

The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

Priyanka's formal debut

Dynastic succession, but a trial by fire

PRIYANKA GANDHI'S formal entry into politics should have sent the BJP high command reaching for smelling salts. This was a carefully-crafted initiation. There is no doubt in anyone's mind where Priyanka stands in the Congress pecking order, yet hers has been a lateral induction with a perceivably modest assignment — overseeing just 40-odd Lok Sabha seats in eastern UP. Not only did it leave the nominal top brass of UP Congress undisturbed, but also sent out the signal that Priyanka, like any Tom and Harry, is being put through the paces. It is a dynastic succession, but a true trial by fire.

The steepness of the challenge is obvious: on the one hand, there is the entrenched Modi-Shah-Yogi trio with caste equations in place and a well-oiled party machine to persuade the voter; and on the other, is the SP-BSP alliance that fashions itself as the principal opposition to the BJP in UP and considers the Congress worthy of just two seats. There is a fragility in this arrangement that Priyanka will be expected to negotiate. The no-holds-barred battle will have to be carefully calibrated to leave the door just ajar for a post-poll alliance with the SP-BSP, if it comes to that. The Congress has made a comeback in bazaar gossip but its UP tally of two Lok Sabha seats and seven MLAs is indicative of a stark absence of an attractive narrative.

Priyanka's past record of public engagement suggests she does not turn the other cheek. Rahul, temperamentally challenged by the BJP's invective-laden lexicon, now has an able ally during election-time stumping when the Modi-Shah-Yogi trio will inevitably launder the Nehru-Gandhi family's inadequacies that have so far received muted riposte. Her telegenic charisma spills beyond the confines of eastern UP and the Congress will expectedly capitalise on Priyanka's resemblance to her grandmother to encash Indra Gandhi's enduring political capital, especially in the southern states. Rahul has tried to craft a different political persona but the 'X factor' deficit, which sets apart a leader from the crowd, needed to be supplemented.

Give priority to teachers' pay

Punjab must talk to the protesting staff

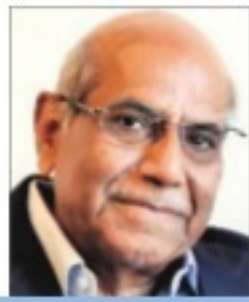
RATHER than assuage the feelings of SSA/RMSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan/Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan) contractual teachers who have been protesting for the regularisation of their services along with grant of full pay, the Punjab Government has insensitively rubbed salt into their wounds. Even as many of the 9,000-odd schoolteachers had in October succumbed to the government's offer of a regular job on the condition that they first work for three years with a 60 per cent slash in dues, nearly one-third of them refused to accept the unkind cut. They preferred to serve on contract with full wages, while keeping the banner of revolt high ever since. The government has now gone back on its word, dealing the dissenting educators a double blow. They too get the unkind cut, but with no promise of job regularisation at the end, unlike their colleagues who had given in earlier.

This knee-jerk reaction of the political leadership due to 'fund deduction by the Union HRD Ministry' betrays its lack of will to resolve the ticklish issue. The affected teachers have, naturally, decided to intensify their stir. In this scenario, the worst hit will be the kids. A rise in the education budget is called for. Its importance is highlighted every year when the government is faced with the ignominy of poor results of children in board exams. Annual surveys further prod the need for steps to improve the sector. It's time that ASER's findings that many class VIII schoolchildren are unable to read text or solve sums of lower classes get addressed.

The administrators must untangle the ugly knots and arrive at a compromise with the teachers so as to prevent consequences detrimental to the children. Talks that aim to end the disruptive wave of protests by the distressed staff should set the ball rolling. Only a satisfied and respected teacher can be stimulated enough to impart lessons that lay a strong foundation for a pupil. And, only a well-educated class of people can put our country on the path of development.

Plugged in to security

US is taking its intelligence strategy very seriously, India must take a cue



SHYAM SARAN

FORMER FOREIGN SECRETARY AND SENIOR FELLOW, CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH

THE Director of US National Intelligence, Dan Coats, released on January 22 a new National Intelligence Strategy for the next four years. It is a sobering document, acknowledging that the international order is transforming rapidly, with a decline of Western dominance and trends towards relative insularity among Western liberal democratic states. The report identifies, from the US perspective, the emergence of a powerful adversary in China and the resurgence of threat from Russia. But more significantly, it identifies certain key global trends. On rapid technological change, it says, 'Technological advances will enable a wider range of actors to acquire sophisticated capabilities that were previously available only to well-resourced states.' As a result, 'This empowerment of groups and individuals is increasing the influence of ethnic, religious, and other sources of identity, changing the nature of conflict, and challenging the ability of traditional governments to satisfy the increasing demands of their populations, increasing the potential for greater instability. Some violent extremist groups will continue to take advantage of these sources and drivers of instability to hold territory, further insurgencies, plan external attacks, and inspire followers to launch attacks wherever they are around the world.'

These observations are very relevant to India.

The report has identified several emerging challenges that relate to space and cyber technology, where both opportunities to advance human welfare, and threats that may under-



CLOSE WATCH: Cyber security is of urgent concern and despite advances in improving defence from attacks, the threat is only likely to expand.

India needs to evolve an ecosystem to tackle multiple challenges. There is no parliamentary oversight over our intel agencies; accountability is poor and needs remedy.

mine it, need to be dealt with. Space-based assets are proliferating and an increasing proportion of civilian and defence-related activities are dependent on them. But they are vulnerable to anti-satellite weapons and there is no global regime to govern this domain. Cyber security is already of urgent concern and despite advances in improving defence of cyberspace from malicious and debilitating attacks, the report predicts that the threat is only likely to expand in the coming years, both from state and non-state actors.

Among emerging technologies, relevant to security planning, it identifies AI, automation, high-performance computing, nano-technology and bio-technologies. These offer the promise of significant benefits but if unregulated, could cause catastrophic consequences. Currently, there are no common ethical standards and shared interests to govern these developments.

No security strategy can afford to neglect these challenges, least of all a major country like India. And yet, we have no such strategy to date.

Since this document relates to intelligence strategy, it devotes consider-

able space to the gathering, collation, assessment of intelligence and to operational issues. It categorises national intelligence into strategic intelligence and anticipatory intelligence. The former attempts to draw a picture of the overall strategic environment a country is confronted with, its major adversaries and the international partnerships that can support its own efforts. The latter looks at 'new and emerging trends, changing conditions, under-valued developments, which challenge long-standing assumptions and encourage new perspectives'. In this context, great value is attached not just to in-house capabilities, but also to inputs from outside experts, academics and industry. A culture of debate and dissent and openness to ideas is critical to making informed assessments. Our own intelligence system can draw useful lessons from this template.

What are likely to be the major preoccupations for US intelligence? The report identifies counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation, cyber security and counter-intelligence and security as priority areas. Under counter-terrorism, the mission would be to 'eliminate

terrorist safe havens and degrade the illicit financial networks that fund terrorist activities' and counter the spread of extremist ideology. There is also the threat of weapons of mass destruction falling into terrorist hands, especially in certain politically unstable N-states. Pakistan should be a prime candidate on several of these counts. Counter-proliferation is a self-evident objective. The US' covert operations to degrade Iran's nuclear capabilities are likely to continue. What is worth noting in the category of counter-intelligence is the citing of threats, not only from foreign intelligence entities, but also insider threats from domestic actors. In dealing with the latter, the report declares the agency's intent to respect privacy of the citizen and operate under the supervision of legal and congressional supervision. This is particularly important in a democracy. There is no parliamentary oversight over our intelligence agencies; there is weak accountability and opaqueness that need urgent remedy.

The National Intelligence Strategy is a public document enabling public debate. This can contribute to its refinement and enable broad political and public support. This strategy is aligned to the National Security Strategy of the US, which is also a public document. This enables coherence in pursuing a security strategy. Reading through the current document, one becomes aware of the complexity of national security challenges a modern state confronts, their inter-connectedness, with strong feedback loops among the connected domains. Inter-disciplinary and cross-domain interventions are indispensable in such an environment and a state must systematically accumulate capacities to be agile in anticipating and tackling challenges. Such capacity will often need inputs from the larger community of experts, academics and analysts, both at home and abroad. The sooner India begins to create such an ecosystem, the more capable it would be to tackle its multiple challenges.

Now it is clean, now not

RAJIV SHARMA

MY city is abuzz with activity. Every nook and corner is being spruced up with utmost diligence. Garbage dumps are being lifted and relocated to far-off places to avoid the probing eyes of the survey team visiting the city to rank the city for Swachh Survekshan 2019.

Road dividers and zebra crossings are being given a fresh coat of paint, weeds are being uprooted, ornamental plants are being pruned and resuscitated under the watchful eyes of officers ahead of the visit of the Central team for assessment and awarding points for cleanliness.

I am amused. The entire year, the city was grappling with filth, encroachments, potholes and defunct

streetlights. And now, at the time of the annual inspection, the administration is on its toes to conceal the grisly underbelly of the city.

Seeing an unprecedented flurry of activity in the corridors of an otherwise indolent administration, I am reminded of my life as a student, when we would panic in the month of February and March as annual exams drew near. Except for a few studious ones, every student scamped here and there to make sure to get through by hook or crook. 'Guess papers' suddenly became a rage among students. Book publishers came out with the latest editions, with every publisher claiming that his selection was the best bet. Even newspapers jumped into the fray by publishing model test papers to help students get through.

Another item whose sales surged was ready reckoners or guidebooks, which provided solutions to every complex question of textbooks. Important questions were highlighted in bold for the benefit of students.

We tried hard to memorise answers, but to no avail. The paper-setters were shrewd enough to avoid those questions, and many a time, they circumvented the language of the question in such a way that we were caught unawares.

Our physics teacher strongly discouraged the use of guides. He would remark, 'Jinna gud paoge, mittha unna hi hona' (Sweetness, or success, depends on the amount of jaggery, or hard work, put in).

There were some students who resorted to cheating, noting down

important points and difficult-to-remember theorems on little chits. Once a friend of mine inadvertently stapled a slip of paper he had carried to the examination hall to cheat, with the extra answersheets. No prizes for guessing: my friend who was expecting a distinction in the subject was slapped with a UMC (unfair means case) by the university.

And today, when the municipal officials of my city are resorting to stop-gap arrangements to please the inspection team, I am reminded of a saying our maths teacher often quoted while taking a dig at our unpreparedness before the exams: 'Buhe khaloti janj, kudi de vino kann!' (wedding procession is at the doorstep and the bride's ears are yet to be pierced).

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Strategy without process is little more than a wish list.

— Robert Filek

ON THIS DAY...100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 1919

Nationalisation of Indian Railways.

AN Anglo-Indian journal recently stated that it anticipated that the question of State management of Indian Railways would be postponed and the contract with the East Indian Railway renewed under more advantageous terms. If this turns out to be true, it would be disappointing to the people of India, as it means continued subordination of Indian economic interests, partly at any rate, to the interests of British shareholders in Indian Railways. This is to be strongly protested against, especially in view of the general support by the British public to the question of nationalisation of their own railways. Indians are urging a similar change for reasons some of which are similar to those of the British public while the others are as strong as they are self-evident. Indian Railways are run not entirely in the interests of Indians but largely in those of the shareholders in England.

Printer's Devil.

THUS the *Pioneer*:—"The Printer's Devil is sometimes responsible for omissions as well as commissions in the announcements of the daily Press. Thus we were made to say in a recent issue that 'it seems improbable that suggestions of a constructive character have now been formulated by the heads of the Provincial Governments during their conference at Delhi.' What we meant was that the contingency in question was 'not improbable.' We understand that criticisms of a constructive nature were put forward on this occasion. We thought that "the unfortunate omissions and commissions" incidental to the conduct of the daily Press were the monopoly of that section of the Press whose representatives are liable to be summarily excluded from meetings of the Legislative Council for one single mistake made in the course of the whole life-time of the Council.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Too mighty to fall

China's economy cannot be ignored owing to its slowest rate of growth during the current year. The figures are often vulnerable to manipulation. China's largest economy has deep roots and has the potential to challenge the hegemony of the West. However, India has an opportunity to reduce the export-import gap and seek more relaxations to trade in China and rationalised business terms for mutual benefits. On the diplomatic front, we must find an amicable solution to belligerent issues. China is stealthily inveigling small states in the Indian Ocean by offering huge funds for projects in their country, with the strategy to strengthen its hold on these countries to keep a watch on the activities in the Indian Ocean. This is a threatening situation for India.

DEEPAK MEHRA, BY MAIL

Some more promises

Reference to 'In poll mode, Cong govt steps up efforts to expedite works' (Jan 23); keeping in mind the Lok Sabha elections, the Centre and every state government is trying to appease every group of society, be it economically weaker sections, farmers, women or senior citizens. But people know that these announcements are

meaningless. Only a few will be met after the elections and the remaining will be kept in the cold storage till the next elections.

FAQIR SINGH, DASUYA

Teachers soft target

Punjab is in a financial mess, but why is the government only after the teachers ('Govt reneges, pay cut for contract teachers'; Jan 24)? There are many other departments too. The pay structure of all government jobs needs revision. It should vary between Rs 15,000 and Rs 50,000 per month. No one should be paid a salary exceeding Rs 50,000. This should apply to new recruitment only. As for old employees, there should be a 10% pay cut for one and all. As far as teachers in private schools are concerned, let us not think about them. They can work on meagre salaries. It is painful to see that nobody wants to talk about these teachers.

RAJEEV BANSAL, BY MAIL

Army's heritage connect

Reference to 'Sensible to shift Army Training Command HQ' (Jan 23); most state governments are trying to remove the Army from their historical heritage connections. The govern-

ments need to read the history of their capital cities/towns, especially in the hills. These towns developed around Army cantonments. The Army did not come to occupy state assets. The same is the case for the Army Training Command shift by the Himachal Government over the years, i.e. to get hold of the golf course, the helipad and the ARTRAC heritage buildings below the mall. I have some suggestions: shift Punjab, Himachal and Haryana area back to Shimla; HQ ARTRAC shifts to Ambala as a one-to-one change; HQ ARTRAC be collocated with National Defence University at Daruhara, Gurugram, which will be in close vicinity to the Army HQs. But under no circumstances should the heritage infrastructure be lost by the Army to the state and its political masters, as has been happening in the past.

COL RC PATIAL (RETD), BY MAIL

Women jail inmates

Reference to 'Prison set-up should be gender-responsive' (Jan 23); the contents leave one deeply disturbed that our women continue to get biased treatment within or without a prison. Most women in the rural set-up live a life worse than what they are meted out in prisons. Against this backdrop, how do they get reformed, if it is a case of 'from the

frying pan into the fire'? With just 4.3 per cent of women jail inmates, it should be easy to reform them, provide we intend to. By treating them on a par with, or worse than the male inmates, there is every possibility of defiance setting in. Let us make genuine efforts in prisons to cement the belief of reform and transformation to bring down the percentage of 4.3 to almost nil.

SPS NARANG, DWARKA

The method works!

Apropos the middle 'An idea begets an idea' (Jan 24), I too tried this threatening method when a student of the cast of a play declined to participate just a few days before the final performance. I was working very hard on him to bring out the best in him, convinced that he had talent. He lost patience and was exasperated after repetitive rehearsals and took up a defiant attitude. When I threatened that I would report the matter to the principal and write in his character certificate that 'the student is not dependable', he was stunned, began to weep, got up and was ready for rehearsal. He was declared the best actor at a PU youth festival and doesn't forget to send me greetings on Teacher's Day.

CHAMAN ARORA, FEROFZPUR CITY

Direct benefit transfer no cure-all for farm crisis



DEVINDER SHARMA
FOOD & AGRICULTURE SPECIALIST

The farm package would include interest-free loans without collateral and a direct income support package of Rs 10,000 per acre per year. Among the numerous suggestions was a proposal from the State Bank of India for financial support of Rs 12,000 per family per year in two instalments, to be split for each cropping season. NITI Aayog had its own estimates.

Meanwhile, latest reports say that the government hardly has any fiscal space left for the proposed additional spending on agriculture. The easy option being contemplated by NITI Aayog, therefore, is to combine all farm subsidies, including subsidies on fertiliser, crop insurance, irrigation and interest subvention, and transfer it in cash to farmers. Since the Finance Minister had already budgeted Rs 70,100 crore for farm subsidies for the financial year 2018-19, the cash transfer of subsidies will not entail additional budgetary expenditure.

While news agencies say that the rupee and bonds rebounded after the report pegged the cost lower than the over Rs 2 lakh crore estimated initially, it is certainly not a farm package that is expected to enthuse farmers. Already reeling under terrible distress, with real farm incomes declining for four decades now, agriculture is in urgent need of immediate relief as well as a series of strong measures for course correction leading to an increase in farm incomes. But if direct benefit transfer (DBT) is all that the government has up its sleeve, there seems to be no respite in the offing for the beleaguered farming community.

Direct benefit transfer is basically a change in the mechanism to deliver subsidies. Launched on January 1, 2013, the focus of direct cash transfer is to bring in transparency and reduce pilferage in subsidy distribution. Therefore, DBT can by no means be



GOAL: The Farmers' Income Commission should be set up with the aim of ensuring ₹18,000/month income to each farming family.

The focus of direct benefit transfer is to bring in transparency and reduce pilferage in subsidy distribution. It can by no means be considered as a direct income support measure. If direct cash transfer is all that the government has up its sleeve, there seems to be no respite in sight for the farming community.

considered as a direct income support measure. It only replaces the input subsidies that the farmers are getting for crop cultivation. The cash that the farmers get eventually will be used to pay for inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides and irrigation. The cash payment is merely a replacement of the subsidy component.

There is a clear difference between DBT and direct income support that the policy planners must understand. NITI Aayog, however, is giving the illusion of income support when in reality it ends up computing the total subsidy outgo and presents it deceptively as an income support of roughly Rs 15,000 per hectare. It is worrying to see many mainline economists propagating the same line. DBT is being wrongly projected as a continuation of the Telangana model of direct income support, which has now been adopted

in divergent forms by Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Karnataka.

Although agriculture needs a holistic approach to draw it out of the crisis it has sunk into over the decades, my suggestions to the government would be to initiate the following:

(1) After the farm loan waiver, which benefits roughly 30 per cent of the farming population, the remaining should be provided with a one-time direct income support of at least Rs 50,000 per family. These are the people who had timely repaid crop loans and are also in need of immediate relief. This will also ensure that credit line in future is not squeezed. As to where the money will come from, it will come from the same kitty that the economic stimulus package of Rs 1.86 lakh crore for India Inc, continuing since 2009, came from.

(2) Set up the Farmers Income Commission with the mandate to ensure a month-

ly income of Rs 18,000 to every farming family. The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) should be renamed as Commission for Farmers Income and Welfare with the mandate to ensure a minimum monthly living income package of Rs 18,000, which should incorporate the income accruing from MSP, FPO (Farmers Producer Organisation) and other market interventions. Take the average farm income in every district, and whatever is the shortfall should be paid by income transfer directly in Jan Dhan accounts of farmers.

(3) Revisit the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, which provides for a limited outlay for agriculture and rural sectors. For instance, according to the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA), only 6.7 per cent of the Madhya Pradesh budget in 2017-18 was spent on agriculture and allied activities, whereas 85 per cent of the population is directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture. The macro-economic policies the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) lays out, too, are responsible for keeping farming impoverished. By mandating the inflation target at 4 per cent, it actually deprives farmers of a rightful income.

(4) Expand the existing network of regulated markets. Against the requirement of 42,000 APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) mandis in a 5-km radius, only about 7,600 exist at present. Also, make it obligatory for trade on eNAM (National Agriculture Market) to purchase at the MSP that is announced for 23 crops. The modal price that eNAMs provide, which is based on the average of the day's price, is nothing but a distress price actually aimed at helping in commodity trading. It is time to learn from the failure of eChaulai that also had the same objectives as eNAM.

No sooner did Finance Minister Arun Jaitley say that "agriculture needs a lot of support for the Indian economy to grow at a steady pace", hinting at the possibility of a package of proposals to be announced for the distressed agriculture sector, a wave of industry-sponsored voices across the country, including the credit rating agencies as well as the investment portfolio economists, have begun to question the need for such 'populist decisions'.

"The aggregate fiscal deficit will come in higher at 3.2 per cent in financial year 2020, which is higher than the financial year 2019 mid-year outlook forecast of 2.8 per cent," India Ratings warns. "A fresh round of economic crisis is in the making," screams a headline. Ever since the new governments in the Hindi heartland of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan announced farm loan waivers, bankers and economists have been crying foul. Some are even questioning the fiscal prudence of providing direct income support along the lines of the Rythu Bandhu scheme in Telangana that provides financial assistance to small and marginal farmers.

Before we try to analyse the question of fiscal imbalances, let's first look at what measures are likely to be announced in the forthcoming interim Budget. Quoting sources, several newspapers had earlier reported that

Moral policing shadow over dance bars



SALIL DESAI
NOVELIST AND FILMMAKER

In 1972, V Shantaram, a doyen of Indian cinema, produced and directed a brilliant, national award-winning Marathi film titled *Pinjara* (The Cage), starring Dr Sriram Lagoo as a much-respected village schoolmaster and Sandhya as a *tamasha* (a popular, bawdy form of Marathi folk theatre) dancer. The central conflict of the film arises from the schoolmaster's determination to permanently stop the dancer's troupe from performing in the village, since he believes she is corrupting the village youth. The humiliated dancer vows to ruin him by puncturing his sanctimonious morality, succeeds through seduction and sets in motion a series of events that eventually destroys them both.

One is reminded of this powerful film when contemplating the 14-year saga of dance bars in Maharashtra because *Pinjara* rivetingly frames both sides of the same argument, for and against, even though set in the rural hinterland three decades before the 'dance bar' issue erupted in Mumbai. The schoolmaster, much like the political class in the dance bar case, bats for morals, decency, the need for society to be protected from vice and lurid temptation, while the *tamasha* dancer, like the bar dancers, fights for the right to earn a livelihood by offering a form of adult entertainment, even if society at large finds it cheap and coarse. And both are right from their respective standpoints.

The Supreme Court recently paved the way for the reopening of dance



CONTROVERSIAL: Dance bars were first banned in Maharashtra in 2005.

bars in Maharashtra by setting aside several provisions of the Maharashtra Prohibition of Obscene Dance in Hotels, Restaurants and Bar Rooms and Protection of Dignity of Women (Working therein) Act, 2016, that severely restricted licensing and operation of these bars.

But nobody is quite sure whether the matter has been settled decisively or whether the Devendra Fadnis-led state government still has some moral ace up its sleeve to thwart dance bars and its patrons. Dance bars debuted in Mumbai in the early seventies, and soon became a rage among a certain type of moneyed male clientele — diamond merchants, brokers, businessmen — looking for some harmless titillation at a place where they could

drink, watch women lasciviously without inhibition and play out their *filmi* fantasies such as throwing money at dancers while striking deals or engaging in ribald conversation. By 2005, there were about 350 dance bars across Mumbai and its suburbs, many of which had gained notoriety as dens of vice because of a variety of reasons — their in-the-face salience and neighbourhood nuisance, the inevitable perception that these were fronts for prostitution, underworld connections and so on.

It was using this potent combination of reasoning — dance bars as a rendezvous for criminals and nocturnal epicentres of immoral activity which threaten Indian culture and society — that these establishments

were first banned in Maharashtra in 2005 by late RR Patil of the NCP, former Home Minister in the Congress-NCP government led by late Vilasrao Deshmukh. In one stroke, it rendered unemployed around 70,000 people working in these dance bars.

Despite the Bombay High Court striking down the ban in 2006, a judgment which the Supreme Court upheld in 2013, the newly elected BJP-Shiv Sena government brought in an ordinance in 2014 to reimpose the ban. When the apex court again struck it down in 2015 as unconstitutional, the Maharashtra Government passed the 2016 legislation which had impossibly stringent conditions such as no serving of liquor, no payment of tips to dancers, licences only to people of 'good character with no criminal antecedents', installation of CCTVs on the premises, and a minimum distance of 1 km from schools and religious institutions.

The Supreme Court's latest ruling has dismissed these provisions, but has managed a balancing act by upholding regulations such as the closing time of 11.30 pm, no showering of money on dancers and no obscenity by performers. It has also frowned upon the Maharashtra Government's 'moral policing' approach to the issue.

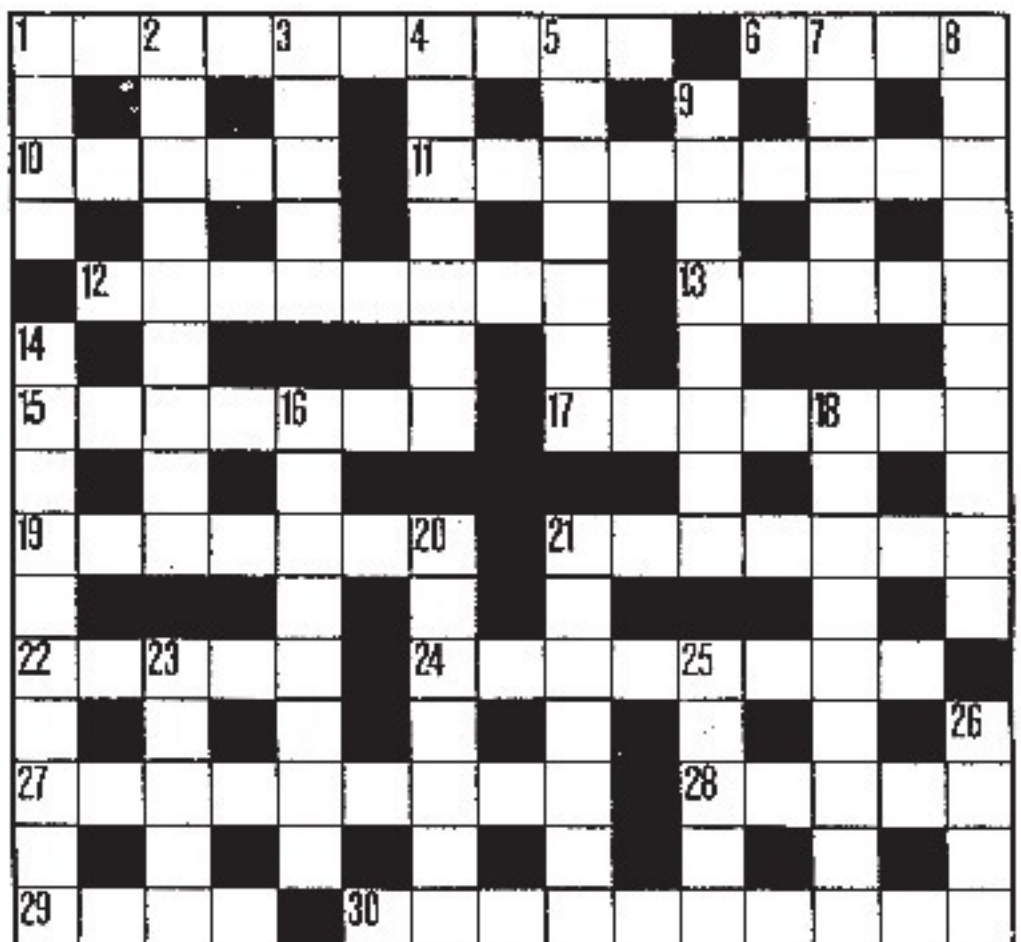
What will the government do now? More importantly, how do we as a society respond? The Supreme Court and all those hailing the judgment are right when they say moral policing is

abhorrent and people have the right to this form of legal adult entertainment, while the bar dancers and owners have the right to make a livelihood. Yet, how many of us would be willing to live in the vicinity of a dance bar? What if a dance bar were to open right across your residential complex or in your neighbourhood? Wouldn't the most liberal of us feel a trifle uneasy with the idea? Wouldn't we be concerned about the possibility of nightly nuisance, the kind of clientele visiting the place, the apprehension of embarrassing sights and sounds, and the probability that rules, regulations and timings would be easily flouted, as happens even with normal restaurants, bars and other establishments such as marriage halls in our cities?

History teaches us that it is far more sensible to regulate human pleasures within a reasonable law and order framework than forbidding them by using the bogus, shaky alibis of morals and culture. Surely, visiting a dance bar does not fall in the category of dangerous or perverse pleasures, like say drugs or extreme forms of sexual depravity. So what's the harm if someone wants to blow off steam at dance bars?

And before we again succumb to our middle-class sanctimony and outrage, let us remember that when most of us plan our European vacations, a must-see venue on every itinerary is the Lido or Moulin Rouge cabaret show in Paris, which frankly is just a sophisticated version of dance bars. Ditto belly-dance performances on Dubai tours!

QUICK CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
1 Personal outlook (10)
6 Catch sight of (4)
10 Large enough (5)
11 Illicit activity (5,4)
12 Covertly (2,6)
13 English composer, d.1934 (5)
15 A public service (7)
17 Ask advice of (7)
19 Capital of Iraq (7)
21 A kind (7)
22 Kingly (5)
24 Boldly ambitious person (2-6)
27 Superior position (9)
28 Passage between rows (5)
29 Commit murder (4)
30 Commercially successful book (4,6)
- DOWN**
1 Highest point (4)
2 About to happen (9)
3 Extremely fat (5)
4 Tidy (7)
5 A nonconformist (7)
7 Roam as a predator (5)
8 To rebuke (4,2,4)
9 Fortuitously (2,6)
14 Logger (10)
16 Idle (8)
18 Occurring everywhere (9)
20 Reduce in status (7)
21 Give impression of (7)
23 Auctioneer's hammer (5)
25 Barely detectable amount (5)
26 An equal (4) in for breath (4)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION
Across: 1 Respect, 5 Cedar, 8 Bombshell, 9 Vim, 10 Turn, 12 Goings-on, 14 Quiver, 15 Urbane, 17 Infra dig, 18 Zeus, 21 Bar, 22 At an angle, 24 Erect, 25 Expunge.
Down: 1 Rebut, 2 Sum, 3 Easy, 4 Tremor, 5 Culinary, 6 Devastate, 7 Romance, 11 Reinforce, 13 Set apart, 14 Quibble, 16 Finale, 19 Suede, 20 Gasp, 23 Gin.

SU DO KU

		8	2	1			
		9		5			7
		6	5	2	8	7	1
7		3	1	4	6	8	
4		2	1				
			7		5	6	

HARD

CALENDAR

JANUARY 25, 2019 FRIDAY

- Vikrami Samvat 2075
- Shaka Samvat 1940
- Magh Shaka 5
- Magh Parvishte 12
- Hijari 1440
- Krishan Paksh Tithi 5, up to 6.18 pm
- Ati Yoga up to 2.47 pm
- Uttaraphalguni Nakshatra 4.25 pm
- Moon in Virgo sign

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

3	8	9	4	6	2	7	5	1
6	1	5	3	8	7	9	2	4
7	2	4	9	1	5	6	3	8
2	3	8	7	4	1	5	6	9
4	9	7	6	5	8	3	1	2
5	6	1	2	3	9	4	8	7
1	4	3	8	9	6	2	7	5
8	7	6	5	2	4	1	9	3
9	5	2	1	7	3	8	4	6

FORECAST

SUNSET: FRIDAY 17:51 HRS
SUNRISE: SATURDAY 07:18 HRS

CITY	MAX	MIN		
Chandigarh	20	08		
New Delhi	18	08		
PUNJAB				
Amritsar	18	04		
Bathinda	19	03		
Jalandhar	18	04		
Ludhiana	19	05		
HARYANA				
Bhiwani	19	05		
Hisar	19	05		
Sirsa	19	04		
HIMACHAL PRADESH				
Dharamsala	13	02		
Manali	05	-02		
Shimla	10	0		
JAMMU & KASHMIR				
Jammu	19	05		
Leh	-01	-10		
Srinagar	05	-01		
UTTARAKHAND				
Dehradun	18	06		
Mussoorie	09	-01		

TEMPERATURE IN °C