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THIS WORD MEANS

MAGNETIC NORTH POLE

How it is different from geographic north, why it is drifting fast towards Russia, what that could lead to

SOWMIYA ASHOK & AMITABH SINHA
NEW DELHI, PUNE, FEBRUARY 5

SINCE MONDAY, news publications across the world have been reporting that the magnetic north pole is drifting fast from the Canadian Arctic and towards Russia. What is this phenomenon about?

Two north poles

The Earth has two pairs of north and south poles. The geographic poles are defined by the axis around which the planet rotates, and are fixed. The Earth behaves like a giant bar magnet — well, almost — and this behaviour defines its magnetic north and south poles, which are not static. A compass points towards magnetic north.

The Earth's magnetic behaviour is far more complex than that of a simple bar magnet. Its north poles and south poles move around sometimes erratically. Over large periods of time, they change their locations significantly, sometimes even interchanging their positions. The last time it so happened, with the magnetic north pole getting somewhere near where the magnetic south pole currently is, was about 780,000 years ago. But this time period is not fixed either.

The origin of Earth's magnetism lies in its outer core, a more than 2,000-km layer of liquid iron and some other metals like nickel, that surrounds the central core, or the innermost part. This liquid iron is in constant motion due to Earth's rotation and various other reasons, and this motion produces a magnetic field.

The magnetic north pole, or south pole, does not coincide with the geographical north or south pole. Currently, the magnetic north pole is located somewhere over northern Canada, a fact discovered in 1831 by Sir James Clark Ross. Since then the magnetic north pole has been moving across the Canadian Arctic towards Russia, and has moved hundreds of miles over the last several decades.

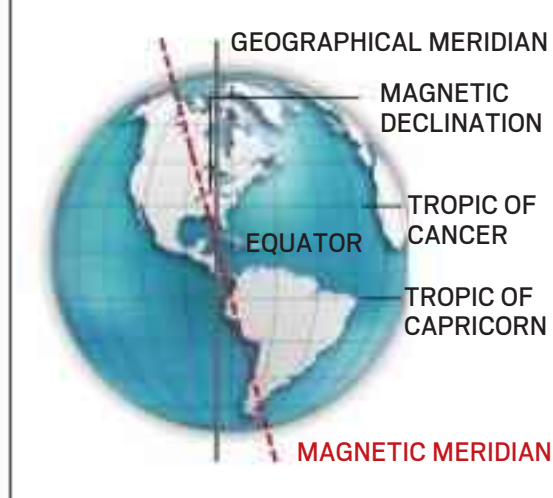
What is new

Scientists have now realised the pace of this movement has suddenly increased, quite significantly, from about 14-15 km per year till the 1990s to about 55 km per year in the last few years. This led to scientists on Monday updating the World Magnetic Model (WMM) that tracks this movement. It was a year ahead of schedule. Every five years, a new and updated version of the WMM is released. The last update was 2015 and the next was scheduled for end-2019. However, by early 2018, scientists realised that the faster movement of the magnetic north pole had made it so inaccurate that it was "about to exceed the acceptable limit for navigational errors".

Why it is moving faster

This is something that scientists do not have full clarity on. The movement of liquid iron and other metals in the outer core of the Earth is known to influence the magnetic field, but this movement is chaotic

TWO NORTH POLES



The midnight sun shines across sea ice in the Canadian Arctic. AP

and turbulent. Scientists do not fully understand how the movement happens or why. The study of the phenomena happening inside the earth can only be done indirectly or through computer modelling, because of the extremely hot temperatures prevailing there. Scientists hope that this acceleration in the shifting of magnetic north pole would throw some new insights into the phenomena happening deep inside the Earth's surface.

The consequences

The entire transportation sector, especially aviation and shipping, depends on correctly knowing the position of magnetic north to chart out their navigation paths. Similarly, it is crucial for militaries, who need to know this for firing their missiles or for other purposes. Knowing the magnetic north is vital for a number of civilian applications as well.

A standalone school compass would not be affected by this change in position of magnetic north. It will reorient itself to the new resultant magnetic north pole. But this standalone school compass is no longer used for modern requirements of navigation in aviation, shipping or military, or even in our mobile phones. This is because school compasses are not very precise as they get affected by local magnetic fields that may be present.

The compasses that are used in modern instrumentation are much more sophisticated, digital and more accurate. This is the reason why they need to be recalibrated to reflect the change in the magnetic north pole. This is what the unscheduled release of the WMM has done. It has released a set of software that will update these instruments to the new positions of the magnetic north pole.

DECISION 2019

THE QUESTIONS THAT MATTER

RJD banks on sharpening old binary, BJP seeks the right balance, Nitish looks at coalition of social extremes

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, FEBRUARY 5

Why is the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) opposed to reservation for the poor among the so-called 'forward castes'?

When the 10% quota in jobs and educational institutions for the economically weaker sections (EWS) was announced, the RJD found itself in two minds. Lalu Prasad, who broke away from the Janata Dal to form the RJD in 1997, had found his mojo in the post-Mandal era, riding to power on the back of backward identity politics in a state riven by deep faultlines of caste. From 1990, when Lalu first became Chief Minister of Bihar, to 2000, when Rabri Devi completed her term, the RJD's politics remained strongly anti-upper caste. When Rabri Devi came back after Nitish Kumar's eight-day stint in 2000, however, the RJD formed the government with the Congress — and was forced to recalibrate its stance towards the upper castes. This broadly remained the RJD's line for the next 15 years — until the elections of 2015.

That year, with the political landscape of North India having been changed by the rise of Narendra Modi, the RJD entered into the Mahagathbandhan with Nitish's JD(U) and the Congress against the BJP-led NDA. In the campaign, Lalu switched back to his hard rhetoric of the 1990s, seizing upon RSS sarsangchalak Mohan Bhagwat's call for a review of the policy of reservations, and telling an election meeting in Raghapur (Vaishali): "Ee baar phir backward-forward bhe gelo (It is backwards versus forwards once again)."

Politically for the RJD, that situation has not changed since. Despite the desertion of Nitish, its best chance of defeating the BJP lies in countering the consolidation of the Hindu vote through an appeal to caste identities, and sharpening Bihar's old forward-backward binary. OBCs, EBCs, Muslims, and at least some SCs are the natural constituency of the RJD. After slight initial hesitation, therefore, the party leadership of Lalu, his son Tejashwi Prasad Yadav, and Rajya Sabha MP Manoj Jha, decided to oppose the EWS quota. However, to signal that it was not against the poor among the upper castes, the party nuanced its opposition — targeting the Rs 8-lakh criterion in the government's definition of EWS. How can someone who earns over Rs 66,000 per month be "poor", Tejashwi has been asking.

But does the RJD have no base among the upper castes?

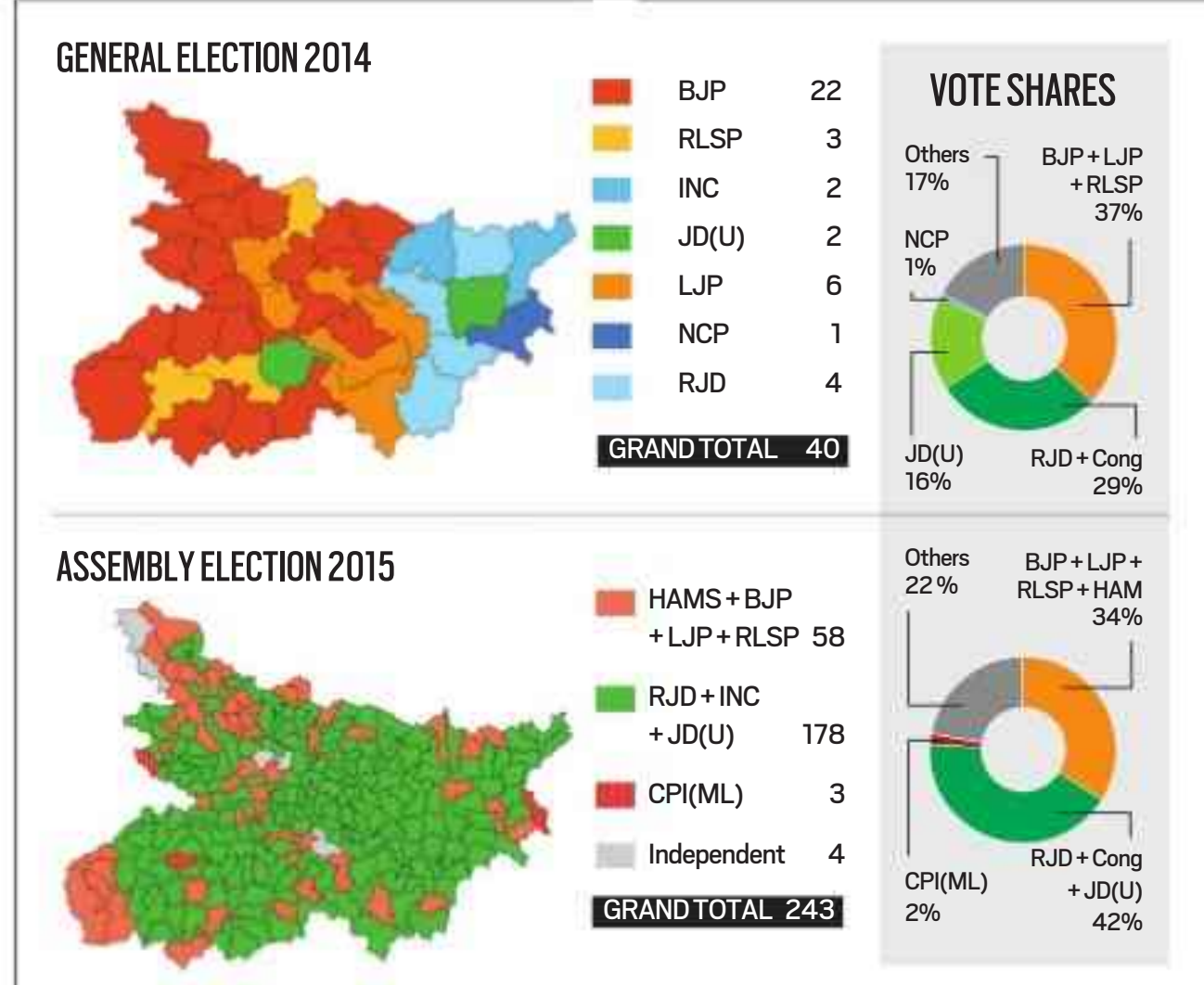
It does have some upper caste people in its top leadership, such as national vice president Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, and former MPs Jagdanand Singh and Prabhunath Singh. The late Umashanker Singh was also a prominent upper caste leader of the party. However, most of these leaders got votes because of personal popularity in their areas. While this has been helpful for the RJD — in the fifteenth Lok Sabha (2009), for example, Lalu was kept company by the three Rajputs, Raghuvansh, Jagdanand, and Prabhunath — for the party as a whole, upper caste voters have always come as a bonus. That is why, despite some open dissent from its upper caste leaders such as Raghuvansh, the RJD has decided to put its faith in its core constituency. The estimated 14% Yadavs, most of the 29% EBCs and 17% Muslims, and a sizeable chunk of the 16% SCs will, it is hoping, make it worthwhile to give up entirely on the

How is the quota for economically backward playing out in Bihar?

In caste faultlines, parties search for their poll pitch



Tejashwi Prasad Yadav of RJD in Patna; he has been opposing the EWS quota. Nandendra Kumar Singh



much smaller and more uncertain 12% upper caste vote.

How will the Congress reconcile its own backing of the EWS quota with its ally, the RJD's opposition to it?

Like the RJD, the Congress too, has decided to go back to its old core of upper caste and Muslim voters, along with a section of EBCs and SCs. Of the 16 upper caste candidates that the Congress fielded in the 2015 Assembly polls, 12 won. The Congress has been upset with the RJD's opposition to the EWS quota, and worried about the impact it can have in the transfer of votes within their alliance. For example, Meira Kumar, the potential Congress candidate in Sasaram, may not get upper caste support — and, should the RJD field Raghuvansh from Vaishali or

Muzaffarpur, the Congress could struggle to explain the RJD's position on the EWS quota to its upper caste voters. Indeed, the party faces a Hobson's choice in Bihar — despite its frustration with the RJD, it cannot risk the senior partner leaving it out of the opposition alliance altogether.

But doesn't the JD(U), too, have an OBC base? Why has Nitish's government decided to enforce the quota?

The JD(U) and erstwhile Samata Party have been with the BJP since 1996, barring the four years from June 2013 to July 2017. Even in the 1995 Assembly polls, Samata tried to tell non-Yadav OBCs, EBCs, SCs, and upper castes that Lalu was against them, and favoured Yadavs unduly. Nitish's prime constituency has always included non-Yadav

OBCs and a good chunk of the untapped EBCs. In addition, he has created his own constituency among the SCs, identifying 21 Scheduled Castes as Mahadalits, who have been getting benefits of about 20 welfare and education schemes since his first full term (2005-10).

With the BJP, the JD(U) is looking at a "coalition of social extremes", where upper castes and Dalits coexist and vote together for the same alliance. Nitish, whose government will pass the EWS quota Bill in the coming Budget Session, would be hoping that his return to the BJP has assuaged the anger of upper castes whom he had upset by going with Lalu in 2015. The harvest, he hopes, will come in the form of good mutual conversion of votes, even though he may field fewer upper caste candidates than his partner, the BJP.

And where does the BJP stand in this complex situation?

Its goal is Hindu consolidation, and it has been trying to do a good balancing act. It has been trying to counter the RJD's attempts at creating a backward-forward binary by underlining that the EWS quota is an addition, and has not taken away from the existing quota for OBCs and SCs. The Bihar BJP has called a meeting of its OBC wing on February 15-16 — to be addressed by Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, and Shivraj Singh Chouhan — to disseminate the message of the Centre's "eight-point welfare programme" for OBCs, including giving the OBC Commission constitutional status, the facility of self-attestation for OBC certification, and paving the way for venture capital loans for OBC entrepreneurs. The BJP, with its allies JD(U) and Ram Vilas Paswan's LJP, is looking at the consolidation of non-Yadav OBC votes, EBC votes, mostly from the Dhanuks and Nishads or Sahnis (boatmen), and Dalit Paswan and Mahadalit votes. It will field its OBC star campaigners in selected constituencies to try to neutralise the RJD's attack on the EWS quota. Two major BJP OBC faces — Chouhan and Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das — will address the party's OBC meet next week.

So, can it be assumed that the EWS quota will be a major election issue in Bihar?

It will be an issue among both the beneficiary upper caste voters, as well as the OBCs, EBCs and SCs whom the RJD will try to tell that the central government's move is the first step towards taking away their own quota. The RJD did this successfully in 2015 — the Election Commission had found pamphlets being distributed in Araria, telling voters that the BJP was "trying to end reservation". But the fact that Lalu is in jail and ill, could seriously handicap the RJD's campaign. Tejashwi, who has been prolific on Twitter against the quota, will be tested during the campaign.

The strength of the Congress's campaign on this issue will probably be decided by how hard Tejashwi pushes, and how much traction he gets. The NDA will attack this apparent faultline within the RJD-Congress alliance. The BJP, JD(U), and LJP have already started to remind voters of the RJD slogan from the mid-1990s — "BHURIA BAL saaf karo", a provocative call to "remove" the upper caste Bhumihars, Rajputs, Brahmmins, and Lalas, as Kayasthas are known in Bihar.

NEXT

#9 Why is the Vishva Hindu Parishad now lowering the Ayodhya heat?

Haryana's South connect: when it made Telugu second language in school

VARINDER BHATIA
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 5

LAST WEEK, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, a Punjabi by ethnic roots, took his audience by surprise when he delivered a speech in nearly flawless Tamil. As Khattar's speech during Pongal festivities in Haryana went viral, it led to comments about the Tamil language's supposed connection with Haryana — that the link goes back four and that Tamil was Haryana's "second official language" until 2010. Later, Khattar added a new dimension to the discussion: while he had learnt Tamil 40 years ago, Haryana actually has a connection with another South Indian language — Telugu. Some 50 years ago, Telugu was declared the state's "second language". A look at how this came to be:

Why Telugu

Telugu was made the state's "second language" — to be taught in schools — but it was not the "second official language" for official communication. And the reason reportedly concerns Haryana's disputes with Punjab. Haryana was carved out of Punjab

on November 1, 1966, but till date the two states continue to be in dispute over water sharing, education, airport and even a joint state capital in Chandigarh. A number of veteran politicians, bureaucrats and journalists said that it was around 1969 when Haryana's third Chief Minister, Bansilal, got so upset with the repeated disputes that he decided to introduce any other language as the second official language. The objective, apparently, was to prevent making Punjabi an official language.

Officers and political sources cited additional reasons behind Bansilal's decision. The government wanted to promote a South Indian language as the South was witnessing intense anti-Hindi agitations in those days. "Bansilal wanted to show that if a North Indian state could adopt a South Indian language, they should not protest against Hindi," a veteran said.

Veteran politicians and bureaucrats also recall that Bansilal wanted to give Haryana's students the opportunity to learn at least two Indian languages, one from the North (Hindi) and the other from South (Telugu). A few recall that at that time, Bansilal is said to have toyed with the idea of a sister-states relationship with Andhra

Pradesh, but the idea did not mature because the then Andhra Pradesh politicians did not see much benefit from such a relationship with a remote, newly created northern state.

What it means

Practically, there is not much relevance for a second language in a state, except that it needs to be taught in schools if students opt for it. It is primarily recognised as such with a specific objective, usually as a gesture towards a particular community that comprises a significant population in a state. But once it is declared, the government is bound to provide specific infrastructure for teaching the second language in schools. A former bureaucrat explained that it creates job vacancies and people get employment. Thus, when Telugu was incorporated as second language in Haryana to be taught in schools, teachers were also appointed to teach the language.

Where it stands

Current and retired bureaucrats of Haryana recalled that since the decision had been taken by then Chief Minister Bansilal, it had to be implemented. Thus, the state



Bansilal (seen being sworn in as CM in 1966) introduced Telugu as second language around 50 years. Archive

government in the early 1970s appointed around 100 teachers to teach Telugu in government schools. Gradually, however, all

those teachers were either accommodated in the teaching of other subjects or resigned, since there were no students to teach Telugu to. The idea did not take off as expected. In June 2017, incumbent Chief Minister Khattar visited Hyderabad and hinted at introducing Telugu as a correspondence course through a university or a college in Haryana. "Many people from Telangana work in Faridabad and Gurgaon and the idea is to help their children learn their mother tongue," Khattar said while addressing a Making of Development India (MODI) programme in Hyderabad on June 9, 2017.

Punjabi is official

Haryana's Official Languages Act was enacted in 1969. With this Act, the Punjab Official Languages Act, 1960, which was earlier applicable to Haryana, was repealed. Hindi was now specified as official language of the state and English was to be used for legislative and judicial correspondence (with Hindi-translated copies). Telugu was not mentioned in the Act, 1969. The Act also had three amendments, but Telugu never found any mention in any of those.

The last amendment was in 2004, dur-

ing Om Prakash Chautala's regime, when Punjabi was introduced as the second official language of the state. "The Haryana Official Language (Amendment) Bill 2004" was moved by then Parliamentary Affairs Minister Sampat Singh and passed unanimously. It said that as per the 1991 Census, 7.11% of the population was Punjabi-speaking and thus it was essential to declare Punjabi as the second official language in addition to Hindi, which was then an official language along with English. It was unanimously passed in the Vidhan Sabha on December 1, 2004; the Governor gave his assent on December 14; a notification was issued on December 15. It was aimed at wooing the Punjabi electorate ahead of Lok Sabha elections in 2005.

In 2009, Bhupinder Singh Hooda promised voters that he would declare Punjabi as the second official language — which the amendment had already done. Once elected to power, Hooda's government on January 28, 2010 issued a notification declaring Punjabi as the state's second official language for the purposes of "receipt of representation scripted in Punjabi by the state government and its office; and promotion of Punjabi language and Punjabi literature".

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Budget's blind eye

It fails to address dismal productivity, not just in agriculture, but across all workers



BHASKAR CHAKRAVORTI

I MUST SAY I didn't expect the cow to make it to the Budget. But it did.

Other than that twist in the plot, the rest of the interim budget speech from an interim minister that was, mercifully, not interminable, was wholly unsurprising. After all, who can blame the government? There is an election ahead and this fact was hard to miss. The urban middle class? Check. Farmers? Check. Workers, most of whom are in the unorganised sector? Check. You get the picture.

Now, it remains to be seen if some of the goodies here — for example, a tax exemption for income up to Rs 5 lakh to appease the middle class or a Rs 6,000 annual cash handout to poor farmers in a scheme that will cost Rs 75,000 crore annually added to a scheme to provide a monthly pension for workers in the unorganised sector after they turn 60 years old — will exacerbate the fiscal deficit significantly enough and whether that ought to be a cause for worry in the future. That said, I am glad that the farmers at the proverbial bottom of the agricultural pyramid and the workers in the unorganised sector — which pretty much covers most of the worker pyramid — were offered some form of an economic cushion, even if a rather thin one.

Call me overly pessimistic but I don't see the deep structural problems that afflict the agricultural sector and the low wage trap that the Indian workforce finds itself in being addressed by either political party in the near term, regardless of the election outcome. Yes, these are stopgap measures and may even create a disincentive to take any of the larger steps needed for meaningful structural reforms. But it is better than nothing.

What else can one say about this rather ho-hum budget? Where one should be worried is that budgets are inherently about data and projections based on intelligent calculations based on economic assumptions and models. What I find worrying is the spate of statistical skulduggery that is coming to light in advance of elections. It makes me quite uneasy about completely buying all the statistics and projections in the budget.

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Even if one were to take the methodological revisions as part of the natural process of improving national accounts and statistics, it is deeply troubling to learn that the National Sample Survey Office, which had pegged the 2017-18 unemployment level at 6.1 per cent, a 45-year high and triple the rate five years earlier, had been compelled to suppress its findings. The report was due for release in December and now two commissioners responsible for reviewing data in the report have resigned in protest of the suppression of the findings ahead of the elections. Prior to this, the Labour Ministry had, since 2016, discontinued its routine practice of publishing employment statistics.

This string of revisions and suppressions are enough to make my eyes glaze over as I read all the statistics in the budget announcement. The acting finance minister says that this budget has been prepared with a moderate impact on the fiscal deficit. He assures us that the fiscal deficit for 2019-20 is no more than 3.4 per cent of GDP and the government has "taken further steps" to consolidate the fiscal deficit in years to come, with

a target of 3 per cent in 2020-21 as well as in 2021-22. He adds that many good things are expected to happen in the interim and cites even more statistics. Gross tax revenue is expected to go up, according to this plan, to 12.1 per cent of GDP in 2019-20 and 2020-21, climbing up after that to 12.2 per cent. We have few assurances that more statistical jujitsu will not happen down the road.

This makes the budget seem like a house of cards. So, what should we bank on, then, given that a budget is, after all, about statistics and, one hopes, methodologically honest estimations of the impact on the future? My bottomline is that I would take all these figures with a healthy helping of salt. In an ideal budget, I would be looking for meaningful policy measures that were not just stop-gaps or giveaways to appease vote banks. I would have been looking for a budget that struck at the core of what ails the Indian economy: Dismal productivity, not just in the agricultural sector, but across all the workers. India ranked 158th among 196 countries in terms of "expected human capital," according to a recent study published in the journal, *Lancet*. Expected human capital is the number of years an individual can work at peak productivity between the ages of 20 and 64, based on the life expectancy adjusted for health, and the years of schooling adjusted for the quality of learning.

I looked in vain for some genuine measures to boost productivity in the minister's speech. And the only true productivity related policy proposal was related to the surprise element in this year's budget: The cow. Thank goodness for the Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog which is designed to "upscale sustainable genetic upgradation of cow resources" to enhance the productivity of cows. Well, I guess, it's a start.

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A VISIT, A MILESTONE

Pope Francis's visit to UAE highlighted a much-needed message: Faith must unite, extremism is the road to ruin

IT IS TOO early to say if Pope Francis's history making visit to the United Arab Emirates — the first by a pope to the Arabian peninsula — is a game-changer in a world in which religious extremism, politicised religion, and terrorism in the name of faith have become all too normal. But it certainly strengthens the case against a belief that has been around for a while now — that the world is in the midst of an inevitable and inescapable "clash of civilisations". At a time of great strife in the Arab world, the visit was extraordinary messaging, not just by the Pope but by his hosts as well. Pope Francis, who is by the far the most unconventional head that the Catholic church has known, was in the UAE at the invitation of Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who has declared 2019 his country's Year of Tolerance. He described the visit as a "landmark in the development of human relations and dialogue between different cultures". In keeping with this theme, the kingdom has launched a series of programmes to promote tolerance and cultural diversity, enough for the Pope to praise the UAE as "a land that is trying to be a model of coexistence, of human brotherhood, and a meeting place among diverse civilisations and cultures". Ahead of his visit, the Pope also underlined that faith "unites and does not divide, it draws us closer despite differences, it distances us from hostilities and aversion".

For the UAE, which knows the economic benefits of diversity only too well, and has turned into a land of many faiths over the decades, the visit was not just about scoring a diplomatic point, but integral to the realisation, across the Arab world, in the time of ISIS, that extremism is the road to ruin. MbZ, as the Crown Prince is known, pulled out all the stops — the Pope addressed a mass where expatriates from India and the Philippines made up the majority of the congregation, and participated in an inter-faith dialogue with the Grand Imam of Cairo's Al Azhar seminary, who was also invited to visit at the same time as the Pope.

In recent years, the UAE has kept pace with its changing demography to allow different religious practices and today boasts several Hindu temples and churches. The UAE's ambassador to India has written in this newspaper that his country's leadership believes that peace and prosperity are impossible unless the conditions for peaceful co-existence of all cultures and faith exist everywhere. That should be obvious, but all too often, these days, it has to be reiterated, and said out loud.

WRIT IN SNOW

Study on receding glaciers in Hindu Kush underlines need for cooperation between countries that share Himalayas

SUCCESS IN MEETING the Paris Climate Pact's most ambitious target might not be enough, a recent study says, to prevent a serious meltdown in the Hindu Kush Himalayas. Released on Monday, the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development's (ICIMOD) "Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment" reveals that more than 35 per cent of the glaciers in the region could retreat by 2100, even if the global temperature rise is capped at 1.5°C. This could destabilise the hydrology of large parts of South Asia, China and Myanmar.

Regions in higher altitudes tend to warm faster than low-lying lands. So, a global temperature increase of 1.5°C could mean at least a 1.8°C temperature rise in the Hindu Kush Himalayas, the ICIMOD study warns. This will have a major bearing on the ice-fields, which are the largest repository of permafrost outside the polar regions. The region's snow is the source of 10 major river systems — including the Ganga, Indus, Brahmaputra and Mekong — in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and Myanmar. Large-scale warming could drastically alter the river flows in these countries. The receding glaciers could cause a deluge in the rivers during the monsoon while the flows are likely to plummet during the dry seasons, with serious implications for irrigation, hydropower and ecosystem services.

Climate scientists have tried to link the Subcontinent's erratic monsoons over the past 10 years — days of intense rainfall combined with drought-like conditions — to global warming. They have, however, stopped short of identifying the exact causes of these extreme weather events. The ICIMOD study offers clues that the receding glaciers might be the reason for the changing monsoon. "The number of intense precipitation days and intensity of extreme precipitation have increased overall in the last five decades. If these trends persist, the frequency and magnitude of water-induced hazards in the (Hindu Kush Himalaya) region will increase," it says. This is a significant conclusion given that developments in the Himalayas are known to have a spin-off on the monsoon in the Subcontinent. The ICIMOD researchers point out that more studies are required to firm up the links between extreme weather events in the higher reaches of the Subcontinent and the erratic weather in the plains. For this, they advocate more data sharing between the countries that share the Hindu Kush Himalayas. Even more salient is their message that political differences between these countries should not come in the way of joint efforts to build resilience of vulnerable communities and shore up the region's water security. Such cooperation must go alongside meeting the Paris Climate Change Pact's goals.

FALLING IN LOVE AGAIN

The best thing about the West Indies' series win against England is that it offers hope for the future

WEST INDIES CAPTAIN Jason Holder was suspended for a match for slow over rates and no one complained. The year was 2017 and West Indies had just lost to New Zealand by an innings. No one likes losers. Now, West Indies have triumphed with a series win against England and over rates have not been an issue. If everyone from Shane Warne to Michael Vaughan is indignant, the reason is that despite their decline over two decades, West Indies remain everyone's favourite second team. It's the sheer joy of seeing them win again — and this was no ordinary victory.

The best thing about this win is that it offers hope for the future. For the first time in two decades, there seems to be a will in place. Even the administrators are doing their bit — the West Indian CEO Johnny Grave went against prevailing wisdom in the islands that countenanced slow low pitches and used the kookaburra ball which would lose seam to make sure their batsmen could prosper. He demanded spic pitches and got the Dukes ball back — the confidence shown in the four-pronged pace attack was repaid with the way they bowled. Alzarri Joseph was quick and imaginative, Shannon Gabriel was pacy and accurate, Kemar Roach was at his best, Roston Chase was skilful and Captain Holder, with his steady seam and batting, offered great balance. Their batsmen dug trenches and fought — in the Antigua Test, the batsmen Darren Bravo and Kraigg Brathwaite played 62 overs for 99 runs.

In recent times, teams around the world didn't quite count their achievements against West Indies as much. Fans would mock them. India are going to tour West Indies after the World Cup and for the first time in years, everyone is preparing to willingly suspend their sleep for the excitement on the field.



SACHCHIDANAND JOSHI

IT IS THE collective awareness about our accomplishments achieved through the ages that fills us with a will that propels us. Instilling heroes and heroic struggles in anyone's consciousness is an important way to build a strong society, nation or civilisation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been at the forefront of shaping a grand narrative of civilisational awareness within the younger generations.

Using waterways is both economically and ecologically prudent. Despite possessing a 7,500 km-long coastline and many rivers of civilisational significance, India hadn't really utilised this means of transport in modern times. It is the Modi government that is making a great effort to reap this potential with inland waterways projects and port development under "Sagarmala". Has this model emanated from a deep sense of history?

In 2016, PM Modi inaugurated the Maritime Investment Summit 2016. Can you guess who he remembered on the occasion? B R Ambedkar. You need to acknowledge PM Modi's sense of history when he said, "Many of us may not know that Babasaheb created two powerful institutions related to water, navigation and power. They were: The Central Waterways, Irrigation and Navigation Commission and The Central Technical Power Board. Dr Ambedkar is also the architect of the water and river navigation policy in India."

In the 38th edition of 'Mann Ki Baat', speaking of the glorious history of India as a

A GRAND NARRATIVE

A rediscovery is afoot of forgotten heroes and civilisational ethos

It is to the credit of PM Modi that he broke the monopolisation of credit for building modern India. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's heroic memory has been in the spotlight because of PM Modi's efforts. He declassified the documents related to Netaji and hoisted the national flag on Red Fort to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the formation of the 'Azad Hind Government'.

naval power, he said, "Very few people might be aware that most navies of the world allowed women on warships much later. But in the Chola navy, a large number of women played leading roles and that too about 800-900 years ago." Today, he is also reviving India as a naval power with the strategic actions around Iran's Chabahar port and Myanmar's Sittwe port.

It is to the credit of PM Modi that he broke the monopolisation of credit for building modern India. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's heroic memory has been in the spotlight because of PM Modi's efforts. He declassified the documents related to Netaji and hoisted the national flag on Red Fort to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the formation of the 'Azad Hind Government'. The INA trials at the Red Fort are well known but what is also well known is that the building in which the trials happened lay forgotten inside the Red Fort Complex. On Netaji Subhas Bose's jayanti this year, the PM inaugurated a museum in the same building dedicated to Netaji and INA. The museum forms part of the complex of four museums which are collectively known as "Kranti Mandir." Museums dedicated to the 1857 War of Independence and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre also form part of the complex.

Almost every political party has used Ambedkar's name but a meaningful tribute had always eluded him. It took the Modi government to develop five important places re-

lated to Babasaheb's life as "Panchateerth".

Generations to come will remember that it is Narendra Modi in his capacity both as chief minister of Gujarat initially and then as prime minister who ensured a fitting tribute to the man who unified India — Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel — with the tallest statue in the world. Through Swachh Bharat, the revival of khadi, setting up of a National Salt Satyagraha Memorial at Dandi, Mahatma Gandhi's memory and ideals have always remained at the centrestage.

It is endearing to see the way in which PM Modi claimed the legacy of democracy to India's credit standing on the soil of London. While unveiling Lord Basaveshwara's statue there in 2015, he said, "long before the Magna Carta, considered the first charter of democracy, 12th-century Indian philosopher Basaveshwara gave the world the ideals of democracy."

Be it history or culture, PM Modi knows how to take inspiration from the civilisational values that India has in abundance and instil the same spirit in the younger generation. His initiatives to bring back the stolen statues and artefacts of India from various countries and using the power of the Ramayana and Buddha to connect with the other parts of the world indicate a grand narrative of India as a global power not just driven by its present and future but also by its past.

The writer is member-secretary, IGNCA

FEBRUARY 6, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO



BHUTTO JUDGMENT
JUDGEMENT IS TO be announced by the Pakistan Supreme Court in the appeal by the former prime minister, Z A Bhutto, against the death sentence, Radio Pakistan reports. An announcement in Rawalpindi said if the judgment goes against Bhutto, his lawyers may file an application for a review. The Supreme Court has already spent 10 months considering the appeal, which is against the Lahore High Court's ruling that Bhutto was guilty of involvement in a plot to murder one of his political opponents. Bhutto's wife, Begum Nusrat Bhutto, said there would be no appeal for mercy if the judgment went against him. A BBC correspondent in Pakistan

said if on the other hand, the Supreme Court overturns the sentence, the military authorities have it clear that there are other

KHOMEINI'S PM
AYATOLLAH RUHOLLAH KHOMEINI named an oil engineer, Mehdi Bazargan, as prime minister of a provisional government to pave the way for the creation of an Islamic republic in Iran.

SC FREES UNDERTRIALS
THE SUPREME COURT released 25 undertrial prisoners lodged in Patna and Muzaffarpur jails in Bihar on personal bonds. Their names had appeared in The Indian Express dated

January and 9. Justice Bhagwati, on his own behalf and on behalf of Justice Pathak and Justice A D Kaushik, also directed the State of Bihar to furnish within two weeks from today a list of undertrial prisoners lodged in the jails of Bihar for a period of more than 18 months, together with a description of the reference charts and the date from which they have been in jail. In another habeas corpus petition filed by Kapil Hingorani, an advocate of the Supreme Court, on the basis of the Indian Express reports, Justice Krishna lyer, on his own behalf and on behalf of Justice O Chinnappa Reddy, directed the following 17 undertrials mentioned in the petition to be released forthwith on bonds.

13 THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The fear is that with a general election looming in India, the ruling party will be seeking to play up its Hindutva philosophy all the more vociferously to get votes."
—DAWN

With an ocean of salt

Interim budget does little to tackle unemployment, poverty. And it is clear that the government's figures cannot be trusted



RAJEEV GOWDA

LAST MONTH, I was part of an all-party delegation of MPs from Karnataka, led by a Union cabinet minister, who met the Union rural development minister. We requested him to release the MGNREGA funds overdue to Karnataka. We pleaded that the poorest of the poor, who turn to MGNREGA as a lifeline, were being discouraged from accessing the programme as they were not being paid for a long time because the Centre had not released the funds they owed to the states. Therefore, when I hear Piyush Goyal announce big amounts as funds allocated to MGNREGA, I can only respond with a weary laugh.

Goyal has learned the art of hype well from his prime minister. But the voters know better and will confront them with reality in a few months. For where voters had been promised Rs 15 lakh in their Jan Dhan accounts, only a few farming families will receive a pittance of Rs 3.30 per day. When the average loan burden is Rs 45,000, they will receive Rs 6,000 per year, far lower than the income transfers offered by Telangana and Odisha, and a far distance from being debt free as envisioned by Congress state governments.

The interim budget is overflowing with announcements aimed at targeting different sections of voters. But it is instructive to see who is left out. The Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana targets land-owning farmers, when it is actually landless labourers and tenant farmers who are experiencing rural distress more acutely. As has been the pattern of this government's budgets, they have been ignored once again. The urban poor have also been ignored. Whereas the urban middle class have got a tax rebate, which, here's the catch, can only be put into effect by a new government. So, it's *jumla* time yet again.

The eve of the budget was also marked by the leak of the NSSO jobs report. This showed that unemployment under Prime Minister Narendra Modi was at a 45-year historic high. Jobs are hard to find and, as CMIE has shown, 1.1 crore jobs have been lost in 2018 alone. The Modi era has been devastatingly destructive for job seekers. The worst affected have been India's young men and women.

There is nothing in the interim budget which seeks to address this challenge. Goyal talks of Startup India while offering no relief to startups from the daft and draconian Angel Tax. MUDRA loans are mentioned but the majority of the loans are so small, it would be difficult to run a

pakoda stall. The farmer income support, the middle-class tax rebate, and numerous other programmes have been announced as being supported through resources saved under other programmes announced in the previous budget, the last one for which this government had a mandate. This means that none of those prior announcements has been backed with adequate fund allocation and proper implementation. So, it's no surprise when targets have not been met. Or, as in electrification, targets have been met by slashing them downwards to claim a pyrrhic victory.

The BJP's social media is awash with how the defence budget is at an all-time high, hiding from the people how this year's defence budget is one of the lowest when seen as a percentage of the GDP.

The government wants us to believe that the economy did well and revised the growth rates upwards to 8.2 per cent for the year when it unleashed the surgical strike on the economy called demonetisation. The truth comes through clearly from IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath's study that shows demonetisation caused a decline in the national economic activity of roughly 3 percentage points or more. The intensity of night lights decreased during and after demonetisation. Employment contracted. Industries witnessed a slowdown.

That the budget did not address the question of record unemployment demonstrates its priorities. Instead, the government had tried hard to hide the NSSO numbers, which revealed the bitter truth. This budget thus shows how the Modi sarkar has abandoned our youth amidst talk of Uber driving.

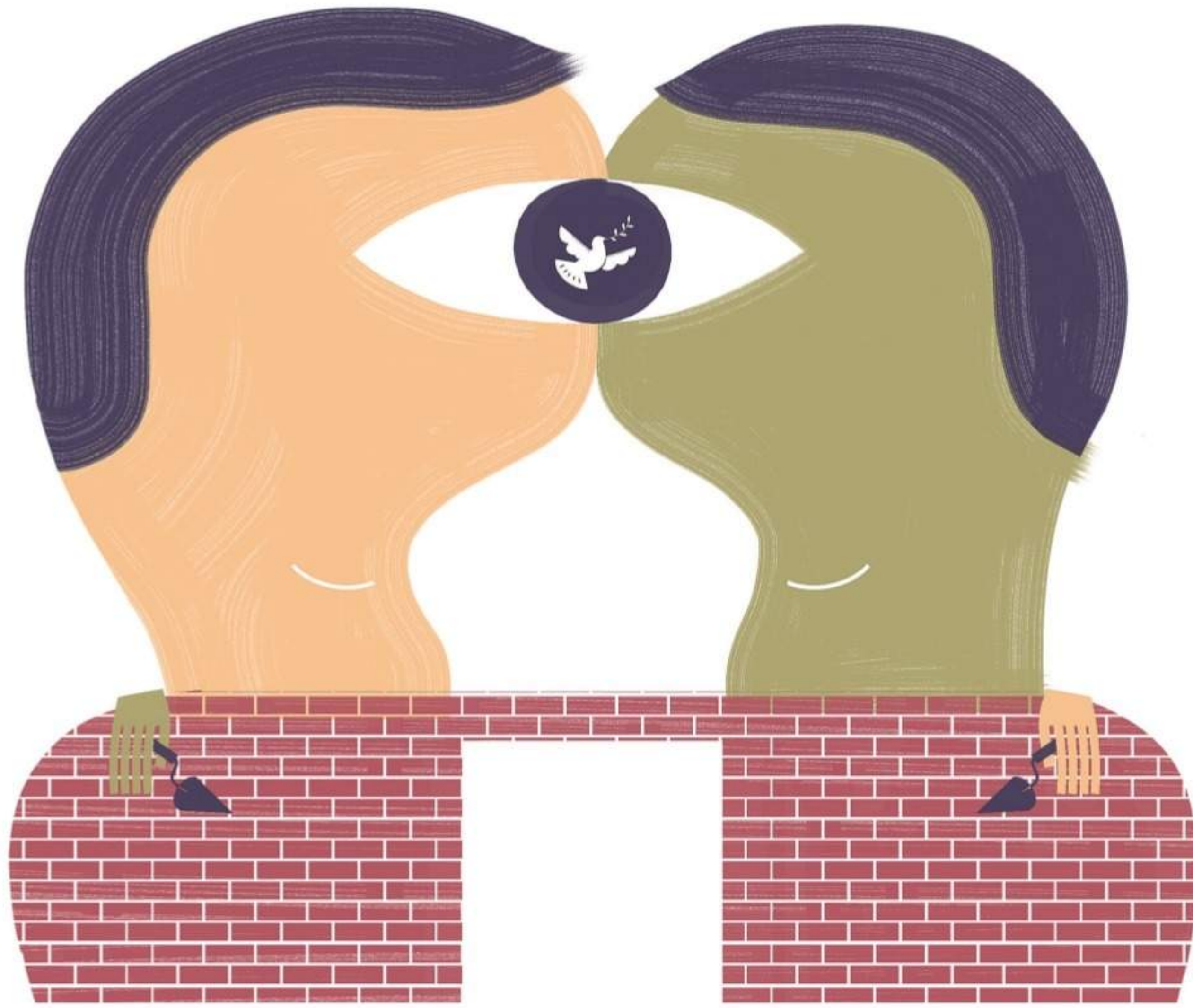
There is a vast difference between the government's promises and its implementation of various X-in-India programmes. Ujjwala hype does not show how few people have come back for an LPG refill. Swachh Bharat remains a toilet building programme rather than one which has actually eliminated open defecation or controlled manual scavenging.

New project announcements have been at a 14-year low. Exports have fallen. Foreign Direct Investment has gone down and, so, the newly renamed DIPP has not released numbers after August.

It is clear that the government's numbers have to be taken with an ocean's worth of salt. They have no credibility. They have emerged from the ruins of the reputations of India's statistical establishment.

This is a government playing with smoke and mirrors. The people of India will shortly give a befitting response to these *jumlas* and errors. Only then will we see a budget whose numbers can be believed. Only then will the pain of our fellow Indians be relieved.

The writer is a Congress MP and chairs its research department



C R Sasikumar

A new temple, a new mosque

Ayodhya's disputing sides can come together. The Supreme Court can direct them to do so



RAJMOHAN GANDHI

like scenario, acknowledgment of wrongdoing and restitution leads to justice as well as reconciliation.

Passions, politics and pressures may produce a Ram temple anyway, with or without a Supreme Court order. If such a temple emerges without an admission of the wrongfulness of the demolition, the Hindu-Muslim divide will deepen and Muslim fears will intensify.

Also, the new temple, no matter how grand, may rest on shaky foundations. Parents may tell their children: "See that glittering temple over there? It was built with deceit and force. First a great lie was spread that a Ram idol had mysteriously appeared inside the mosque when in fact it was surreptitiously inserted. Forty-three years later, the mosque was demolished despite repeated pledges to courts and the world that it would not be touched." People will say to themselves: "Lord Ram was known for saying that life may be sacrificed but one's word must be kept. He was loved and honoured for that statement. Is this a temple for that Ram?"

In their 2012 study of the demolition's history (*Ayodhya: The Dark Night*), researchers Krishna Jha and Dharendra K Jha detail the idol insertion of 1949 as also the persistent effort of Swami Akshay Brahmachari, an eye-witness, to bring that pre-dawn insertion to public knowledge. A fearless believer in Hindu-Muslim friendship, the Swami lived until 2010.

In 1949, the carefully planned placement of the idol was portrayed as a miracle. Though KKNayar, the region's deputy commissioner, was sympathetic to the insertion and refused to undo it, he conceded in a letter to the UP government that "the installation of the idol in

the mosque has certainly been an illegal act". Nayar's observation was quoted by P V Narasimha Rao in his 2006 book on the demolition, *Ayodhya: 6 December, 1992*. In 1949, Nayar (who became a Jana Sangh MP in 1967 from Bahraich in UP) claimed that he was helpless before the illegal installation. Similarly, Rao, who was the prime minister when the 1992 demolition occurred, said in his 2006 book and to Parliament in 1992 that he was helpless before the demolition.

We are now in February 2019. Ignoring history can be convenient, but erasing it does not seem possible. Yet it is not impossible for a nation to come together to address the past's mistakes.

Will Ayodhya's disputing sides voluntarily come together as I have imagined? Very unlikely. But the Supreme Court can direct them to do so. We have to rebuild our society, return it to some civility. We have to restore Hindu-Muslim relations. We have to become respectable in the world. Indians have to recover pride in their country's lawfulness.

History's facts cannot be scratched out. What happened in Ayodhya in the 1520s, in 1949, and in 1992 cannot be changed. But yesterday's follies can be admitted and consigned to the past. They should not be allowed to burn our todays and tomorrows.

A new temple and a new mosque rising as a result of a Supreme Court direction for justice and reconciliation would lift everyone's spirits. At this testing time, the Supreme Court may be in a position to add significantly to India's peace and India's honour.

The writer is research professor at the Centre for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The bare bones of a settlement are not hard to identify. One, the Hindu side admits the error in demolishing the mosque. Two, the Indian state admits its failure to prevent the demolition. Three, the Muslim side acknowledges the Hindu community's wish to see a Ram temple rise on the site as also the Hindu community's belief that a temple had once stood where the Babri Masjid was built. Four, not far from the site, and yet not too close to it, space for a new mosque is made available by the Hindu side and the Indian state.

EVEN AS A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court seems ready to hear the case about the Ayodhya site where the Babri mosque (said to have been built in the 1520s) stood until its demolition in December 1992, the central government has asked the Court to release from its custody land surrounding the site so that the construction of a Ram temple can begin there. With good reason, this Ayodhya question has been linked to the general election that is due before May. The question should, however, be examined in a broader perspective. In fact, we should ask even at this late stage whether or not statesmanship and a spirit of give-and-take can produce a settlement.

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VIEW FROM THE RIGHT

SHLOKAS IN SCHOOL

THE EDITORIAL IN *Organiser*, attacking a petition by lawyer Veenayak Shah opposing Sanskrit prayers in Kendriya Vidyalayas, claims by invoking fraudulent principles and defying the basic philosophy of the Constitution is in fashion. The editorial expresses surprise at the fact that the Supreme Court has accepted the petition and now recommended its hearing by a Constitution Bench. "Before deliberating on any such case, we need to keep in mind the thinking of our Constitution makers on the issue and what can be the possible implications if the logic of petition is accepted," it says.

The editorial adds that the petition by Shah has argued that Sanskrit prayer recitation is a violation of Article 28 (1) as it promotes "Hinduism". "... If this logic is extended, then every institution of Bharat will have to change their motto. Why then the

Supreme Court work with the motto (sic), *Yato Dharmastato Jayah*, [which] means 'Where there is Truth (the dharma), there is Victory (justice)', which is a quote from [the] Mahabharata? With this absurd argument, our armed forces and even organisations like [the] DRDO are communal, as all of them have as their motto Sanskrit shlokas. As all entries in the Parliament are carved with the Sanskrit shlokas, even those will have to be removed. Even our Constitution has depictions from the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Upanishads; then our Constitution can be termed as a communal document with this illogical petition," the editorial adds.

The editorial concludes with remark that the danger of erasing Sanskrit shlokas from prayers is "eliminating the Sanskriti of Bharat, the only long-lasting view of life rooted in the integral approach and well-being for all".

MODI AGAIN

A COVER STORY in *Organiser* claims that the old proverb — "nobody is a permanent friend or enemy in politics" — is well-suited in the context of the recent "unholy" alliance between the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). The alliance, it

claims, is based solely on self-interest. Taking note of past political relations between the two parties, the article says that much water has flowed into the river since the 1995 "guest house" incident, when SP "hooligans" (allegedly) attacked Mayawati. "Now we are in (the) 21st-century... when one may see the lowest political ground to defeat a single identity - 'MODI' (sic). The BSP was 'blown away' by the Modi wave of 2014 and hardly survived it in the 2017 UP assembly elections. Similarly, the SP barely retained its status for name-sake as the principal Opposition in the assembly election, the report claims and adds: "So they ganged up to fight (the) Modi wave jointly based on their 2014 poll vote-share, assuming to merge vote share of each. (sic)"

The article also conjectures that with the presence of Priyanka Gandhi in UP, the electoral battle will become "quadrilateral" with multiple poles and the division of votes will actually benefit the BJP. According to the report, the Lok Sabha polls will be fought on the question of who will be next prime minister. With the complete absence of a PM candidate in the Opposition, Modi will provide the BJP with a clear majority of seats in UP — around 50-55 — which will suffice to have him return

to office, the article claims.

FALSE UNITY

AN ARTICLE IN *Organiser* claims that between the Opposition's latest show in Kolkata on January 19 and their first parade on May 23 last year, the chemistry and distance between them has changed. "Of course, they remain united in their hope (masked as resolve) to see that the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are away from any serious reckoning for power after the 2019 polls. But, beyond their wishful thoughts, there is little to show any unity in terms of strategy or willingness to overcome their ambitions to pursue the larger goal of a BJP-mukt sarkar," asserts the article. The article adds that Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, in May 2018, rubbed shoulders with Mayawati, Akhilesh Yadav, Mamata Banerjee, Sharad Pawar, Chandrababu Naidu, Sitaram Yechury and others at the initiative of former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda on the portico of the imposing Vidhan Soudha when H D Kumaraswamy was sworn in as chief minister of Karnataka. "Cut to February 2019, it is for everyone to see how the alliance has fared today".

Compiled by Lalmani Verma

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A STANDOFF DEBATED

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The spectacle' (IE, February 5). Showdowns like the one between the Centre and the West Bengal government have become a common feature of Indian politics. This disturbing development owes to the BJP-led NDA government's inclination to use law enforcement agencies to settle political scores. In a democracy, the government must treat its political foes and friends as fairly and equally as possible, to be seen as being above suspicion.

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The spectacle' (IE, February 5). The dhama by the West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to prevent the CBI from questioning Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar shows the complete breakdown of the state's administration. This is the first time that a chief minister of a state has gone on an indefinite sit-on with a public servant. Banerjee has accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP President Amit Shah of trying to organise a coup. But one wonders why the West Bengal chief minister is so agitated about the CBI interrogating Kolkata's police commissioner.

Tushar Anand, Patna

EYE OPENER

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Oh so backward' (IE, February 4). The article shows how flawed our general idea of backwardness is. The inspiring example of Mon makes us question our own sensibilities. Many of us who live in the so-called "forward" cities are surrounded by non-biodegradeable

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301. Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

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wastes for which we alone are responsible.

Dikshita Damodaran, Delhi

BITTER PILLS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Budget's how question' (IE, February 4). Skill generation and job creation are extremely important but they take time. Direct transfers to farmers, tax breaks to the middle class and agricultural subsidies put a great strain on the exchequer but they are extremely necessary for providing transient respite to the distressed beneficiaries.

Anish Manchanda via e-mail