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TELLING NUMBERS

Attendance in states, girls in class, facilities in schools



The percentage of schools serving Mid Day Meals has been largely constant but facilities such as the provision of toilets, have seen significant improvement over the last few years.

ATTENDANCE PATTERNS BY STATE

Overall, enrolment for the age group 6-14 has been above 96% in every year since 2010. Attendance, however, varies across states.

Table with 2 columns: ATTENDANCE* and STATES. Rows show attendance percentages for various states like Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, etc.

*Attendance patterns in primary sections of government schools. Attendance based on visit on a random day.

PROPORTION OF GIRLS OUT OF SCHOOL FALLING

The percentage of out-of-school girls aged 11-14 has fallen significantly over time. Even older girls (ages 15-16) are staying on in school.

Table with 4 columns: STATE, %OoS 11-14 YRS (2006, 2018), %OoS 15-16 YRS (2006, 2018). Lists states like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, etc.

*Only states that had a girls OoS percentage of more than 20% in the 15-16 age group in 2006 have been listed

SCHOOL FACILITIES IMPROVING

In most states, school facilities have been improving over time, especially the provision of toilets, successive ASER surveys since 2010 show.

Table with 4 columns: % OF SCHOOLS WITH, 2010, 2016, 2018. Rows include Midday meal, Drinking water, Toilet available, etc.

*2018 data is for playground inside school premises only Data: ASER 2018

SIMPLY PUT

India warming: what trends show

2018 was the sixth warmest year on record, a result of the global warming trend. A look at temperature and rainfall last year, and a series of extreme weather events that have triggered concern about the future

SOWMIYA ASHOK NEW DELHI, JANUARY 16

IN A statement issued Wednesday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said 2018 was the sixth warmest year on record, with the average temperature over India being "significantly above normal".

The five warmest years on record (nation-wide records began in 1901) were, in order: 2016 (+0.720°C above the 1981-2010 average), 2009 (+0.560°C), 2017 (+0.550°C), 2010 (+0.540°C), 2015 (+0.420°C).

Part of global warming trend

The trends of recent years are part of the "global warming" trend, Ministry of Earth Sciences Secretary M Rajeevan told The Indian Express.

During 2018, the IMD said the annual mean surface air temperature averaged over the country was +0.410°C above the 1981-2010 average. However, this was "substantially lower" than the highest warming observed over India in 2016, which was +0.720°C.

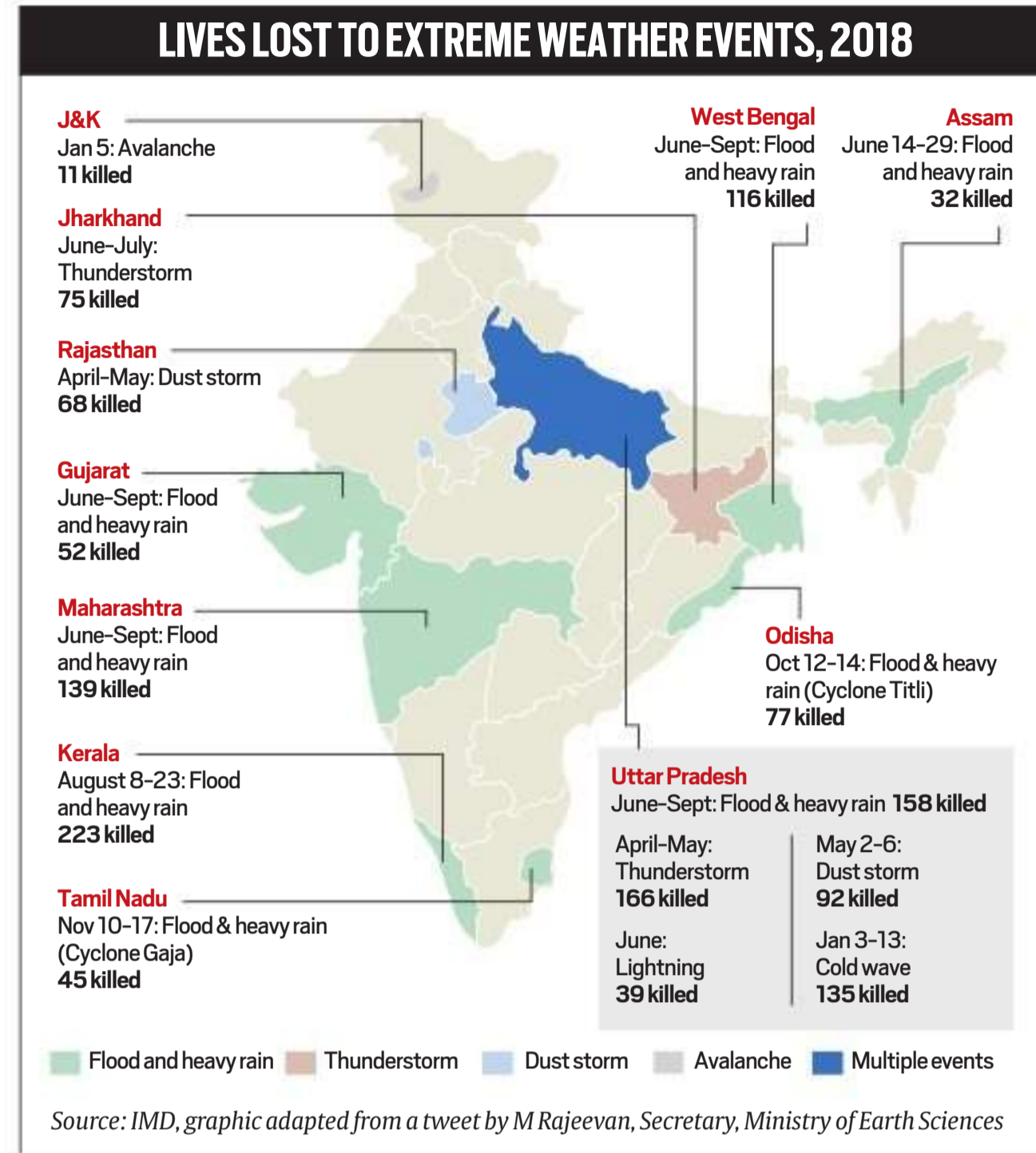
In November 2018, the World Meteorological Organisation had said the "long-term warming trend" had continued in 2018.

Both day, night getting warmer

The IMD said Wednesday that the winter and pre-monsoon seasons, with an anomaly of +0.590°C and +0.550°C respectively, "mainly contributed to this warming".

Broadly, Rajeevan said, "Temperatures are increasing during both day and night time. Heat waves are increasing in frequency as well as magnitude."

According to the IMD, the country-aver-



aged season mean temperatures were also "above average" during all four seasons with winter (January-February, +0.590°C) being the fifth warmest since 1901.

Extreme weather events

Apart from the six cyclonic storms that formed over the northern Indian Ocean, India experienced "high impact weather" events, the IMD said.

FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

May's turbulent January: what now in Brexit?

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, JANUARY 16

Parliament in London was debating a no-confidence motion against the government Wednesday evening (India time), a fallout of Prime Minister Theresa May's crushing defeat the previous day on her plan for Britain's exit from the European Union.

Scenario 1: MPs takes charge

This could, in theory, see Labour call for another referendum, a "people's vote" that an increasing number of pundits have been



The Prime Minister has a few options, mostly bad. Reuters

advocating. However, May and her top colleagues have been steadfast that there would be no second plebiscite, and Corbyn himself has been opposed to the idea.

support of the majority in Parliament.

■ May could try to negotiate with Labour, and perhaps agree to its plan for a customs union with the EU.

■ A group of MPs wants to take the wheel themselves. While a majority wants to avoid a Brexit without a deal, how will they go about executing this option?

Scenario 2: May goes back to EU

The PM could either ask the EU for a sweetener to take back to the Commons in a renewed bid to get her plan through, or seek a postponement of Brexit.

if the UK has a second referendum perhaps, or is able to offer the EU states a serious plan.

Scenario 3: May's long shots

There are two desperate, unlikely-to-succeed moves she can attempt. One, despite winning the no-confidence vote, she could still call for an election in the hope she would get a bigger majority that would help pass her deal.

Scenario 4: Leave without deal

If Parliament remains unable to find a way out of the crisis, this could actually happen — and chaos could follow. There is reason for optimism that it would not come to this — a large majority in Parliament is against leaving without a deal.

IIP: how this index is calculated, and what it says about factory output

AANCHAL MAGAZINE NEW DELHI, JANUARY 16

LAST WEEK, data released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) showed that factory output growth had slipped to a 17-month low in November. This growth is measured on the basis of the "Index of Industrial Production (IIP)".

The index & its importance

The IIP is a composite indicator that measures changes in the volume of production of a basket of industrial products over a period of time, with respect to a chosen base period.

The all-India IIP provides a single representative figure to measure the general level

of industrial activity in the economy on a monthly basis. Used by government agencies including the Ministry of Finance, the Reserve Bank of India etc, for policy purposes, the all-India IIP forms a crucial input for compilation of Gross Value Added (GVA) of the manufacturing sector in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on a quarterly basis.

It is crucial considering the IIP is the only measure on the physical volume of production. While its impact on GDP calculations is lower following changes incorporated when the latest shift to the 2011-12 base year happened, it remains extremely relevant for the calculation of the quarterly and advance GDP estimates.

Changes in base year

The change in the base year to 2011-12, which happened in 2017, was the ninth revision of base year of the all-India IIP since the beginning of its dissemination.

In the 2011-12 series, as compared to 2004-05 series, a number of items were introduced or deleted which helped to check the volatility of the index that was earlier seen especially for capital goods.

IIP 2011-12 data series, while 124 of them were deleted. The items 'salt' and 'coffee' in the existing series have been replaced with 'iodized salt' and 'instant coffee' respectively.

Global indices

Globally, the compilation of such indices dates back to at least the 1920s. A United Nations publication detailing the production index methodology, namely Index Numbers of Industrial Production, was published in 1950 — the first and only United Nations publication on this topic.

tion of the methodology published in the original version of the index number manual has been released. Since its publication in 1950, many changes have taken place that require an updated version of the index number publication.

IIP & ASI

Since the ASI is the main source of long term industrial statistics while the IIP is a monthly indicator based on items and factories selected from ASI, comparisons between the growth rates of manufacturing sector based on the two datasets are obvious.

marily on account of the fact that the IIP is based on a fixed set of items and factories chosen in the base period whereas the ASI is a record-based survey of establishments registered under the Factories Act, 1948 in which the sampling frame and the sampled establishments undergo significant changes.

Consequently, the ASI captures information of new items and factories whereas the IIP does not. Also, the IIP is based on a much smaller sample of factories as compared to that of ASI.

15 THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The PM leads a party that is divided and a country stockpiling food and medicines as if preparing for war. She needs to humbly reach out to her opponents and find a way to prevent Britain crashing out of the EU in weeks."
— THE GUARDIAN

Noise without conversation

Constant disruptions in Parliament fail the mandate of the people



MANOJ KUMAR JHA

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT parliamentary democracy is a system of government in which citizens elect their representatives to a Parliament. Parliament then engages to make the laws and take appropriate decisions for the country. The making of parliamentary democracy ought to reflect the will of the people. But the will of the people does not stop merely at electing their representatives and "constituting" the parliament. The people also desire to see the members of Parliament discussing the issues dominating the everyday life of "we the people of India".

Democracy, particularly parliamentary democracy, has to be seen as a cultural praxis, through which the everyday experience of the people and social groups, including those on the margins, should find their voices being heard in Parliament. This, too, should not be limited to occasional events. People must hear the reverberations of their voices often and for longer, from Parliament. Let us take a leaf out of the Buddha's life. He once asked Ananda, his first disciple, "Have you heard, Ananda, that the Vajjians had full and frequent public assemblies?" Ananda replied: "Lord, so I have heard", the Blessed one rejoined: "So long as the Vajjians hold these full and frequent assemblies, so long may they be expected not to decline but to prosper". Hiren Mukerjee, a veteran parliamentarian, had narrated this exchange in the context of talking about Indian Parliament in the days of the first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Thus, the will of the people has to be seen in the great Vajjian tradition.

Parliamentary democracy is an ecosystem wherein "one man, one vote, one value" should be seen in terms of the priorities of Parliament. No matter how powerful a majority is available with the treasury benches, the party in power should learn not to compel upon itself a top-down approach of policy making, nor a "my way or the high way" manner of strategy in passing legislations. In the interests of a healthy Parliament, the Opposition too must review its ontological being in Parliament and be ready to constantly review an all-season recipe of opposition just for the sake of opposing. In recent years, it has been observed that the members of Parliament in the treasury and opposition benches prefer not to speak to each other and take great trouble to speak at each other. Parliamentary democracy can get us the best results only when authorities are willing to look for common agreeable propositions.

The roots of this "war-vocabulary", employed by both the sides in contemporary Parliament, could be traced through

the developments during 2012-13 of the UPA-2 government. During this period, continued disruptions and subsequent adjournments ruined the very idea of a civic discourse. Opposition leaders of the said period went on to repeatedly highlight that causing "disruption" in the house is a valid parliamentary strategy. The political climate of those years was being shaped on a daily basis by the protests on the metropolitan streets on issues ranging from violence against women to corruption at high places. Sensing the mood, the then Opposition probably thought it was better to speak to the audience outside rather than discuss within. However, history has a strange habit of repeating itself. So, in the last few months of the present government, we are witnessing a repeat of the 2012-13 period. Opposition parties in the present Parliament prefer the same "valid strategy" of disruption to embarrass the government. Thus, whether it is Rafale, agrarian distress or unemployment, opposition parties are relying on the same strategy: Speak to the larger audience outside than engage with the limited audience inside. However, the very idea of parliamentary democracy suffers in the process. Parliamentary democracy gets richer only if nuanced debates are held. A false consciousness which emanates out of the "influencers" on social media makes the leaders shun the idea of deliberations within the House, and instead, keep engaging with talking-shops outside Parliament.

All of us should remember Edmund Burke's words. "When the leaders choose to make themselves bidders at an auction of popularity, their talents, in the construction of the state, will be of no service. They will become flatterers instead of legislators; the instruments, not the guides, of the people," he said. One wonders if it's for this reason that governments largely fail to rally the resources existing within Parliament in order to respond effectively to contemporary challenges. The compulsion to flatter a powerful elite is bound to impact parliamentary procedures, and, undermine the dignity and rights of marginalised groups and communities. It can be argued that the agrarian crisis, lack of jobs, labour and the unorganised sector could be better tackled if the parliamentarians who conduct research on these issues were allowed to contribute to deliberations in both the Houses — similar to the energies they invest in literary festivals, media conclaves and other such events.

The people are not the only ones to incur losses in this carefully-crafted ruckus in the well of Parliament. The new parliamentarians are socialised into parliamentary procedures and norms of behaviour by the older members, definitely in the Rajya Sabha but also in the Lok Sabha. As a new member of Parliament, I feel this loss keenly as I research records and accounts of deliberations by MPs both inside and outside Parliament, because surely what one witnesses in the House is not what ought to be.

The writer is national spokesperson, RJDT, and a Rajya Sabha MP

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PLIANT CAMPUS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Campus accused' (IE, January 16). The freedom to express "provocative ideas and political discussions" is a part of democracy, but its necessity and use has to be interpreted contextually. Slogans which talk of "Bharat ke tukde-tukde" or support self-determination for Kashmir within the precinct of the university, and agitate against the hanging of proven anti-India elements like Afzal Guru, would certainly not come in this category. While the charge of sedition may be exaggerated, the decision to prosecute the accused students should not be clubbed with the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. We have to distinguish between intellectual dissent and student indiscipline.

YG Chouksey, Pune

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Campus accused' (IE, January 16). The slapping of sedition charges by the Delhi Police on Kanhaiya Kumar and other JNU students seems to be more a political exercise. After their defeat in the recent state assembly elections, the BJP is in search of some issue which can help it redeem its lost narrative about nationalism. Some time back, 15 Madhya Pradesh youth who cheered for Pakistan were arrested — their arrest by the MP police on sedition charges was a blatant misuse of the sedition law. There is a dire need to curb the misuse of this colonial-era law in India on anyone just for dissenting or expressing an opinion.

Lal Singh, Amritsar

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

A LEG UP

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'MS Dhoni finishes in Adelaide, the Mahi way' (IE, January 16). Kudos to Team India for an impressive victory. With this, the three-match series has been levelled 1-1. It was strenuous for Team India to chase the mammoth score of 299 runs as the two Indian openers, Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan were dismissed very early. But the partnership between Indian skipper Virat Kohli and M S Dhoni provided the Indian team the winning edge.

Tushar Anand, Patna

Suvajit Dey

Seeding a revival

Policy must tackle not just dissatisfaction of large farmers but address the distress of the most vulnerable



PINA AGARWAL

THE TWO MAIN policy interventions repeatedly discussed in recent months to tackle farmer distress — loan waivers and minimum support prices (MSP) — treat all farmers (large/small, male/female) alike. But farmers are heterogeneous. They differ especially by income, land owned and gender. And farmer dissatisfaction is not the same as farmer distress. Better-off farmers are dissatisfied but politically vocal; poor farmers are distressed and many kill themselves in silence. It is the truly distressed we need to reach, but our policies only address the dissatisfied.

First, take loan waivers. Today, most economists agree that waivers are a bad idea: They deplete state finances, undermine bank culture, and barely reach 20-25 per cent farmers who have access to institutional credit, but not the marginal farmers or labourers who depend on moneylenders, or get no credit at all. Having a bank debt is not, in itself, a sign of distress. Farming, like other businesses, needs loans, and access to formal credit signifies credit worthiness. It is the marginal and small farmers who depend mainly on private lenders, and whose loans don't get waived, who are in distress.

Second, raising MSPs will help surplus producing farmers, but not net buyers of farm produce — marginal farmers, farm labourers and urban consumers. A 2015 IIM-A report on Marketed and Marketable Surplus found that marginal farmers (up to one hectare land) contributed only 5 per cent of marketed surplus rice and 4 per cent of wheat, even in the major rice and wheat surplus states. And they sold only 39 per cent and 25 per cent of their marketed rice and wheat to government agencies, compared with the 70 per cent and 90 per cent sold by large farmers. Further, the Shanta Kumar Committee reports that only 6 per cent of farmers gained from selling these crops to any procurement agency.

Third, the policy of direct transfers to farmers also ignores the inequality between farmers. Telangana gave Rs 9,900/ha/season to all landowning farmers. Hence, the very

large landowners gained — not only from owning large tracts, but in both seasons, since with irrigation they can cultivate in both kharif and rabi seasons; while pure-tenants and labourers got nothing. Nor did women farmers get anything, few of whom own land. Odisha recently announced that it will pay both farmers and labourers, but like Telangana, it will pay per household and not per person. Both states thus ignore women's claims, and also the substantial evidence that it is income in a mother's hands that greatly improves child nutrition and education, rather than income only in the father's hands.

In fact, neither state has recognised intra-household inequalities, or paid heed to the large proportion of women farmers who are either principal cultivators or de-facto responsible for farms with male out-migration. Both categories are growing: Women farmers directly operating holdings, for example, grew from 12.8 per cent in 2010-11 to 13.9 per cent in 2015-16 (agricultural censuses). And in 2010, women farmers constituted 15 per cent of farmer suicides in five major states.

In NSSO's Situation Analysis Survey, when 50,000 farmers across India were asked if they liked farming, 40 per cent said they did not. This included both better-off and poor farmers, and both men and women. As discussed in my article ('The seeds of discontent', IE January 15, 2017), the better-off farmers, with more land, credit and education have high aspirations and are deeply dissatisfied, not in the least by the lack of formal sector jobs for themselves and their children. The poorer farmers are distressed given poor returns from agriculture. Women fall in both categories.

To address these woes, we need a multi-pronged strategy of income support, government investment, and institutional innovations, and not a one-size-fits-all approach. First, to overcome immediate distress, direct transfers are preferable to loan waivers, but transfers should be limited to smallholders (those owning 2 ha or less), pure-tenants and agricultural labourers. And the funds should go to women in the family for best results.

Second, to reduce the long-term distress of poor farmers, agricultural investment in priority areas is imperative. Topping my list is irrigation, water conservation, and storage for surplus produce. Even 70 years after Independence, only 44 per cent of our irrigable area is irrigated. This must increase, but not via groundwater mining, which is unsustainable. Consider Punjab's massive groundwater depletion. After the state introduced

Farmers are heterogeneous. They differ especially by income, land owned and gender. And farmer dissatisfaction is not the same as farmer distress. Better-off farmers are dissatisfied but politically vocal; poor farmers are distressed and many kill themselves in silence. It is the truly distressed we need to reach, but our policies only address the dissatisfied.

free electricity for irrigation in 1997, canal-irrigated land declined by 40 per cent between 1997-2002, while groundwater extraction rose sharply, as did the area under paddy. Now, Punjab's water table is falling by 2.3 ft/yr or more, with no penalties for over-drawing. In contrast, Gujarat's success in agriculture (9.6 per cent growth rate between 1999-2009) lay particularly in rain-water harvesting. This needs replication wherever possible. Also, water use efficiency by farmers is essential: Low-cost techniques of drip irrigation could be one method.

Third, some 70 per cent of farmers cultivate one hectare or less, in scattered plots. This is non-viable. Andrew Foster and Mark Rosenzweig, in their 2011 report, 'Are Indian farms too small?', find that as farm size in India increases from very small to eight ha, profits/ha rise substantially. So why don't we encourage land and labour pooling? In my research on Kerala, I compared women's group farms using leased land with individual family farms (95 per cent of which were male managed), in Thrissur and Alappuzha. The annual average value of output was 1.8 times greater and annual average profits were five times higher on group farms, which did especially well in commercial crops such as bananas and vegetables, despite depending on leased land. Groups helped increase farm size, brought scale economies, saved on hired labour, improved credit access and enhanced bargaining power in input and output markets. Institutional reform has long been a blind spot in India's farm policy. It needs to be an integral part of schemes to help poor farmers (both men and women). Groups can also reduce farmer isolation and the likelihood of suicides.

Fourth, dietary changes require more focus on non-foodgrains for food security, including vegetables which are more profitable and inland fisheries, a key source of protein. Finally, both to overcome farmer distress and farmer dissatisfaction, creating jobs for farmers' children in their vicinity, not in cities, is essential, through ancillary industries, food processing, SMEs, and so on. This would provide much needed supplementary income for farmers in distress. Doubling farmers' incomes does not need doubling farm incomes. It needs increasing their incomes from both farm and non-farm sources.

The writer is professor of Development Economics and Environment, University of Manchester and former director, Institute of Economic Growth

Cricket, the opium

Extolling cricket victories feeds into milieu where other sports are neglected



THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Victory foretold' (IE, January 8). It describes the victory of the Indian cricket team in Australia as heartwarming. The nation, indeed, has every reason to cheer this well-earned victory. Virat Kohli and his team deserve to be congratulated wholeheartedly. But at the same time, I feel that cricket gets undue prominence in the media, including your paper. Let's not over-hype the victory or the game in general as it leads to imbalance in focus on sports. This was one reason for the country's poor performance at the Rio Olympics in 2016.

A few days after the cricket team's victory in Australia, for example, Mary Kom, was crowned as the number one woman boxer in the world. However, this achievement was consigned to the inside pages of your paper.

It was thanks to women sportspersons like P V Sindhu and Sakshi Malik that the country was saved from a drawing a blank in the medal's tally at the Rio Olympics. There was, of course, focus on the athletes when the Rio Games were on. But as soon as the

Olympics were over, it was cricket all over again. The game is being sold like a hot commodity and organisers, team owners, broadcasters, advertisers and the players have reaped the benefits. Politicians and moneyed celebrities control the game in various forms, while we the public, for whom cricket is like opium, are paying through our nose to watch the IPL tournaments.

Your editorial, and the paper's coverage of cricket overall, feeds into the atmosphere in which most other sports are neglected. In a way, we as a nation are to blame for making cricket what it is today, because we do not raise our voice against what is wrong. Cricket players are auctioned like residential plots. This is not merely a vulgar display of wealth. Let's not forget that sportspersons like Mary Kom and

Hima Das, who have done the country proud, came from poor families. It is the sacrifices of their parents and coaches that made them winners. Government officials or the sports authorities can take little credit for helping them during their initial struggles. The Phogat sisters were groomed by their father, and not the system. Sushil Kumar and others roughed it out in the village mud.

The army has produced sports heroes like Milkha Singh, hockey player Balbir Singh Sr, shooter R S Rathore, Vijay Kumar and several others. None of these heroes have led a life of glamour like the cricketers.

We are responsible for this state of neglect. We endorse the various TV channels which air commercial advertisements on the sale of IPL tickets. In the malls and cinema the-

DEAR EDITOR, I DISAGREE

A fortnightly column in which we invite readers to tell us why, when they differ with the editorial positions or news coverage of 'The Indian Express'

The writer, a retired army officer, is convener of the INTACH chapter, Ambala