

# Opinion

SUNDAY, JANUARY 27, 2019

IN TAMILNADU the festival is called *Bhogi*. In other parts of India it is called *Lohri*.

The harvest is imminent, it is time to honour the bulls and the cows and the ploughs, and it is time to celebrate with the farm hands. Before we celebrate the new dawn, we must throw out the old — used clothes, broken farm implements and useless knick-knacks that accumulated during the year gone by. We make a symbolic bonfire of them on *Bhogi* day. The next day is *Pongal* or *Sankranti*, the harvest festival. The *jallikattu* (taming the bull) is part of the celebrations in Tamil Nadu.

"Ring out the old, ring in the new" captures the spirit of harvest time. On the eve of the Lok Sabha elections, I asked myself what can be thrown out before we welcome the next government. I was able to list a few.

## Muscular Approach

Firstly, we must abandon the muscular approach to complex problems that cannot be resolved through a show of the might of the State. In Jammu and Kashmir, the muscular approach has acquired an ominous dimension: it is muscular, militaristic and majoritarian, alienating a whole population and driving young men to embrace militancy. A fine young man, topper of the IAS batch of 2010, resigned from the service in frustration and despair. In the Northeastern states, the muscular approach accelerated the preparation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and left out, initially, 40,07,707 persons who found themselves 'stateless'. The muscular approach is now forcing down the Citizenship Amendment Bill on the ethnic population because of misplaced concern for 'persecuted minorities' of other countries, notably Bangladesh. The muscular approach must go.

Secondly, we must repeal or re-enact laws that are unjust. Top of the list is Section 124A of the IPC that defines 'sedition'. It must go lock, stock and barrel. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act that allows the use of force to 'the point of causing death' must be repealed or amended extensively. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) laws must be completely redesigned. If any one claims to have understood the *text* of the Central GST Act (in what is passed off as legal English language), that person deserves to be admitted to the Bar without the need to pass a law examination! The anti-profiteering provision in GST laws must go. The Angel tax on start-ups must go.

## Discriminating Against Poor

Thirdly, poorly designed and inherently discriminatory (against the poor) schemes must be scrapped and replaced by schemes that will deliver the intended outcomes. There is a long list: MUDRA loans, *Swachh Bharat* (Clean India) that builds toilets that are unused or unusable, *Fasal Bima Yojana* (Crop Insurance Scheme) that robs farmers and enriches the insurance companies, *Kaushal Vikas Yojana* (Skill Development Programme) that is able to place only 28% of the trainees, and *Ayushman Bharat* (Health for All) that is underfunded and excludes the poor

## ACROSS THE AISLE

P Chidambaram



# Ring out the old, ring in the new



Indian paramilitary soldiers stand guard in a closed market area during a strike on Republic Day in Srinagar on Saturday

who have no access to private hospitals. You can add to the list based on your experience of the schemes that concern you. The grave flaws in these schemes must go.

Fourthly, the *Aadhaar* excesses must be reversed. The *Aadhaar* Act authorised the government to require *Aadhaar* only for transfer of 'subsidies, benefits and services'. The government exceeded its authority, insisted on *Aadhaar* for many other activities and collected huge personal data. The illegally acquired data must go. How that can be done is a question that must be answered by the next government.

## EVM vs Ballot

Finally, there are concerned citizens who want Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) to go and to return to the ballot

paper system. On the other hand, the Election Commission and the government swear by EVMs. I supported EVMs because of the ease of casting valid votes, but I was troubled by the numerous instances of malfunctioning EVMs. That led me to plead for VVPATs. Now, the counts of one EVM and one VVPAT (in each Assembly constituency) are matched. A constituency has, on average, 250-300 polling stations. Hence, the chances of discovery of mischief in the electronic units is less than 1%. I have, therefore, pleaded that the count of every EVM must be matched with the physical count of the VVPAT slips. The argument that counting — and declaration of results — will be delayed is a weak argument. Nothing will be lost if the results are announced three or four hours later if the gain is greater trust in the process of electronic voting.

I was confident that my — and others' — suggestion will be a satisfactory answer to the demand for returning to ballot papers, but my enthusiasm has been dampened by Mr G Sampath's brilliantly-argued piece in a newspaper (*The Hindu*, January 22, 2019). According to the author, the paper ballot system alone will satisfy the three tests of visual confirmation of the vote, secret ballot and visible counting. EVM-VVPAT system fails on all three tests as established by a judgment of the German Constitutional Court. It is difficult to disagree with the author or the German Court. So, while I cannot say EVMs must go, we should demand match of the counts in all polling stations.

If we can get rid of the dross, perhaps we can drink the water from the pool.

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## INSIDE TRACK

COOMI KAPOOR

## Bigger share of pie?

Priyanka Gandhi's entry into politics is not just a challenge for the BJP, it is also a message to the anti-BJP Opposition that the Grand Old Party cannot be taken for granted. While preaching unity, *gathbandhan* votaries such as the SP, BSP, TDP and TMC have kept the Congress out of an alliance in their respective states. Others like the DMK, RJD, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha may offer the Congress less than 10 seats in state-specific tie-ups. In such a situation, the Congress would be a serious contender in only some 260 of the 543 parliamentary seats. It would have to win every second seat out of the 260 if it hopes to reach a respectable figure of around 125 seats, and be in a commanding position in an anti-BJP coalition government. Whether with Priyanka's charismatic presence the Congress can ask for a bigger slice of the pie will be known in the coming weeks.

## Priyanka factor

Those who once dismissed the Congress as a spent force in UP now acknowledge that with Priyanka's presence the party has a fighting chance in constituencies such as Kanpur, Jhansi, Saharanpur, Ghaziabad, Padrauna, Lucknow, Barabanki, Varanasi, Allahabad and Farrukhabad, apart from the family pocket boroughs of Amethi and Rae Bareilly. Priyanka's cousin Varun Gandhi is unlikely to stand from nearby Sultanpur and Narendra Modi may perforce have to spend more time campaigning in Varanasi. But the Congress could also upset the calculations of the BSP-SP alliance, splitting the anti-BJP vote. Some suspect that the SP knew in advance of Priyanka's entry and could eventually reach a tacit understanding over a few urban seats. Though Mayawati is reportedly fuming over the Priyanka announcement, Congresspersons still nurse a hope that the *gathbandhan* will offer the party a more respectable deal.

## Stars struck off

The four filmstar MPs in the Trinamool Congress — Sandhya Roy, Tapas Paul, Satabdi Roy and Moon Moon Sen — are apprehensive that Mamata Banerjee will drop them in the coming polls. Tapas Paul is definitely out of the race because of his alleged links to the Rose Valley chit fund case while the performance of the three others as parliamentarians has reportedly been found wanting. Mamata is not meeting MPs these days, so it makes more sense for the three to plead their case with Abhishek Banerjee,

Mamata's nephew, now unquestionably her heir apparent. The powerful nephew's photo even figured in all party posters for the recent TMC rally in Kolkata.

## Strange happenings

It is increasingly difficult for the Congress in Karnataka to maintain the façade that the BJP is to blame for the murky shenanigans in the party. Last Sunday night, a brawl broke out among Congress MLAs lodged at Eagleton Resorts near Bengaluru and a seriously injured Anand Singh had to be hospitalised. Congress minister DK Shivakumar, who made arrangements for the MLAs' stay, claimed at first that Singh had suffered a heart attack. But the cover-up came to light when Anand Singh's wife took one look at her husband's cracked skull and bruised face and announced that she was going to police, regardless of the Congress denials. An FIR of attempted murder has now been registered against JN Ganesh, the Congress MLA accused of the assault who was later suspended by an embarrassed party. Accounts differ as to whether the weapon was a flower pot, a stick or a whiskey bottle. The brawl reportedly broke out when Ganesh, one of the MLAs who was temporarily missing from Karnataka, accused Anand Singh of being a double-crosser and an agent of Shivakumar. Suspicion remains that former chief minister Siddaramaiah and dislodged minister Ramesh Jarkiholi encouraged the MLAs to do the disappearing act in a bid to bring down the Kumaraswamy government before the Lok Sabha polls. Meanwhile, CM HD Kumaraswamy has not made any comment on the strange goings-on in the Congress.

## Hands-on minister

When Hardeep Puri took over as MoS housing and urban development in September 2017, there was scepticism as to whether a former diplomat could handle a portfolio totally outside his field of expertise. But the figures speak for themselves. In his first 15 months in office, the ministry's project completions and investments have shot up dramatically. The number of projects for Smart Cities has gone up from 109 to 1,409. There were only three states free of open defecation in the first three years of the Modi government; there are now 19. The number of tap connections has gone up from 1.22 lakh to 47.37 lakh. House occupation by beneficiaries was 5,23,395 till September 2017, it is now 8,68,177. In the same period, the central assistance released to the states for housing has gone up from ₹11,654 crore to ₹23,874 crore.

# It's all in your hands

## Don't get conned by modern fundamentals of golf, advises 92-year-old golf instructor Bob Toski

## OVER THE TOP

Meraj Shah



I CAN'T THINK of a better way to introduce 92-year-old Bob Toski to those who may not have heard of him than by quoting Jerry Tarde, editor of *Golf Digest* (US), who in a testimonial on Toski's website says, "...you 'invented' the Golf instruction school concept, that you were the last great player (in the footsteps of Tommy Armour, Paul Runyan and Claude Harmon) to dedicate himself to teaching golf. That you were the first of the modern tour guru, that you are to the teaching profession what Palmer is to the pro tour, that you wrote the best book I've ever read on golf instruction..."

To me, as someone who's worked with a golf magazine for a few years, the last bit of that tribute is especially impressive: golf publications sell primarily on account of the amateur golfer's insatiable appetite for instruction, and Tarde, as long-time editor, has

probably read more instruction than all the pros on the PGA Tour put together.

The reason I'm putting this out is simply to submit that when it comes to the golf swing, Toski knows what he's talking about. Probably the finest golfer in his 90s, Toski won four tournaments on the PGA Tour in 1945 — the only one to win during a season in which Byron Nelson won a record 14 events. He was one of the top players in the game in the 1950s; was considered one of the PGA Tour's longest hitters; and had his big moment when he won the World Championship of Golf in 1954. That win brought with it an astonishing sum of \$100,000 (at a time when most winners' cheques were around \$5,000) and took the edge off Toski's impetus to ply his trade on tour. He quit the tour in his 30s and by 1960 was well on his way to a life in golf instruction.

More than half a century later, in the anteroom of the Delhi Golf Club, Toski parried questions from a young writer from a golf magazine. The great man, infinitely more interested in the peacock strutting about on the patio than listening to the writer's theories on the golf swing, finally gave up trying to dodge the subject. Heaving a sigh (like someone about to part with a precious



Tiger Woods' classic-looking golf swing is the one to imitate

piece of information), he turned to me and said, "Move that bin to the other end", pointing towards the far side of the room (keeping the bird still in view). After I complied, he handed me a crumpled napkin. "If you can chuck that into

the bin in the next 30 seconds, I'll tell you the only secret of the golf swing."

Surprisingly, for an all-round maldroit, I managed to accomplish that task in the very first attempt. "Great! Now, do you know how you did that?"

Toski asked. "Did you think about the line of your arm, the angle of your wrist, when and how you hinged it, or how you released the napkin?" I admitted that I hadn't thought about it.

"That's it son," he whispered. "The first and last thing I'm going to tell you about the golf swing is that it's in you. Your body knows how to accomplish something that involves motor skills and as long as you're focused on what you're trying to do, your body will know what to do."

I admit I felt a bit disappointed at the time; 10 years back, I was completely immersed in golf swing technique and Toski's tip sounded ridiculously simplistic. He probably knew that's what I would think (which explains his initial reluctance). Therein lies the entire dichotomy of golf instruction: the reason why it doesn't work on most occasions (and I can see the legion of coaches who've tried to 'fix' my swing over the years roll their eyes) is because most golfers think they know better. Who was it who said, "Truth comes knocking at your door, and you tell it to get lost because you're looking for the truth." Unfortunately, and this is true even more so for our hapless lot of weekend golfers — we must pass through the fire and refuse second-hand wisdom.

And so it is that more than a decade after Toski literally handed me the key, I'm beginning to use it. Not just me;

this piece is inspired by a resurgence of instruction that advocates the use of 'feel' and natural body movements in the golf swing that are created by the hands. Coaches like Shawn Clement and Brandel Chamblee are having great success teaching a golf swing that harks back more to the freewheeling actions of Jack Nicklaus, Tom Kite and Tom Watson. And players like Bubba Watson, Louis Oosthuizen and Jordan Spieth are showing just how well it can work. Even Tiger Woods has gone back to an old-style golf swing that involves lateral moves to protect his fragile back and knees.

Toski is often accused of not subscribing to the 'big muscle' method of the modern golf swing, but the litany of injuries that so many pros who use that has triggered concern. Contrary to what you'd expect, most great players in the last century had relatively long careers: Watson famously nearly won the Open when he turned 60.

And without exception, the most creative players have always used their hands in the golf swing; the late Seve Ballesteros famously remarked, "My hands are my computer." Toski says we just need to reboot that computer, trust it to run. "Stay in the big picture, and don't get lost in instruction trying to teach you what you already know. But you've got to trust that ability."

A golfer, Meraj Shah also writes about the game



INDO-PAK TREATY

Pak team to visit river basin in J&K next week

The tour is an obligation imposed on both countries by the Indus Waters Treaty 1960 signed between India & Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi, January 26

A PAKISTANI DELEGATION will visit the Chenab river basin in Jammu and Kashmir for inspection from January 28 to 31, as mandated under the Indus Waters Treaty, sources said.



Under the Treaty, waters flowing in Sutlej, Beas and Ravi have been allotted to India, while Chenab, Jhelum and Indus waters have been allotted to Pakistan

a total of 118 such tours on both the sides have been undertaken by the commission. The last tours of the commission in Pakistan and India were held in July 2013 and September 2014 respectively.

This tour will be followed by a visit of Indian Indus Commissioner to Pakistan at a mutually convenient date decided between the two commissioners, the official added.

I-T dept attaches shares held by VG Siddhartha, Coffee Day in Mindtree

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi, January 26

THE INCOME TAX (I-T) department has attached some of the shares held by VG Siddhartha and Coffee Day Enterprises in Mindtree, a move that may halt them from selling their stake in the IT firm.



The step by the I-T department has been taken to recover a tax demand from the two, Mindtree said in a regulatory filing without disclosing further details.

The development comes at a time when Siddhartha, who owns about 21% stake in Mindtree through various entities, is said to be in advanced discussions to sell his shares in Mindtree.

Mindtree said in a stock exchange filing Saturday that the I-T department in Bengaluru has issued a "provisional attachment u/s 281B of Income Tax or prohibitory orders Act, 1961 for tax demand likely to be raised by the I-T Department on...shareholders of the company - Coffee Day Enterprises and VG Siddhartha."

on when they want to buy, how much they want to buy, when they want to sell etc. It is outside our purview in that sense," Ravanan, who is also the CEO and managing director, had said.

"We can make sure that things go right at Mindtree, we take care of people, customers and continue to deliver industry leading growth, so the stake sale is not something that we have a view on or would like to make a comment," he had added.

Shares of Mindtree closed at ₹885.95 against Friday on the BSE.

Rescuers find second body from mine tragedy in the northeast

REUTERS New Delhi, January 26

RESCUERS HAVE LOCATED a second body from the site of a "rat-hole" mining accident in India's northeastern state of Meghalaya, a spokesperson for the country's navy said on Saturday, two days after recovering the first body.

Fifteen miners were trapped on December 13 when their illegal mine was flooded. A court stipulated ban on unregulated mining in the state in 2014 has unfortunately been unable to stop such activities.

Thousands of workers in Meghalaya, including children, have been killed in the so-called rat-hole mines. The miners have to crawl into narrow shafts on bamboo ladders to dig for low-quality coal in these kinds of mines.

"Indian navy diving team finds second body 280 feet inside the rat-hole mine," a navy spokesperson said in a tweet Saturday.

There was no immediate indication on when the body will be brought to the surface, said a rescue official, who did not want to be named.

Given the circumstances, families and relatives of the trapped miners have given up hope that any of them would be found alive.

India has been critical of the Council's efforts to extend its reach beyond what is allocated in the UN Charter by redefining other issues when it struggles to fulfil its primary functions.

"Can the needs of climate justice be served by shifting climate law-making from the inclusive UN Framework Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC) to decision-making by a structurally unrepresentative institution with an exclusionary approach decided in secretive deliberations?" he asked.

"The contestation is about what manner, which aspects and which global governance mechanisms are best suited to tackle these phenomena," he said.

Global issues notwithstanding, 2019 to be growth year for Indian IT: Gurnani

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Davos, January 26

THE INDIAN IT sector is poised to grow in the current year, even as it faces global headwinds from Brexit, said CP Gurnani, managing director and chief executive officer of Tech Mahindra.

The Tech Mahindra chief also flagged currency risks, but noted that the domestic IT sector will benefit from investment in digital technology.

"Uncertainty and lack of clarity around the US shutdown and Brexit are risks for the IT industry. However, the IT sector is poised for future growth, with technology being the key enabler for Globalisation 4.0," added Gurnani on the sidelines of World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Meanwhile, the US President Donald Trump on Friday backed a deal to temporarily end the record-breaking government shutdown despite getting no funding for his controversial plan to build a wall along the US-Mexico border.

The deal resolved the crippling 35-day closure but the fight over the proposed border wall construction is still on.

"While the US accounts for 60% of Indian IT spend, for Tech Mahindra nearly 45-46% business comes from the US. We also have other currencies to battle. Every currency has its own equation with the US currency and hence, it all balances out in the end. The impact of the current geopolitical issues, if any, is likely to be two to three quarters away. I would wait and watch before drawing any conclusion," Gurnani told PTI.



File photo of CP Gurnani

Britain is set to exit the 28-member EU on March 29. But with just over two months to go, Britain is still undecided on a road map, which has led to uncertainties for businesses and the global economy as a whole.

Gurnani, who served as the chairman of IT industry body NASSCOM in 2016-17, said the Indian IT sector is betting big on Globalisation 4.0 where global trade will be shaped mainly by the use of technology.

"Despite global slowdown, India has witnessed robust growth and is poised to become the fifth largest economy in the world. Together with Asia, India has a critical role to play in Globalisation 4.0, and it is important for us to sustain the momentum," he said.

As per Gartner estimates,

India's IT spending will grow by 6.7% in 2019 to \$89 billion. Increased spending on three segments—devices, enterprise software and IT services—will give a major boost to IT spending levels in India in 2019, Gartner had said.

"2019 will be the year of growth as the IT industry invests aggressively in digital. The future is now, and it is all about being agile and being able to deliver better customer and citizen services. The economy is being driven by millennials that has led to a huge demand in data and data services. Using data for personalisation and customisation of services will hold the key," Gurnani said.

He also said that Tech Mahindra is betting big on emerging technologies like 5G, blockchain, artificial intelligence, deep machine learning and quantum computing and will continue to focus on strategic acquisitions to scale faster.

"The future of innovation depends on the successful rollout and implementation of 5G. Networks are at the heart of accelerating digital transformation and a fully functional 5G network will deliver unprecedented productivity gains. After 18 months, 5G will take the centre stage in the tech world and all our conversations will be about digital and 5G," Gurnani said.

India calls for cautionary approach to link climate change to security

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA United Nations, January 26

INDIA HAS CALLED for adopting a cautionary approach on linking climate change to security and giving the UN Security Council the right to take action to address it, saying overly militarised solutions to problems which require non-military responses bring the "wrong actors" to the table.

A "mere decision of the Council" to takeover enforcement of climate change action would disrupt the 2105 Paris Agreement and multilateral efforts to find solutions, India's Permanent Representative Syed Akbaruddin told the Security Council on Friday.

He was speaking at the UN Security Council's open debate on "Addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters and security."

"Climate Change is an unprecedented challenge to global civilisation," he said. Akbaruddin said India believed that climate action should be a priority area for international cooperation.

"Global institutions should be responsive to felt human needs, including disaster preparedness, as well as resilience and response in the face of disasters. Such phenomena tend to threaten human well-being.

"Also, in some cases, such as rising sea levels, the integrity of States is at stake, even in the absence of violence and conflict," he said.

Akbaruddin said while climate risks are evident in some specific cases, research findings on generalised linkages between climate disasters and security remain ambiguous.

"The nexus between climate change and security is complex, contingent, and still contested. Hence, we as practitioners wanting to address such matters through international cooperation, face dilemmas," he said.

India has been critical of the Council's efforts to extend its reach beyond what is allocated in the UN Charter by redefining other issues when it struggles to fulfil its primary functions.

"Can the needs of climate justice be served by shifting climate law-making from the inclusive UN Framework Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC) to decision-making by a structurally unrepresentative institution with an exclusionary approach decided in secretive deliberations?" he asked.

"The contestation is about what manner, which aspects and which global governance mechanisms are best suited to tackle these phenomena," he said.

₹50,000 crore highway projects to decongest Delhi, says Gadkari

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi, January 26

THE GOVERNMENT WILL take up ₹50,000-crore projects to decongest Delhi that is battling with the twin problems of air and water pollution, union minister Nitin Gadkari said Saturday. Road transport and highways minister Gadkari was addressing an event after laying the foundation stone for a ₹2,820-crore highway corridor project that will link Akshardham to the Eastern Peripheral Expressway (EPE) junction on Baghpat road.

"Delhi is facing problem of air and water pollution. There are frequent traffic jams. We have taken the decision to start work on ₹50,000 crore highway projects to decongest it," Gadkari said. He said that the foundation stone for Dwarka Expressway, to be built at a cost of ₹10,000 crore will be laid next week and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been asked to set out time for it. The minister announced that the work on Delhi-Meerut Expressway will be completed by March, and April onward, people will be able to reach Meerut from Delhi in 40 minutes instead of the current 3.5 hours.

The high-speed signal-free 31.3-km corridor from Akshardham to Saharanpur bypass, for which foundation stone was laid on Saturday, is expected to contribute to decongestion and considerable



Nitin Gadkari in Delhi

reduction in pollution levels in Delhi-NCR.

The six-lane access controlled corridor will connect Akshardham in east Delhi to the Eastern Peripheral Expressway junction on Baghpat Road. The alignment of the road will be

from the Akshardham-Geeta Colony-Shastri Park-Khanoli Khas-Delhi/UP border-Mazandola-EPE intersection.

It will be developed in two packages—first a 14.75 km stretch from Akshardham to Delhi/UP border and the other 16.57 km stretch from Delhi/UP border to EPE intersection. There will be a 19-km elevated section.

"The estimated cost of the project is ₹2,820 crore. The project includes construction of 3+3 lane service roads on either side of the highway, eight new underpasses, seven ramps connecting major roads, 15 major junctions, 34 minor junctions, and over-bridges at Delhi-Shahdara, New Delhi-Anand Vihar railway lines and Dilshad Garden-ISBT metro line," the government had said earlier.

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