

TELLING NUMBERS

4,705 Indians in Middle East jails, half of them in Saudi Arabia

A TOTAL of 4,705 Indian nationals are in prisons in the Gulf countries, the Ministry of External Affairs said in Lok Sabha during the recent Budget Session. Saudi Arabia, with 2,224, accounts for nearly half these prisoners, followed by the United Arab Emirates with 1,606, which is more than one-third of the 4,705. Replying to a question by Congress member M K Raghavan, Minister of State for External Affairs V K Singh said: "Apart from extending them all possible consular services, Indian Missions and Posts abroad also assist in extending legal aid wherever needed. Missions and Posts also maintain a local panel of lawyers where Indian community is in sizeable numbers. Legal assistance is also provided to Indian nationals abroad including those in prison on a means tested basis through the Indian Community Welfare Fund. No fee is charged by our Missions and Posts abroad in such cases," Singh said.

HOW MANY JAILED WHERE

Saudi Arabia	2,224
United Arab Emirates	1,606
Kuwait	483
Qatar	212
Bahrain	121
Oman	59

Source: Ministry of External Affairs reply in Lok Sabha

amnesty scheme in the UAE for overstaying foreigners to regularise their visa status between August 1 and December 31, 2018. "During this period, a total of 6,823 Indian citizens sought consular help from the Indian Mission, of which 1,949 were from Telangana, 1,064 from Andhra Pradesh and remaining from other parts of India. Consulate issued 4,034 Emergency Certificates free of cost for their return to India and 2,802 short-validity passports for those who wanted to rectify their status and continue to remain in UAE. Consulate also provided free air tickets to 230 Indians for their return to India during the amnesty scheme," Singh said.

THIS WORD MEANS

GREAT WHITE SHARK

Iconic predator of the seas. Now, its decoded genetic structure throws up clues for fighting cancer



AS A predator, the Great White Shark is iconic, due in no small measure to the 1975 film *Jaws*. A major study has now decoded its entire genome and found that it could hold new clues to the fight against cancer. The study revealed the genome's huge size (1½ times the size of the human genome) and also a plethora of genetic changes that could be behind the long, evolutionary success of large sharks. The researchers found indications of molecular adaptation in numerous genes with important roles in maintaining genome stability. This is a mechanism that counteracts the accumulation of damage to the DNA of a species, thereby preserving the integrity of the genome. The opposite phenomenon, genome instability, which results from accumulated DNA damage, is known to predispose humans to numerous cancers and age-related diseases.

The discovery was significant because theoretically, the risk of developing cancer should increase with both the number of cells (large bodies) and an organism's lifespan. However, contrary to expectations, very large animals do not get cancer more often than humans, suggesting that they have evolved superior cancer-protective abilities.

"There's still tons to be learned from these evolutionary marvels, including information that will potentially be useful to fight cancer and age-related diseases, and improve wound healing treatments in humans, as we uncover how these animals do it," Nova Southeastern University quoted researcher Mahmood Shivji as saying. The findings are reported in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, USA*.

Source: Nova Southeastern University

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Why is China shielding Jaish?

In blocking global action against Masood Azhar, Beijing wants to protect its 'all weather' ally in South Asia and its business interests in CPEC. It also wants to keep India under pressure, and make a point to the US.

APURVA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 19

SOON AFTER a suicide bomber killed 40 CRPF personnel in Jammu and Kashmir on February 14, the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad claimed responsibility. The terrorist organisation has carried out multiple attacks on India over the last nearly two decades, but its leader, Maulana Masood Azhar, eludes international sanctions.

The reason is China. Beijing has refused to lift its "technical hold" on a proposal to declare Azhar a global terrorist under UN Security Council Resolution 1267, which prescribes a sanctions regime against designated terrorists and terrorist groups. India's proposal, put forward in February 2016 after the Pathankot attack, to designate Azhar as a global terrorist under the 1267 regime has been blocked four times by China, most recently in January 2017.

Why is China so keen to shield Azhar, blocking a global consensus at the behest of Pakistan? Its standard line is that it wants to "uphold the authority and validity of the 1267 Committee". But its real reasons are far less lofty — and range from protecting its "all weather" ally in South Asia to its business interests in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and from making things difficult for its Asian rival India to making a point to western powers led by the United States.

Where does the CPEC come in?

This is the brightest jewel in Chinese President Xi Jinping's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which aims to connect Asia, Europe and Africa by building and upgrading road, rail, and sea infra on a massive scale. CPEC runs across the length of Pakistan, linking Kashgar in China's Xinjiang province to the Gwadar deep-sea port on the Arabian Sea near Pakistan's border with Iran. Chinese firms have invested close to \$40 billion in around 45 CPEC projects, about half of which are nearing completion. China is determined to protect this gigantic investment of money, personnel and time. Access to the sea through Gwadar will remove the need for it to take the long route west through the Straits of Malacca and around India, and dramatically increase its proximity to the oil shipping lanes through the Strait of Hormuz.

Good relations with Pakistan, and international protection for ISI proxies like Jaish



President Xi Jinping with PM Imran Khan in Beijing last November. Reuters. Below: Maulana Masood Azhar, leader of the Jaish-e-Mohammad. Archive

provide China with insurance against terrorist attacks on CPEC infrastructure and the thousands of Chinese working on them. The project has been targeted by Baloch separatists as well as the Pakistani Taliban, who have claimed to be protesting China's treatment of its Muslim Uyghur minority in eastern Xinjiang. Pakistan has attempted to reassure Beijing on the security of CPEC. In 2015, it established a 20,000-personnel Special Security Division drawn from the Army and paramilitary forces, and headed by a Major General-rank officer, exclusively to secure CPEC in addition to the local police.

But if security has been provided, why does China still not budge on Azhar?

China has had a tacit understanding with the Afghan Taliban from the days of their predecessors in the 1970s, said Prof Srikanth Kondapalli of the Centre for East Asian Studies at JNU's School of International Studies. The Chinese military had trained the *mujahideen* against the Soviets, and China subsequently made a deal with the Taliban (many of whom, including Mullah Omar, were former *mujahideen* commanders) that "as long as they don't support the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, they won't harm them". This deal, Prof Kondapalli said, is still on: "Don't train the Uyghurs and we won't interfere."

Nearly 10 years ago, a top leader of the



Islamist Uyghur East Turkestan Islamic Movement who was allegedly involved in a bombing in Xinjiang was tracked to Pakistan, which handed him over to Beijing. "Compare this with Pakistan's response to India's demands that it hand over terrorists wanted in India," Prof Kondapalli said. "Broadly this is the situation."

On Azhar, China insists there isn't enough evidence to designate him a "global terrorist", though the rest of the P5 believes otherwise. "China takes a different position because of the larger understanding it has with such organisations... as long as you don't disturb me, we will not penalise you. If you are expanding your international base, it must not be at my expense. That's China's attitude," he said.

Also, China enjoys overwhelming popularity on the street in Pakistan — surveys show 88% Pakistanis view China favourably, compared with only 33% Indians. It is not in Beijing's interest to disappoint this constituency by giving in to India's repeated demands to list Azhar. China, experts said, remains conscious that relations between Pakistan and the US had been strongly impacted by the killings, first by al-Qaeda of American-Israeli journalist Daniel Pearl in 2002 and then, by US special forces of Osama bin Laden in 2011.

Does China's stand have to do with India's emergence as a competitor?

Chhattisgarh PDS case: what it is, why now

DIPANKAR GHOSE
RAIPUR, FEBRUARY 19

A SPECIAL investigating team (SIT) of Chhattisgarh Police recently registered a case against two senior IPS officers in an alleged scam that took place in the Public Distribution System (PDS) when the previous government was in power. What is this scam, and why is it politically significant?

The allegation

In 2015, the then BJP government faced allegations of corruption in the PDS, which until then had been seen as a model for other states. The allegations were that kickbacks were paid by rice millers and agents to allow the distribution of substandard rice through the state's PDS. The agency in charge of distribution is Nagrik Apoorvi Nigam (NAN).

Two govts, two probes

With the Opposition raising an uproar,

the then BJP government started an investigation by the Anti-Corruption Bureau and the Economic Offences Wing. The ACB raided NAN offices, recovered cash and documents, and eventually charged several officials including two senior IAS officers, Alok Shukla and Anil Tuteja. The recoveries reportedly included a "diary" with details of kickbacks paid, and references to various individuals including, the Congress alleged, aides of then CM Raman Singh including "CM Madam". The ACB clarified that these references were not to family or aides of the then CM but to officials; the Congress has maintained that the ACB probe was a sham and protected political beneficiaries of what they have alleged was a Rs-36,000-crore scam.

In their campaign for the Assembly elections, Congress president Rahul Gandhi and now Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel raised the issue of the scam. Within days of taking oath, Baghel announced an SIT. The Congress said the SIT would look at political beneficiaries. Many questions have been raised on the

Congress government choice for IG, ACB and EOW — S R P Kalluri, who is leading the SIT. During the BJP's tenure, Kalluri was accused by human rights activists, tribals in Bastar and even Congress leaders including Baghel, of human rights excesses and intimidation. The BJP, meanwhile, has questioned why Baghel is using multiple SITs for the "politics" of revenge.

The new case

The SIT has registered a case against former Additional DG of the ACB and EOW, Mukesh Gupta, and SP of ACB and EOW Rajnesh Singh. This has caused a flutter for two reasons — the seniority of Gupta, a DG-ranked IPS officer, and the fact that he had headed the probe into the alleged NAN scam until Kalluri was given charge. Gupta and Singh, now suspended, have been accused of criminal conspiracy, forgery, and illegal phone-tapping. SIT officers allege that Gupta and Singh fiddled with government records to legitimise phone-tapping, a charge Gupta has denied. R K Dubey, a DSP with the EOW, was named in the FIR as having written

a statement claiming that he changed records under threat and instruction from Gupta and Singh. A day after the FIR was registered, however, Dubey approached the special NAN court in Raipur and the Bilaspur High Court and wrote an affidavit to the DGP claiming that he was being forced by the SIT to give false statements against Gupta and Singh, and that his life was in danger. The Bilaspur High Court said it could not intervene in the case but added the state should not pressure any citizen to give a statement in a particular way.

More politics ahead

In the Lok Sabha elections, the Congress effort will be to present a narrative that the previous BJP government had been corrupt. When in Opposition, Baghel had often attacked Gupta, calling him close to the BJP regime, and alleging he was working to protect then CM Singh and his aides. Now, the appointment of Kalluri and the rapid pace of investigations are being widely viewed as moves undertaken with a political objective.

Despite their continuous differences, why can Shiv Sena and BJP not stay apart in Maharashtra?

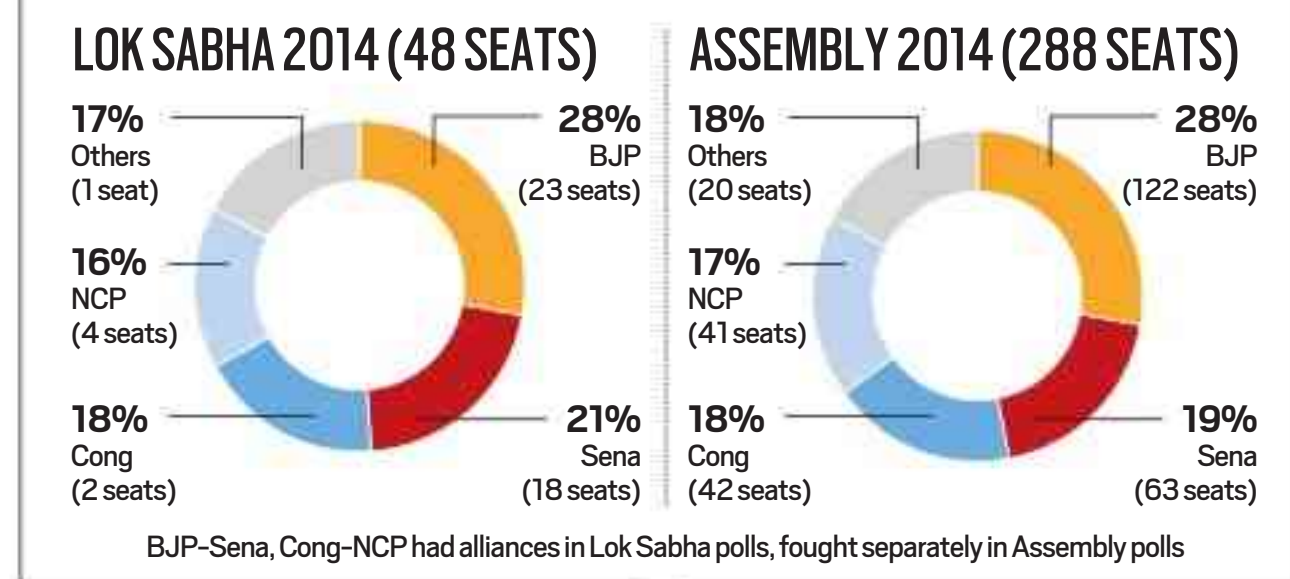
Pressure to pool votes, amid national and local concerns

48 Lok Sabha seats make Maharashtra second only to Uttar Pradesh in terms of size. In the last Assembly elections, contesting separately had left neither BJP nor Shiv Sena with a majority. Both are also wary of rival alliances in Maharashtra and elsewhere.

the state's 48 seats.

How strongly have the two parties performed in recent elections?

In 2014, the BJP and the Sena won 41 Lok Sabha seats between them (another NDA partner won a 42nd), which was miles ahead of the Congress-NCP's 6 seats. However, the Congress (18%) and the NCP (16%) added up to a vote share of 34%, which was more than the individual shares of either the BJP (28%) or the Sena (21%). It underlined the importance of the BJP and the Sena pooling their votes. In the Assembly elections that followed, the individual vote shares changed very marginally (see graph). With the BJP and the Sena having contested without an alliance, neither party had a majority on its own and had to come together again to form a government. In Maharashtra where coalition politics has dominated since 1995, no party can rely on a triangular or four-sided contest. In a series of meetings held between Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and Sena



president Uddhav Thackeray, the central issue discussed was how to ensure that their votes remain undivided.

What, then, was coming between them?

When Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray declared two years ago that they would go solo, he was positioning the Sena as an aggressive

Opposition party in the state, and hoping to occupy the space held by Congress-NCP. The Sena had to look for Opposition space after the BJP had emerged the single largest party in Maharashtra. Later, the Sena had to back-track because of pressure from most of its 18 Lok Sabha members and 63 MLAs, who were keen on an alliance with the BJP. Had they

contested separately, the Sena would have faced a challenge in keeping its own house in order and holding back possible defections.

Does this coming together have any significance beyond Maharashtra?

Maharashtra's 48 Lok Sabha seats, second only to UP's 80, make the state crucial to the BJP's efforts at returning to power. With the BSP and the Samajwadi Party having joined hands in UP, it challenges the NDA's 73 seats won in 2014. Besides, various regional forces have rallied around the Congress.

What is the shape of the arrangement?

The Lok Sabha seat-sharing formula more or less conforms to previously stated positions, except that the BJP has agreed to concede the Palghar Lok Sabha seat to the Sena, giving it 23 and keeping 25. The Assembly shares, on the other hand, reflect more concessions. Although the BJP won 122 seats in 2014 to the Sena's 63, it has agreed on an equal share after setting aside a few seats for smaller allies.

Now that they are together, what next?

The immediate challenge for both parties is to convince their cadre about the need for unity. The Sena is likely to tell *sainiks* about important posts it is likely to get in the power structure, and that it has forced the BJP to agree to various demands, including stopping of work at the refinery in Ratnagiri. Sena poll managers agree, however, that convincing voters would be more challenging, given the Sena's previous statements against the BJP-led government at the Centre. Now, the Sena has cited the Pulwama terror attack as the reason to rejoin hands with the BJP. Sena chief Thackeray and BJP president Amit Shah have declared that the alliance is in the larger interest of the nation and Hindutva.

NEXT
#19 What national and regional factors are at play in Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in Haryana?

DECISION 2019
THE QUESTIONS THAT MATTER

SHUBHANGI KHAPRE & VISHWAS WAGHMODE
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 19

ON MONDAY, the Shiv Sena and the BJP announced an alliance for elections to the Lok Sabha and the Maharashtra Assembly. The BJP will contest 25 Lok Sabha seats and the Sena 23 — Maharashtra has 48 — followed by both parties contesting an equal number of seats in the 288-member Assembly.

Given the differences between them, what brings the BJP and the Shiv Sena together again?

Both the BJP and the Shiv Sena have stated that a triangular fight would not have been good for either of them, especially when the Congress and the NCP have announced they will be alliance in the Lok Sabha elections. The Congress-NCP alliance hopes to make deeper inroads into rural Maharashtra, which accounts for about half

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Soldiering on, after Pulwama

We are acutely aware of what is at stake in Kashmir. And that there is no easy way out



ABHINAV KUMAR

TRUTH ABOUT TERROR

Pak PM must know he has no plausible deniability on terror. Saudi Crown Prince cannot turn a blind eye to the problem

PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER Imran Khan is either very naive or plain disingenuous. In his first response to India holding Pakistan responsible for the February 14 Kashmir attack, he demanded "actionable evidence" and asked what his country had to gain from a terrorist attack in India from its territory. He should know that Pakistan does not have credible deniability on this attack. The Jaish-e-Mohammad, which took responsibility minutes after the devastating suicide bombing, is based in Pakistan's Punjab province. To say that the JeM was banned in 2002 is not good enough. After the 2016 Pathankot attack, also the JeM's handiwork, the Pakistan government took the Jaish leader, Masood Azhar, into protective custody. PM Khan appeared reasonable when he said he was prepared to discuss terrorism with India. But if he really understands that his country stands to lose from terrorism, the first thing to do is to crack down on the JeM, Lashkar-e-Toiba, and other such groups flourishing in his country. Shortage of evidence has never been the problem for Pakistan in tracing the perpetrators of terrorist attacks in India. In the 26/11 case, it had its own investigation, but still did nothing. The problem is that Pakistan believes using terrorists as proxies is the most effective way to achieve its regional strategic objectives.

The arrival of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia at this moment is an opportunity that India must use well. India's relations with Saudi Arabia are wide-ranging, from trade and investment to defence and security. In 2010, the two countries enhanced their ties to the level of a "strategic partnership". The Islamic kingdom is India's fourth largest trading partner. Bilateral trade is in the region of \$28 billion. India imports 19 per cent of its oil requirement from Saudi Arabia. As the country with the third largest Muslim population, there is a religious-cultural aspect to India's ties with the custodian of Islam's holiest sites. The Indian workforce in Saudi Arabia tops 3 million. Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to India will no doubt seek to build on this already strong relationship.

What India needs to press home to the Saudi Prince is that his praise for Pakistan's efforts against terrorism on his visit to Islamabad earlier was tone deaf. It is no secret that Islamist extremism was exported and funded from Saudi Arabia. The JeM, a Sunni Deobandi group, has drawn both money and ideology from al Qaeda and Taliban. If MBS, as he is known, is truly the reformer he claims to be, India must hold him to his agenda. The entire region is a powder keg because of the terrorist groups that operate from Pakistan, launching attacks in Iran one day and India the next. And with the ISI created Taliban hoping to regain power in Afghanistan in a negotiated deal with the US, the situation in South Asia is extremely fragile. If MBS wants India-Pakistan tensions to de-escalate, as he declared in Islamabad, he must start by advising his Pakistani hosts to take the steps the world has been asking them to.

BJP AND FRIENDS

Party bends to regional partners' demands in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, underlines importance of alliances ahead of polls

SHIV SENA AND BJP have apparently repaired their frayed relations and arrived at a pact in Maharashtra for the general and assembly elections. The BJP has pulled off a deal in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry as well, where it will contest in alliance with the AIADMK and PMK. In these states, the BJP appears to have gone out of its way to accommodate the partner's demands, a pattern that began when it negotiated an arrangement with the JD(U) in Bihar. The BJP leadership seems to have looked at the big picture while conceding ground to the Sena, JD(U), AIADMK and PMK.

The Sena-BJP deal in Maharashtra should help consolidate the Hindutva vote against a potential Congress-NCP alliance. This alliance — first forged in 1989 — had won 42 of 48 parliamentary seats in the state in 2014. However, the two parties moved apart ahead of the assembly elections later that year and contested separately, dividing an overlapping political constituency. The Congress and the NCP fought independently, splitting the anti-BJP vote, and helped the BJP win a simple majority in the state assembly for the first time. Now, the prospect of a Congress-NCP alliance would have prodded the BJP and the Sena to come together. However, the Sena leadership may have some explaining to do since the party has been vicious in its attacks on the BJP. Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray, for instance, repeated Congress president Rahul Gandhi's "chowkidar chor hai" jibe at PM Modi, and pulled up the government on issues ranging from demonetisation to Pakistan policy. Sena, clearly, had no option but to swallow its own words since its plank of nativism has lost its sheen and its Hindu nationalist agenda is subsumed in the BJP's Hindutva project. Tamil Nadu saw multi-cornered contests in 2014 and the AIADMK, which projected its chief, J Jayalalitha, as the PM face, swept the polls. Now, a weakened AIADMK will fight the bulk of the seats while projecting the leadership of Modi, unusual for a party that claims the legacy of the Dravidian Movement.

The firming up of the NDA in these states, on terms and conditions apparently set by the allies, also reveals the uncertainty ahead of the election. The BJP seems unwilling to risk its chances in the wake of agrarian unrest, lack of jobs and the prospect of an Opposition getting, at the very least, its arithmetic right.

AFTER THE KISS

The sailor in Eisenstaedt's iconic post-WWII photo has passed on. The demons his generation exorcised threaten to return

WHY BECAUSE a soldier and a nurse, the fighter and the healer, are the ready and recognisable symbol of the horrors of war? Or, perhaps that dark colour of the American sailor's uniform, and her white outfit make for an elegant visual? Alfred Eisenstaedt's iconic photograph of a kiss between strangers in the heart of Times Square in New York celebrating the Allied victory over Japan in World War II, was an image that typified the sense of hope after the destruction, the ecstasy at the possibility of a new world. Like with all powerful images, the mystery of its resonance can never quite be solved. But the optimism the picture symbolised began steadily diminishing, almost as soon as it was taken.

George Mendonsa, the sailor, died earlier this week at 95, and Greta Friedman, the nurse, had passed away in 2016. Eisenstaedt never revealed the names of his subjects, and it was only in the 1960s that the pair realised that their fleeting kiss was an indelible record of history. Friedman, in fact, has said that "it wasn't much of a kiss" and it has been pointed out that the image could very well be a violation of her consent. Politically, the Cold War and the threat of extinction, the seeds of which were sown by the victory over Japan, began to loom large from the 1950s itself. And, many would argue, the world hasn't become much better.

What was the unknown sailor celebrating? The end of a horrific war, but also the defeat of a jingoistic, exclusive nationalism that thrived on the vilification of the other and the militarisation of society. As the generation that witnessed that time passes on, their experiences seem distant: But from Europe to North America and Asia and Latin America, the chants of an aggressive nationalism ring forth once again. The after-life of the image of the kiss has been more ambiguous than could have been imagined in 1945.

ANOTHER BLOODY STRIKE in Kashmir has left the nation in shock and disbelief. The 40 CRPF bravehearts who were killed in a suicide car bomb attack near Lethpura, Pulwama, on February 14, came from all corners of the country. As the nation mourned, in a predictable display of defiance, a section of Kashmiri society celebrated this strike on social media. A nasty backlash followed, that does no credit to the national cause in the Valley. Especially because patriotic Kashmiris serving in all our security forces are at the frontline in this conflict.

Across the country, the reactions from the usual suspects have been all too predictable. The jingoists go on beating their war drums, the peaceniks carry on smoking their peace pipes, and analysts educate us about the lack of a proper strategy in Kashmir. Everyone has their favourite scapegoat to blame for the mess.

Many point a finger at the current dispensation at the Centre for its headline approach, that has supposedly worsened the situation in Kashmir. Others bemoan the lack of a coherent policy in Kashmir, as if it was some kind of a magic formula which once adopted, would solve everything. Lack of dialogue is often blamed for escalating violence. This is hogwash in a scenario when violence is the primary negotiating tactic of our enemy. Policies are not formed in a vacuum. They are, of course, based on strategic objectives, but they are also shaped by capacities and constraints. The current course in Kashmir is to no one's satisfaction but it is imposed on us by a combination of all of the above. To paraphrase Drucker, in Kashmir, reality eats policy for breakfast.

For the security forces operating in the Valley, most of this talk is plain noise. Fact is, we are too quick to claim improvement by clutching at straws. So a decline in violence and increase in voter participation will be trumpeted as a huge achievement. And conversely, a spectacular terror strike such as the incident in Pulwama, or an increase in casualties over the previous years, is enough to bring out the prophets of doom and gloom. The truth, as always, lies somewhere in between.

In the aftermath of Pulwama, our task is cut out. Our first challenge is to go after the perpetrators and fast-track their path to paradise. As I write this, those efforts are well under way. Our second challenge is to ensure that the threat of future such attacks is minimised. One would want to paint a realistic picture on this count. With the best technology, equipment and intelligence at their disposal, US-led forces in Afghanistan and Iraq have not been able to eliminate the threat of car bombs. So let's not promise something to ourselves as a nation that is impossible to deliver. We can be better prepared, that is all.

There are challenges in Kashmir that are surmountable. And there are challenges in Kashmir that we have no answer to. Knowing which is which would be a useful exercise to weigh our options post Pulwama.

Let's look at the negatives first. It is not possible to dissuade the separatists/jihadis from the path of violence. It is not possible to coercively or diplomatically change the mindset of the generals and mullahs in Pakistan who provide them with basic support. It is not possible to seal the border completely to prevent crossing of militants and weapons. It is not possible to ensure that "fidayeen" attacks and the resultant loss of life can be prevented in totality. Anyone who promises any of these as an achievable policy objective, has a tenuous grip on reality.

Conversely, we must be clear about what is achievable in Kashmir. Preserving the demographic profile and cultural distinctiveness of the Valley is no longer in our national interest. Article 370 was a goodwill gesture by Jawaharlal Nehru that no longer serves its original purpose of making Kashmiris embrace the accession to India. If we want to show national resolve, repealing it would be exhibit A. It has long outlived its utility, if it had any to begin with. All it has done is create a limitless sense of entitlement in the Valley. The second thing that is entirely achievable is to continuously dehyphenate Ladakh and Jammu from Kashmir Valley. For too long, the Valley has been given the privilege of speaking for the entire state. It doesn't, and it is high time to show the mirror to the separatists about the culturally parochial and geographically limited nature of the Azadi movement. The right to self-determination cannot begin at the Zojila and end at the Banihal.

The third thing is to ensure that at the tactical level the security forces are given the best logistical support possible. In practical terms, it means bulletproofing and IED proofing all the vehicles used by the security forces in the Valley. It also means reimposing restrictions on civilian vehicles during convoy movement that had been in place earlier but were done away with in a

goodwill gesture. And it will also require a more robust airlift capacity between Jammu and Srinagar for all the CAPFs. The fourth is to step up our efforts at deradicalisation and engage more meaningfully with Kashmiri youth.

In the aftermath of Pulwama, our task is cut out. Our first challenge is to go after the perpetrators. As I write this, those efforts are well under way. Our second challenge is to ensure that the threat of such attacks in the future is minimised. One would want to paint a realistic picture on this count. With the best technology, equipment and intelligence at their disposal, US-led forces in Afghanistan and Iraq have not been able to eliminate the threat of car bombs. So let's not promise something to ourselves as a nation that is impossible to deliver. We can be better prepared, that is all.

Our third challenge is to ensure that the culture of restraint and proportionate response by our men on the ground does not break down. Despite propaganda to the contrary, there is no comparison between the savagery of the separatists and the professionalism of our security forces. All of us serving in the Valley are seeing right now, but our rage must be channelised productively and intelligently. This is a tragic setback, no doubt. But we have to learn its lessons and soldier on.

Despite the best efforts of the separatists and their sympathisers in our civil society to paint us as such, those of us who serve the nation in the Valley are not mindless blood-thirsty monsters. We are all proud professionals with a life beyond the uniform too. We are acutely aware of what is at stake in Kashmir. And that there is no easy way out. This attack must be seen for what it is, a cowardly act of desperation, designed to show that the jihad is alive and kicking. It makes not the slightest difference to our national resolve. We mourn our dead, console their families and gear up for the struggle ahead. Any number of Pulwama-style attacks will not change that.

The writer is an IPS officer serving in Kashmir. Views expressed are personal



SUSHMITA DEV

RUSE OF GENDER JUSTICE

Triple talaq legislation does not have anything to do with women's empowerment

ALL GOVERNMENT POLICIES must be judged keeping two things in mind: The circumstances at the time of introducing a legislation and the actual impact of a law. The Supreme Court (SC) judgment of 1985 that allowed Shah Bano to claim maintenance under the Code of Criminal Procedure was applauded as a progressive judgment. I cannot disagree with the merits of that judgment but the controversial law — subsequently the Muslim Women (Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986 that was drafted by the Rajiv Gandhi government — came under severe attack at the time. It was seen as an act to appease the conservative Muslim and against the empowerment of Muslim women.

Be that as it may, what critics of the 1986 Act must in all humility realise now is how this law actually impacted women over the last three decades. The 1986 Act actually defines the rights of a Muslim woman on divorce. Section 3 says that she will be entitled to a fair and reasonable amount for maintenance. She will also be entitled to the property she receives from her relatives and the relatives of her husband. If her husband fails to pay her, she can claim her maintenance from the people who stand to inherit from her, if they fail, she can claim maintenance from her family and if they fail as well, she can claim maintenance from the state's wakf board. The most empowering provision is that she must be paid within the iddat period — three months.

In 2017, the SC deemed instant triple talaq to be void in the 'Shayara Bano' case. The government's ordinance, however, criminalises it and the justification is it will deter Muslim men. No where does the judgment mention a need for criminalisation. The ordinance assumes that it will invoke fear in the husband's mind. But is there anything that stops him from deserting her?

Danial Latifi, Shah Bano's lawyer, amongst others, challenged the 1986 Act in the SC as unconstitutional. In 2001, Court upheld the Act and went on to state that it captured the spirit of the 1985 judgment. The 2001 verdict further clarified that she will get her settlement for her entire life as a lump sum within the iddat period. Lawyer and activist Flavia Agnes has noted that this law has given Muslim women maintenance to the extent of making men in the community unhappy. Courts have been flooded with appeals by husbands challenging orders of maintenance under the Act. Compare the Rs 179 received by Shah Bano to the women who got lakhs under the 1986 Act.

In 2017, the SC deemed instant triple talaq to be void in the Shayara Bano case. The government's ordinance, however, criminalises it and the justification is it will deter Muslim men. No where does the judgment mention a need for criminalisation. The ordinance assumes that it will invoke fear in the husband's mind. But is there anything that stops him from deserting her? Anyone who has dealt with matrimonial litigation or faced matrimonial disharmony will vouch for the fact that it is economic disempowerment that puts a woman in an unequal position. The government could have levied a fine for practising instant triple talaq.

There is no law that can force a married couple to stay married, all that lawmakers can do is codify the rights and liabilities of

the parties on separation. The ordinance keeps the couple married and gives the woman nothing but a right to prosecute her husband. In comparison to the fair and reasonable amount sanctioned by the 1986 Act, the triple talaq bill said she must be given a subsistence allowance — the ordinance does not define this.

The Act of 1986 struck a balance between the rights of a community and of its women. Those who today applaud Narendra Modi's ordinance as a tool of empowerment of Muslim women must not forget the context. With general elections a month away, the prime minister desperately needs to appear inclusive to please the neutral voter, who feels letdown by incidents of cow vigilantism, mob lynching and the assassination of liberal writers.

Shayara Bano has the advantage of nullifying her talaq, so the woman remains legally married to her husband (who she did not want to return to). But she has no financial support. The ordinance empowers her to file a criminal case with no real relief and makes things more acrimonious. Maybe that's why under all other personal laws, the remedy for desertion lies in the restitution of conjugal rights which gives the couple the time to reconcile, not criminalisation.

Therefore, I see no justification for criminalising triple talaq.

The writer is a Congress Lok Sabha MP



FEBRUARY 20, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

CHINA'S INCURSION INTO Vietnam has halted on February 19, about five to 10 km inside Vietnam, with Hanoi claiming that elements of 13 Chinese battalions have suffered 3,500 troops killed and 80 tanks have been destroyed. Western intelligence sources said in Bangkok that the intention of the Chinese invasion was to "teach Vietnam a lesson" and that elements of some Chinese units were possibly withdrawing to China.

INDIA'S STAND PRIME MINISTER MORARJI Desai reviewed the Vietnamese situation with the Minister of External Affairs Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who cut

short his visit to China by a day after Chinese forces attacked Vietnam. The foreign secretary, Jagat Mehta, was also present at these discussions. Desai has already come out with a forthright statement calling for the immediate withdrawal of Chinese forces from Vietnam as a first step towards restoration of peace in Southeast Asia. And to make India's stand clear, a special paragraph was inserted into the President's address expressing India's grave concern on the Sino-Indian-Vietnamese border, and the President too asked for the immediate withdrawal of Chinese troops.

UP DRAMA THE MEETING OF the Janata Legislature Party

scheduled for February 21 in Lucknow to elect a new leader for Uttar Pradesh has been postponed. The party's Central Parliamentary Board at its meeting tomorrow morning will fix a fresh date for the election of the leader, the Janata Party General Secretary Rama Krishna Hegde, said. The postponement has been necessitated to give the central leadership and various factions in the states more time to reach a consensus over the successor to UP Chief Minister Ram Naresh Yadav, who has lost the confidence of the party. Both the outgoing chief minister and the pro-changers had approached the high command to defer the election of the leader by a week or so.

13 THE IDEAS PAGE

Star-studded CVs and moral numbness

The prevailing wisdom is that well-trained professionals will contribute towards social welfare and environmental sustainability. That's not the way it works



AVNEE DHAMIJA AND NAVDEEP MATHUR

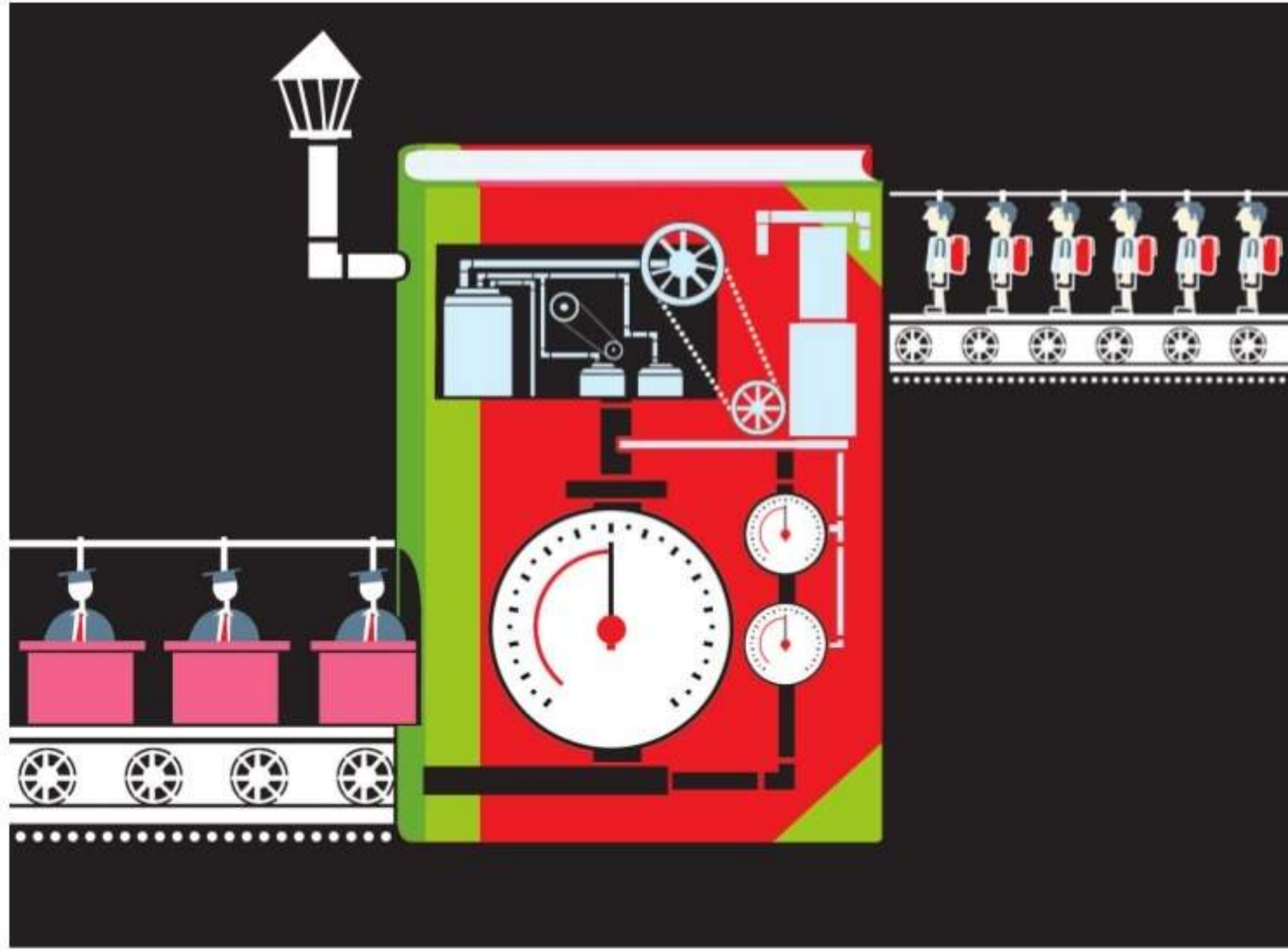
IF ONE DOES a simple web search for corporate fraud, financial scandals, aggressive marketing of toxic products or other forms of corporate malfeasance, we get a list of some of the biggest names in the industry. Be it oil companies, financial institutes, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, auditing firms, consulting giants, or fast food companies, hardly any big name seems to be giving this party a miss.

We are as concerned with the scale of these malpractices as we are with the real-life impact of these activities on society. For the impact of fraud and wilful disasters of the oil companies, we find permanent ecological damage, destruction of biodiversity, loss of habitat and poorer health quality of all human and other life. Fatal additions, commercial malnutrition and over-medication from the pharma and fast food industries. The loss of health and healthcare, loss of employment or inhumane working conditions for others. The ravages of natural resource and human exploitation, war and violent conflict are known to be intricately linked with profiteering armaments' manufacturers and global finance. Connecting the dots is not that difficult. What amazes us is that these are the very industries and big-name companies that hire the best talent usually from the country's most elite institutions.

Paradoxically, the common perception in such institutions is rather different. Here, the prevailing wisdom is that well-trained professionals will contribute towards social welfare and environmental sustainability. This seems so remarkably at odds with the situation we have spent out above. However, if we see such elite training grounds a little differently, we feel that such a paradox will no longer remain a mystery.

The answer, we feel, lies in the social norms and cultures of disciplining towards which educational spaces are geared today. It is in these spaces that potentially smart individuals are transformed into compliant "professionals", who focus merely on executing instructions in the most efficient manner. The incentive structure (status, prestige and pay packages associated with the firms who value these individuals as potential employees) is designed in such a way that the individuals lose interest in questioning the status quo, in seeking explanations, or in doing things differently — they look for standardisation, seek comfort in given structures, and limit themselves to task-orientation. The pedagogy in these "schools" is designed in such a way that the students learn to follow a solution-first approach — they are trained to solve the given problems in an instantaneous manner. In a quest to be the first one, they hardly question what they're being asked to do, but quickly rush into "solving" problems, irrespective of the larger implications of their actions. A classroom exercise in one of our courses can illustrate this clearly.

In this activity, the students were asked to form a group of two or three members to discuss the following: "Identify a product or service that you would 'sell' with all your energy, talent, and creative resources (with an intent to expose, attract, have people try, consume and ultimately seek their addiction), but would use that same level of energy in



Suvajit Dey

order to insulate and protect your family members, and ensure that they don't consume the product or service in question."

After some discussion, the groups identified certain products that were either proven to be harmful or were perceived to be potentially harmful — dating apps for married people, violent and sexualised video games, pornography, euthanasia, prostitution, junk food, soft drinks, energy drinks, muscle building supplements, alcohol, cigarettes, and many more.

From the perspective of a participating student, one of us noted: "As soon as the question was presented to the class, my group members and I started thinking of products that were harmful, addictive or illegal. We felt that it had to be a 'bad' product because we were asked to keep our families away from it. We started thinking of cigarettes, marijuana, and dating apps for married people. There was a lot of enthusiasm and we started discussing how we would position the product in the market in order to achieve maximum sales, but at the same time, we were sure that we would shield our family members from the product. Till this point, there was absolutely no feeling of immorality or wrongdoing. We felt we were only trying to solve a problem. After much discussion, one of the class members mentioned that such a product should not exist — if all of us start marketing aggressively, then eventually our families would also be exposed to the harmful products. At this point, the entire course of the discussion changed from marketing strategies to business ethics. I felt uneasy and disturbed as I realised that I was so sincere and diligent about solving the given problem that I had completely lost out on my ethical lens. I felt guilty and embarrassed — that it took a great deal of facilitation to make me and other class members realise that we were actively pushing for something that we ourselves considered harmful or immoral. I was also a little bewildered as I am not someone who would place business gains or my loyalty towards my em-

ployer above my conscience or morality. However, that's exactly what I did, albeit, subconsciously."

It should have been obvious that the exercise presented an ethical dilemma, and could not be tackled like a calculus problem. But as it actually transpired, the students believed that there was nothing right or wrong in the solutions proposed by them — it was not about a moral choice, and it was purely a business strategy. More so, the students displayed an abstract, but remarkably strong, sense of employer attachment. They felt that their foremost identity as an employee should be to take care of their employer's interest.

It should have been obvious that the exercise presented an ethical dilemma, and could not be tackled like a calculus problem. But as it actually transpired, the students believed that there was nothing right or wrong in the solutions proposed by them — it was not about a moral choice, and it was purely a business strategy. More so, the students displayed an abstract, but remarkably strong, sense of employer attachment. They felt that their foremost identity as an employee should be to take care of their employer's interest.

We wonder if there is a way to "un-school" well-intentioned individuals, to enable them to discern the real-world implications of their powerpoints and excels — to nurture individuals to think critically, to raise questions, and to seek explanations, as opposed to the current culture of training individuals into diligent and obedient employees. However, this begs an important question. Would instilling moral criticality through pedagogical interventions (such as the classroom activity) be in line with creating "employable" resources, or would that be in contradiction to the interests of corporations that recruit well-trained disciplined individuals who strive endlessly to "strategically" maximise their employers' profits? We're not sure where we can get the answer from, but the bigger worry is that not many seem to be asking this question.

Dhamija was an MBA student, batch of 2016, at IIM-Ahmedabad and is an entrepreneur. Mathur is faculty member, public systems group, IIM-A

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"We hope the US delegation and US elite will understand that bad relations hurt both sides, and China will never be the only victim."

— GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

A promissory note

Opposition's Common Minimum Programme needs honesty, realistic implementation, not bravado



UDAYAN MUKHERJEE

SOMETHING IMPORTANT HAPPENED at Sharad Pawar's residence last week. Not that the Opposition leaders met again — there have been plenty of these recently. But, there was talk of a Common Minimum Programme (CMP) — something a lot of citizens, particularly those disillusioned with the performance of the current NDA government, have been waiting for. A vision that all these various state parties, who are vying to present an alternative to the electorate, can agree and sign-off on. On this may hinge the nation's choice of plumping for a federal style coalition government or handing Narendra Modi another term to prove himself.

A lot of voters believe, correctly, that Modi is betraying tell-tale signs of desperation. The recent reservation for economically weaker sections and the handouts in the "interim" budget all point to that. Desperation is usually punished by voters. Opposition parties have to be careful not to fall into this desperation trap themselves. In that, Rahul Gandhi's recent reckless announcements about farm loan waivers and basic income schemes should be viewed with caution. It can easily be interpreted as a race to the bottom. What voters need is a calm, well-thought out programme which is less a sheet full of unattainable promises, like they witnessed in 2014, and more of an action plan meant to address the country's deep structural faultlines. We don't need another promise of "acche din" but a lay-out of the road that can get us somewhere close. The Common Minimum Programme needs honesty, not bravado.

The vision plan has to start with jobs, as this has been Modi's biggest failure. The CMP should avoid the mistake of putting out an annual job target like Modi's 20 million jobs a year, which he fell woefully short of. Rather, the nation needs a plan. As an example, the CMP could point to the pathetic 1.6 per cent growth in exports over the NDA's term and make a promise to focus on creating a manufacturing base for exports which can potentially create millions of jobs, as witnessed in other Asian economies like Bangladesh and Vietnam. Like we have a fiscal responsibility plan which pressurises the government to stick to deficit targets, the CMP can impose a target of bringing down unemployment from the current four-decade high of 6.1 per cent to 3 per cent during its tenure.

Intrinsically linked to the vision on job creation, is an overhaul of India's education system, which has to find place in the CMP. Our education system, primary or graduate level, is not producing employable workers and that is at the root of the jobs crisis. The CMP could announce the setting up of an education reform task force, helmed by credible technocrats with a firm implementation deadline. Budget outlays

for education need to be augmented significantly.

A comprehensive farm sector policy should be the other pillar of any CMP. And this cannot hinge on promises of farm loan waivers, however politically expedient they may be. India's problem of falling farm prices and yields is structural and has been left unaddressed during the Modi tenure. The CMP can hold out a promise of "temporary" income support relief but introduce a longer-term plan to address the problem. Else it would be walking into the same trap that the NDA fell into. And if the opposition parties have set their hearts on a Universal Basic Income plan, then the CMP must include a promise to have such a plan vetted by the best economic minds on the subject before implementation. This is too important a subject to be left to the whims of politicians and bureaucrats.

The CMP also needs to promise a comprehensive relook at our reservation policy. Without resorting to a reckless "everyone will be included" kind of promise, a progressive, equitable and inclusive reservation policy should feature prominently in the list of objectives. In addressing all this, the Opposition should not forget to dispel any notion that corporate India will get the wrong end of the stick — that will be a colossal mistake. In an attempt to prove that it isn't a "suit boot ki sarkar", the Opposition has to be careful not to go to the other extreme. A word of assurance in the CMP about a stable tax regime and fiscal rectitude will allay such fears.

In addressing all these issues which are economic at core, the CMP cannot lose sight of its key social objectives, as this is what will separate it from Modi's tenure at the helm. A clear, unequivocal promise has to be made of zero tolerance to any kind of communal divisiveness. Violence against any minority — Dalit, Christian or Muslim — will be dealt with severely by the state. Hindus need not fear, they can hardly ever be discriminated against in India, but the government will not turn a blind eye to injustices — such as cow vigilantism — meted out using religion as a pretext. Every leader of the Opposition has to endorse this promise. India's social fabric does need some stitching.

Finally, the electorate has to be assured that this will be a stable government. This is the mother of all manifesto promises as it is precisely this fear that keeps voters away from coalition formations. All prominent leaders have to take a pledge that they will not use their position in the government as a bargaining chip and hold it to ransom with threats of pulling the coalition down, on any disagreement. There will always be differences, but they will never be bigger than the interest of the nation. If the CMP cannot agree on this, there is no deal. Modi will use his powers of oration to seed doubts about stability and snatch away another term. If the Opposition wants Modi out, then they will have to tolerate each other, and the CMP has to demonstrate that.

This is a watershed election for India. A lot of Indians want to desperately believe that there is another alternative. The CMP will be the litmus test.

Mukherjee is consulting editor, CNBC and author of the novel Dark Circles

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FOR THE FARMER

THIS REFERS TO the article 'A race to atone for neglect of the farmer' (IE, February 19). It is true that the token sops and schemes being promised for the agricultural sector by various parties before the general election are not going to tackle its longstanding problems. The politically ambitious BJP, however, must not hesitate to implement sure-fire measures that bring about structural reforms and make this sector distress-free.

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

LG VERSUS CM

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Who rules?' (IE, February 19). The role and power of lieutenant governors (LGs) in union territories should be redefined. The confrontation between chief ministers and LGs often turn into long-drawn judicial battles, as has happened in Delhi. The Puducherry governor, Kiran Bedi, is certainly wrong in blocking the state government's proposals on social welfare schemes.

Sanjay Chawla, Amritsar

BRING PAK TO BOOK

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'After Pulwama' (IE, February 18). There is no single response which can pressure Pakistan to end its proxy war. India will have to target Pakistan on multiple fronts, especially on the international relations' front. India can negotiate with China, since India has significant trade relations with it. Saudi Arabia and the UAE too have shown an inclination to improve relations with India in recent years.

Nishant Parashar, Chandigarh

VIEW FROM THE RIGHT

SELECTIVE OUTRAGE

THE EDITORIAL IN *Organiser* says that in Bharat, even murders and lynchings are termed as "secular" and "communal". It adds that there is a stark contrast in the media coverage and political responses between the unfortunate killings of Akhlaq of Dadri in Uttar Pradesh and Ramalingam of Thirubuvanani in Tamil Nadu. "What has been popularly discussed as 'Dadri lynching' and later popularised as 'cow lynching' by the narrative builders and members of the Aard Wapasi gang was a 'communal' murder. Look at the headlines in some of the reports. 'Indian man lynched over beef rumours', 'Dadri lynching' and 'India's cow vigilantes'. The 'akhlaq lynching' is reminded systematically under some or the other pretext (sic). Mind you, this was all happening under the Samajwadi Party regime and not the 'Yogi Raj', the editorial claims. The same narrative was peddled in the Junaid murder case and Pehlu Khan's killing, the editorial notes. It adds that in the case of Ramalingam's lynching, the same media houses have gone silent. Ramalingam was a

"Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) activist, he was killed in front of his son. The FIR clearly identifies the motive 'to warn others' who oppose the religious conversion by extremists and still the secular silence continues. These double standards and selective outrage are the root cause of communal tensions," the editorial points out. It adds that the killing of Akhlaq was used to create an anti-Bharat narrative while the killing of Ramalingam would strengthen the anti-Bharat forces.

A report in *Panchjanya* notes that political parties in the state were biased in the Ramalingam case. Initially, only the BJP condemned the incident. DMK chief M K Stalin condemned the killing after two days on Twitter.

TWITTER'S BIASES

AN ARTICLE IN *Organiser* says that sinister attempts are being made to subvert the democratic and political process and create a biased narrative to influence the 2019 elections through popular social media platforms, especially Twitter, which has been hijacked by neo-Left intellectuals, media, pseudo-seculars and jihadis. The article says that free and fair means of communication are *sine qua non* of democracy and if the means of communication are biased, exclude people on social, religious, political, ideological, or any other ground, democracy gets vitiated. "This is made even worse if the means of communi-

cation are owned by a foreign company," the article contends. It adds that Twitter has a systematic bias against users who are nationalist in their thoughts and action. It notes that the Parliamentary Committee on Information Technology issued summons to Twitter officials on February 5.

FIVE THREATS

AN ARTICLE IN *Organiser* talks of a warning which it wants India to pay heed to. Outside powers could try to change public opinion and generate mistrust among the common people during this year's general election. The article adds that there are many ways in which nations have accomplished regime changes abroad — bags of cash have been delivered, scandalous stories leaked to foreign newspapers, hundreds of social media accounts supporting radical groups have been created, and millions of social media users have been contacted. While talking about the forthcoming general election, the article says that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emerged as a powerful world leader. "His unique efforts in outreach to small, medium and powerful nations, including many neighbours, has unsettled many regional and world powers who are having less say in the affairs of such countries. It is due to these powers who don't like his rise, many security experts have opined that there may be attempts or interventions to stop his electoral prospects in

2019, (sic)" article reads. It contends that five forces could try to sabotage the electoral process: China, Pakistan, the Church, those influencing the Muslim electorate and social media companies.

DYNASTY AGAIN

THE EDITORIAL IN *Panchjanya* says that the rise of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in the Congress after the appointment of Rahul Gandhi as the party's president cannot be called a healthy practice in a democracy. It points out that there is no scope for the youth in the Congress party, which promotes the next generation of a particular family. The editorial points out that the Congress has become a party that breaks the trust of people to benefit one family. "For example, there are allegations against some ex-chief ministers of Congress-ruled states that they ignored the laws and rules to arrange lands for the companies associated with the 'family'." It notes that the Congress was in a shock after the road-show of Rahul and Priyanka because the "lucky" bus arranged from Punjab could not create magic for the brother-sister duo. "It was because of the media management of the party that no camera moved from 'beautiful faces waving hands' to the roads to tell the real number of people there," the editorial points out.

Compiled by Lalmani Verma