to the Environment Ministry, warning "that the Bt Cotton disaster of Vidarbha will repeat itself if GM mustard is commercialised".

Even a parliamentary panel on science and technology and environment and forests comprising 31 MPs has "warned against the commercialisation of GM crops unless the bio-safety and socio-economic desirability is evaluated" and "an accountability regime is put in place". Many experts note that "despite a huge outcry against the failure of Bt Cotton, Monsanto has till today never acknowledged that its insect-resistant hybrid was a failed experiment in India that compelled farmers to commit suicide".

The GM crop lobby is "now using its muscle and trying to bulldoze our scientists", according to the story.

SCHOOLS OF THE PAST

THE COVER STORY OF *Panchjanya* explains how the British destroyed India's education system. Having "secured political dominance over India", the British formed many commis-

sions to comprehend Indian education. A mammoth report by Indologist G.W. Leitner, released in 1883, gives the educational status of many parts of north India, including the number of traditional schools, students, teachers, curriculum, details of textbooks and teachers, salaries and qualifications of teachers. Leitner was among the few Europeans, who did not believe they are superior to Indians on all counts.

Following his report, the British government established a college and a university and later, a school in every district. The report says the Indian society had so much respect for education that people from all walks of life, even criminals "competed with each other to respect scholars". "There was no temple, mosque or dhamshala that was not associated with a school," the report says. Besides these schools that primarily offered religious education, there were "thousands of secular schools".

The British rule changed this system. Consequently, the quality of traditional schools declined. With emphasis on "paper certificates", Indian education lost its flavour and became "lifeless" and "mechanical".

Compiled by Ashutosh Bhardwaj