



The Indian EXPRESS

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RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

A vote on national security

Parties must make it a poll issue. Questioning armed forces or government is not unpatriotic



SHYAM SARAN

AFTER CHINA'S VETO

India hasn't scored a diplomatic victory on Masood Azhar. But there are other ways to keep up pressure on Pakistan

THE TECHNICAL HOLD by China on a proposal to list Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar under United Nations Security Council resolution 1267 was not entirely unexpected. The proposal, first moved by France, found as many as 13 co-sponsors in the Security Council. Aside from the US and UK among the P-5, all 10 non-permanent members joined the proposal as co-sponsors as India dilled world capitals for support. Going by Beijing's muted reaction to the "counter-terrorist" air-strike by India in Balakot inside Pakistan, Delhi nursed a small hope that China might finally be ready to co-operate in Masood's designation by the Da'esh and Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the Security Council. In a last minute bid to persuade China against blocking the proposal, the US put out a statement saying that failure to designate Masood would go against the "shared goal" of regional stability and peace. The Chinese statement that a solution "acceptable to all" had to be found was a definite indication that Beijing was not on board. This is the fourth time China has used the "technical hold" to block Azhar's listing. Clearly, this act of kindness to Azhar by Beijing, despite its own oft-stated position against terrorism, means that it believes its own interests are better served by staying out of an international alliance against Pakistan.

This episode is not the end of the matter for India. The listing definitely would have been a diplomatic victory, but the unsuccessful effort does not mean that Masood Azhar is not a terrorist in the eyes of the world. In fact, just the opposite, as seen from the number of countries that supported the proposal. Each of those non-permanent members is a representative of its region in the Security Council. No one doubts that the JeM is headquartered in Pakistan, and that Azhar is based there too. India has succeeded in making clear both the JeM's role in the February 14 Kashmir bombing, and its own intention of not holding back on exercising a military option against terrorist groups based inside Pakistan.

The proposal, too, will remain under active consideration of the Security Council for the next 12 months. But while India should keep up efforts for Azhar's listing, it would be unwise to invest too much diplomatic capital on this alone. For one, it runs the risk of reducing India's multifaceted relationship with China to one issue, which is hardly the way in which two civilisational powers should be doing business. For another, the benefits of listing are hardly clear — especially India-focussed terrorists based in Pakistan — going by how Hafiz Saeed, leader of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jamaat-ud-Dawa, has flourished in the 10 years since he was put on the list. It would be better, instead, to keep up diplomatic pressure on Pakistan to give up its "strategic assets" in a range of other ways, including through the Financial Action Task Force.

GAME OVER

A shooter game is raising parental hackles. But that's no reason for Rajkot police to play nanny

THE RAJKOT POLICE are going where no one in khaki has gone before. They are now battling the ostensible epidemic of virtual violence unleashed by the award-winning video game PUBG, or Player Unknown Battleground. They didn't go online to do it, and contented themselves with creeping up on young men playing the game in public places and booking them. They marvel at the concentration of the players, who generally did not detect them approaching until it was too late. Their depth of focus seems to provide yet more evidence of the threat that the game presents to society, and apparently vindicates the notification that the Rajkot police commissioner issued against PUBG a few days ago, banning it from his turf.

But PUBG is not substantially different from other shooter games, a category that's been popular with online gamers for over three decades. Early cult titles include Muse Software's Castle Wolfenstein (1981) and id Software's Doom (1993) and Quake (1996). The player forages through a landscape for weapons and other assets which he or she turns on other players. Teamwork is generally available, but the free-for-all format has always been popular. Real-world penalties in these games include a reduction in social life and the wrath of the player's families, but the attentions of the police are generally not anticipated. The game has about 400 million active players, who are just waking up to the news that 10 of their peers in India are in trouble with the law, for disobeying a local notification banning the game.

Parents are worried about PUBG (one even complained to the prime minister), though it is no more violent than a lot of music and programming that children are exposed to. There is, of course, some evidence correlating excessive screen time with learning impairment and behavioural issues in children, but no conclusive data on adults. On the contrary, it is sometimes argued that violent content online has therapeutic value, sublimating the urge to commit violence in real life. Besides, the Constitution assures citizens the right to communicate with others, even through a video game. The nanny state has no business trying to attenuate this right through a notification. If it fears that violent games have social consequences, it should initiate a social advocacy programme against their use. But hauling young people off to a police station for playing a video game does severe violence to their privacy and freedoms.

NO TAMPERING

MCC proposal to standardise the ball is misguided. Joy of Test cricket lies in teams competing across varied conditions

AN EFFORT to standardise conditions for the world Test championship, the MCC's world cricket committee has suggested that all Tests be played with the same ball. The MCC doesn't have power to enforce the rule but considering its heavyweight panel, chaired by former England captain Mike Gatting, it's likely that the international cricket council might yield to the proposal.

The reason behind the proposal is providing a "level-playing field" and a "good balance between bat and ball". It isn't clear how this move will achieve that. Let's assume that the ICC goes with the Kookaburra ball — one among the three balls currently in use. The Kookaburra ball, used in Australia and South Africa among other countries, isn't a good fit in Indian conditions. If you believe Wasim Akram, it isn't a good fit for subcontinental conditions as it nullifies reverse swing, and since its seam gets flattened it isn't good for spin bowling on these pitches either. A Dukes ball, which abets swing movement in England, might not be so good for Australian conditions. Likewise, the SG ball might not be great for Australian conditions.

The real test and joy of Test cricket lies in the fact that teams compete across conditions (which include pitch, ball, crowds, weather) to prove their real worth. Why would anyone want to standardise that? Would the MCC go on to prescribe similar pitches also? If anything, to level the playing field, the MCC and ICC should think of a more radical move: Make the captains choose their own preferred ball in any condition. In a world loaded against the bowlers, let the fielding team decide their weapon of choice at toss and let the batsmen earn their runs and reputation. If a bowling team that has skillful reverse swingers feels that a Dukes ball might be more in tune with their plans and wants to take the risk on that ball in a country where it's generally not used, let them take that punt. It will lead to more interesting decisions.

IN THE WAKE of Pulwama and Balakot, national security may become the key issue in the forthcoming general elections. A focus on national security is assumed to bring advantage to the ruling BJP as it could sweep aside the Opposition's efforts to leverage the failures of the government on generating employment and relieving farm distress. It would be most timely if national security indeed became a serious election issue, not in terms of scoring political points, but in drawing attention to persistent infirmities in our governance systems, the failure to address serious gaps identified by expert committees such as the Kargil Review Committee (2000) and the Naresh Chandra Task Force on National Security (2012) and the blatant lack of accountability apparent in avoiding public reckoning in subsequent serious security lapses evident in the Pathankot, Uri and now the Pulwama incidents.

Let each political party in the fray have the courage to acknowledge India's national security challenge in its various dimensions and include in their respective manifestos what practical steps they are committed to undertaking to make our country safe from external and domestic threats.

One must expose our hostile neighbour's responsibility for threats to our national security. But it is as important to turn the spotlight on our own failings which allow our adversaries to exploit them repeatedly. The surgical strikes in 2016 and now the air attacks on Balakot are significant actions in raising the costs for Pakistan pursuing cross-border terror against India. But let us not over-interpret their impact. Any triumphalism which deflects attention from what needs to be done to strengthen our national security structures and processes, must be avoided. No government, no political leader, no institution of the state should claim immunity from scrutiny or questioning, especially in a democracy. As we go into the elections, political parties need to engage in a substantive debate on national security issues, share with the public what they believe are the serious gaps which must be addressed and what each intends to do to overcome them. What are the critical issues on which political parties should seek the people's mandate?

Recognising that national security has become a major public preoccupation, each party should include in its manifesto what it believes should be the national security

Recognising that national security has become a major public preoccupation, each party should include in its manifesto what it believes should be the national security doctrine for a plural and democratic country like India. It should be a doctrine based not on creating fear but clearly spelling out the real trade-off between security and the space to enjoy democratic values and fundamental rights of citizens enshrined in the Constitution. A national security doctrine will make sense only if it is placed in the framework of India's Constitution and conveys a sense of where India wishes to be as a country and society in 10, 20 or 30 years.

doctrines for a plural and democratic country like India. It should be a doctrine based not on creating fear but clearly spelling out the real trade-off between security and the space to enjoy democratic values and fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. A national security doctrine will make sense only if it is placed in the framework of India's Constitution and conveys a sense of where India wishes to be as a country and society in 10, 20 or 30 years. We should not end up as a state where security compulsions become a veto over decisions of democratically elected governments, nor should an elected government use the national security argument to abridge the rights of citizens and resist their right to hold government accountable.

More specifically, political parties should commit to updating the reports of the Kargil Review Committee and the Naresh Chandra Task Force on National Security, make public their outcome and promote an open debate as a prelude to implementing key recommendations. These two reports not only contain a diagnosis of our national security challenge but valuable recommendations to address it. They emphasise the need to draw lessons from past successes and failures and avoid ad hoc responses.

There are some indispensable elements for a robust national security system. One relates to police reform. Any security system is as good and efficient as its junior-most foot-soldier. The best superstructure is like a house built on sand unless it is supported by highly trained and motivated personnel at the lowest rungs of hierarchy. In India, law and order is a state subject. The recruitment of police personnel at these levels is often subject to political patronage and corrupt practices. They lack basic training. Some, being virtually illiterate, are not even trainable. Their conditions of work and living are pathetic. They are easily corrupted. Most state governments are guilty of allowing large vacancies in their police forces.

India has one of the lowest police to population ratios at 125 per 1,00,000. At the ground level, there is virtually no policing of the kind which might have apprehended the LeT terrorists as they landed on the beach outside Mumbai. That there is regular smuggling from across the sea and our land borders is an open secret. Terrorists slip through using these smuggling routes often relying upon corrupted elements in security forces. No ad-

ditional bureaucratic layers added to an already top heavy system are likely to make much difference unless the reality at the local level is addressed. Are the political parties ready to commit to implementing the long awaited, indeed Supreme Court directed, police reforms?

There is inordinate stress on the personal security of political personages and senior officials at the expense of public security. There are three security personnel, on an average, for every VIP. Some political leaders are protected by as many as a hundred or more security guards at the state's expense. This is anachronistic in a democratic and egalitarian society, but also impacts adversely on the state's ability to ensure public security and law and order without which terrorist threats cannot be addressed. Is any political party ready to declare that it will not seek privileged security cover for its members but focus instead on improving public security?

These are some of the real issues relating to national security and can be addressed through efficient and accountable institutions and not through individual bravery or brilliance. Citizens have the right to hold their political leaders and governing institutions accountable and that is only possible if there is transparency mandated by law, not left to the discretion of a government. It is unacceptable to assert that questioning the armed forces or government is unpatriotic. Armed forces are not invincible. They can make mistakes, they may lack capacity or the right kind of weaponry and equipment. National security does not justify hiding from one's own citizens the infirmities which plague our security forces. Governments make mistakes and will continue making them if citizens cannot question them. Are our parties ready to commit themselves to comprehensively evaluating national security institutions and processes through credible and respected public figures and independent professionals?

Let us, by all means, make national security an election issue because there are serious concerns on how it is being handled. Treating it as an evanescent electoral ploy rather than as an existential matter is selling the country short.

The writer is a former foreign secretary and senior fellow, CPR. He was chairman, National Security Advisory Board 2013-15



SAURABH KAPOOR

CASE OF EXPLODING HASHTAGS

Pulwama aftermath underlines it: News is not what is published, it's all that spreads

IN 1913, A socialist monthly in the US published a controversial cartoon showing the head of a prominent wire service pouring bottles of "lies," "slander" and "prejudice" into the well of news. *The Masses* called it, "Poisoned at the Source". In a world of accelerating interconnectedness a hundred years later, plugged into this source is a relentless social media conveyor belt. There are no bottles, but hashtags hidden in plain sight.

As two nuclear-armed nations teetered on the brink of war, familiar strangers on Twitter and Facebook timelines used trending hashtags to plot their positions on the social media battlefield. #FinalStrike, #DeclarePakTerrorState, #IndianStrikesBack, #PakStrikesBack, #SayYesToWar were just a few acts of digital blitzkrieg. It reaffirmed that social media has redefined the way news is traded up the consumption chain. While it is still far from replacing traditional news sources, social media has established itself as a dominant "discovery tool" for news. Stories become hashtags before they become headlines in your daily newspaper. Opinion, emotions and speculation now act as augmented reality filters for news, much like the ones for pictures on Instagram or Snapchat.

After the IAF airstrikes across the border, the Pakistan army was quick to tweet its responses, while our forces acted risk-averse in sharing details. In between, there were information voids that were filled with fiction and conspiracy theories.

News is no longer all that is published, it is all that spreads. That's why resources are increasingly dedicated to tell real from the fake. And that's where a hashtag acquires the power of driving change in case of a #MeToo or getting weaponised. As the rising fog of war rubbed its back against our internetted screens, every share or retweet with #BadlaKab, #ExposeDeshDrohis, #ExposePakLovers, #BoycottPak, #PulwamaRevenge and others such had a real-world impact in shaping or distorting the narrative. After the IAF airstrikes across the border, the Pakistan army was quick to tweet its responses, while our forces acted risk-averse in sharing details. In between, there were information voids that were filled with fiction and conspiracy theories. So, while your information stream looked organic on the outside, it was constantly drip-fed with images, information nuggets, graphics, videos to define the narrative through government-friendly or unverified social media handles on either side. While all talk centered around a conventional war, what we witnessed were insidious charges in a "netwar".

In the early 1990s, two political scientists with a US think tank, the RAND Corporation, offered a distinction between cyberwar —

hackers attacking enemy's economic and military capabilities online — and netwar, which they defined as information-related conflict between nations or societies aimed at "trying to disrupt, damage, or modify what a target population 'knows' or thinks it knows about itself and the world around it". John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt said that "a netwar may focus on public or elite opinion, or both" and "may involve public diplomacy, propaganda, psychological campaigns, cultural subversion or interference with the local media."

From videos of a "second IAF pilot captured by Pakistan", which turned out to be fake, to contested pictures of a what was presented as a PAF fighter pilot killed after his F16 was downed in a dogfight, the hostilities in this information war continue unabated from both sides. Expect more shots to be fired from these cyber shadow lines. But remember, as Arquilla and Ronfeldt argued, "Deterrence in a chaotic world may become as much a function of one's cyber posture and presence as of one's force posture and presence." And a netwar can also be "an instrument for trying, early on, to prevent a real war from arising".

saurabh.kapoor@expressindia.com



MARCH 14, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

KOSYGIN-DESAI TALKS
SOVIET PREMIER ALEXEI Kosygin, who returned to New Delhi cutting short his tour around the country by a day, held talks for two and a half hours with the Indian delegation led by Prime Minister Morarji Desai and consisting of the deputy prime ministers, the foreign minister and ministers representing various economic ministries. The were wide-ranging, covering bilateral economic co-operation and an exchange of views on international affairs, role of non-aligned and Moscow's relations with Washington. In this context, Kosygin said an agreement with the US on strategic arms limitation would be finalised "quite soon". China and its recent ac-

tion in Vietnam did not figure in the talks.
JANATA IN ASSAM
THE TWO JANATA high command observers — R K Hegde and Renuka Devi Barkatani — who visited Gauhati to study the situation created by the demand of party dissidents for change of leadership, are believed to have returned to New Delhi carrying the impression that while a large number of party legislators wanted the chief minister, Golap Chandra Borbor, to change his style of functioning, the pro-changers were in a minority. The ministry has the support of 60 Janata legislators, four Plains Tribal Council members and 12 CPM MLAs — 76 in a House 126.

UNWELCOME GUEST
THE JAMMU AND Kashmir government is not in favour of the Minorities Commission visiting the state. It does not want to treat Kushak Bakula, a member of the commission, as a state guest. Bakula is from Ladakh. He and Sheikh Abdullah are not known to be friends. The Jammu and Kashmir assembly adopted a resolution moved by the CM to set up an 11-man committee on whether the Minorities Commission had jurisdiction over the state.

(There was no edition of the newspaper on March 15 on account of Holi. These are from the issue dated March 14)

15 THE IDEAS PAGE

Why education doesn't become a poll issue

The gains of education are long-term and call for sustained efforts. Outcomes are often illegible to the electorate and too complex for political parties to take credit for them



KRISHNA KUMAR

DECISIONS IN THE field of education are usually quite illegible to the public eye. Some of them look inconsequential. Others look so obviously correct that no one bothers to examine them. Their political consequences, therefore, are rare and insignificant. That is one big reason why education has little value as an election issue.

Consider the recent decision — taken with genuine political consensus — about diluting the no-detention policy of the Right to Education Act. Politicians of just about every hue supported it. In the media, too, there was little criticism. Though it is a retrograde step, it looks as if it was the right thing to do. People find it obviously correct in light of their own childhood memories. One recalls being scared in childhood of failing in exams. This popular memory reinforces the commonsense logic that we all worked hard because we were afraid of failing. This logic is a shortcut to the conclusion that children will stop working hard if the fear of failing is erased. So, now one can happily take the final step: Learning standards are low (as dubious surveys have repeatedly proved) because the no-detention policy has taken the fear factor off learning. These quick conclusions become axiomatic if you are deliberating on children of the poor. Old, nicely entrenched middle-class images of the poor suggest that their children will take learning seriously only if the school injects into their minds a hefty, preferably daily, dose of fear.

This example demonstrates why bad decisions taken in education carry little political cost. Now we can address a question often asked before elections: If education is so important for development, why doesn't it make a difference to the outcome of elections? There are several reasons, and we have sampled just one of them. Let us turn to the others. Education presents an elusive terrain to voters. They respond to chronic shortages of electricity or bad roads. Urban voters feel good about a party during whose regime the water supply improved. This kind of reaction does not happen in the case of poorly-maintained schools or high failure rate in examination. You can't think of an election in which an education-related demand brought voters together. Nor can you think of an election in which the neglect or mismanagement of education led to a party's defeat. In election after election, one gets the impression that schools and colleges, no matter how badly they are maintained, just do not matter in elections. The status of education as an election issue is far, far lower than that of *bijli, sadak, pani* and *naukri* (electricity, road, water and employment).

Yet, political parties seldom fail to include education in their election manifestoes. The promises made are often grandiose, offering a new national policy on education, increase in expenditure, improved infrastructure, accountability among teachers, and so on. But when these promises are not fulfilled, no one seems to use the vote as a means to punish a party or candidate. Apparently, people don't expect much change or improvement in education. There is widespread acceptance of the state's failure on the education front. Acceptance is also reflected in the general willingness to turn to privately-run in-



CR Sasikumar

stitutions when state institutions fail to satisfy. This point looks a lot sharper as a statement than it is in social reality. Search for private alternatives is part of a long unfolding of common distrust in state institutions and the legitimate feeling that no individual can have a say in how these are run.

Another reason why education carries little value as an election issue lies in its nature as a long-range area of governance. Improvement in any component of education calls for sustained, long-term effort. The fruit takes many years — certainly more than five — to come into view. By then, public memory phases out the origin of these effects. The media doesn't help either. The din of election has little room for analysing a ruling party's performance in education because it is hard to sift older continuities from recently taken steps.

Another reason why education seldom figures in an election debate is its confusing placement between the Centre and the states. The "concurrent" status education holds between the two is not new. Most people find the distribution and overlap of responsibilities quite confusing. In reality, too, the responsibilities of the two sides are far from clearly divided. Even on radical measures like the RTE, the roles of the Centre and the states remain unclear. Who, exactly, is responsible for the slowing down of the RTE momentum is hard to pin down and explain to voters, especially in the Hindi belt. Given the nature of election-time ethos in our country, anything

As for higher education, it remains both opaque and irrelevant for the majority of children never make it to a college. So, if a regime has actively damaged institutions of higher learning, the matter cannot bring much political loss. Moreover, higher education is perceived primarily in terms of its degree-dispensing role. To be told that it has an intellectual purpose too makes little sense to an average parent-voter.

that sounds complex loses out. That alone may suffice to disqualify education as an election issue. It offers unlimited scope for confusion and obfuscation. Little is known outside about what is happening inside schools and classrooms. Tall claims can be made without much fear of contestation. The fact that governments have chosen to ignore basic issues afflicting the system of education is nicely concealed in the glamour of technology-based "solutions".

In the secondary education slab, the division between Centre and states conceals the class divide. The higher income groups are served by a Central Board of Examination (CBSE) while the rest of society sends its children to schools affiliated to state boards, Delhi being a major exception to this pattern. Pass percentage differs quite sharply between the CBSE and state boards. Millions fail in the latter boards, arousing little interest in Delhi and the national media. As for higher education, it remains both opaque and irrelevant for the majority of children never make it to a college. So, if a regime has actively damaged institutions of higher learning, the matter cannot bring much political loss. Moreover, higher education is perceived primarily in terms of its degree-dispensing role. To be told that it has an intellectual purpose, too, makes little sense to an average parent-voter.

The writer is a former director of NCERT

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Boeing should focus on eliminating risks, rather than trying to wipe out public concern through releasing statements over its own confidence in its product safety."
— GLOBAL TIMES CHINA

Stranger in the Northeast

BJP will need to shed ideological baggage and embrace local concerns if it wishes to build on its electoral successes



THANGKHANELAL NGAIHTE

SPEAKING AT A book launch function in New Delhi on November 24, 2017, the BJP leader, Ram Madhav, said that unlike the RSS, the BJP is unashamedly interested in winning elections and gaining power. Sharing the dais with a slew of BJP ministers from the Northeast and RSS leaders, he was in a triumphant mood. The previous year, the BJP had won the assembly election in Assam, the most populous state in the Northeast. Manipur followed in 2017. The book, *The Last Battle of Saraighat*, is a chronicle of how these victories were won.

Madhav went on to narrate how the BJP has evolved from being a party of India's "cow belt" to become a party of choice in places like the Northeast and Jammu and Kashmir. He painted a rosy picture for the future. Just three months later, the BJP added Tripura to its score while also becoming a partner in the new governments of Nagaland and Meghalaya. Mass defections had already led to the collapse of the Congress government in Arunachal Pradesh. With the defeat of the Congress in Mizoram in late 2018, the goal of "Congress-mukt" Northeast has, apparently, been achieved.

This surely should be a time of celebration for the BJP. But it was not to be. The new year saw the entire Northeast region besieged with hysteria over the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill (CAB). As the bill was passed in the Lok Sabha, agitations took on a feverish pace. All of a sudden, the BJP, which thought it had just conquered the Northeast, found itself without friends. It became BJP versus the rest.

What's happening? What explains the BJP's dramatic rise and its sudden look of vulnerability and loss over the now-lapsed CAB? What are the prospects of the BJP in the region, going forward?

First, one needs to qualify the claim of "Congress mukt" Northeast. It is true that all the eight states of the region now have non-Congress governments. But between Manipur, Meghalaya, Assam and Mizoram, the Congress still holds close to 80 assembly seats. This is significant because the Congress had to fight the last round of assembly elections in the face of massive anti-incumbency and a hostile government at the Centre. It would seem that in its mad rush to deliver on the promise of "Congress-mukt" Northeast, the BJP paints a much rosier picture of its position by simply counting all non-Congress votes as its own. This is misleading because in Nagaland and Meghalaya, the BJP is only a junior partner while it is not even part of the government in Sikkim and Mizoram.

Second, the most important factor for the BJP's dramatic rise in the Northeast is the

simple fact of it being in power in Delhi. The Northeastern states are small, deficit-ridden states and they need a friendly government at the Centre to keep them afloat. And when the government at the Centre has a clear goal of snatching the region from the grip of its bête noire, the Congress, changing colour to saffron becomes a necessity for survival. Not many need prompting.

Third, the image of the Narendra Modi government as a strong and decisive government, one that gets things done, played a role. People were fed up of the Congress's status quoist orientation. The energy and enthusiasm that the BJP brought to these elections and its employment of election professionals to run surveys and manage its messaging, helped.

Fourth, there was a strong anti-incumbency wave against Congress governments in Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya and Mizoram. The same goes for the communist government in Tripura. The BJP showed up as a viable alternative at the right time.

Lastly, the BJP carefully orchestrated its campaign to focus on local issues and concerns. In Madhav's own words: "We didn't allow the debate to turn to national issues." This was because the BJP knew it will not gain votes by harping on its core ideology. Indeed, it is difficult to see how the Northeast people will ever find the BJP's pet themes — Hindu, Hindi, cow, temple, hyper nationalism — endearing.

This was a clever strategy and it worked for the short term. But the limitation of this strategy — projecting an image contrary to its character — shows up soon in the form of the CAB. In the CAB, the Northeasterners saw the true face of the BJP and they were not happy.

To their credit, the authors of *The Last Battle of Saraighat*, Rajat Sethi and Shubhrastha, acknowledged that the BJP will need to undergo an "ideological churning" if it is to strengthen itself in the Northeast. "It would do the party a great service if the strategy decentralises itself and focus is given to local alliances and dynamics than an attempt to dictate politics from the Centre," they write.

The BJP will have to wrestle with this sooner or later. Back in March 2018, the BJP president, Amit Shah, had set a target of winning 21 Lok Sabha seats (out of 25) in the Northeast in the general election. As promised, the party will do all it can to win those seats. Ram Madhav is back doing what he does best: Cobbling up electoral alliances with regional parties. On March 13, the Asom Gana Parishad — which had exited the BJP-led government in Assam in January — returned to the BJP's fold. Others will follow.

Repressive laws like the AFSPA help mobilise people in between elections, but they have never decided election outcomes. The same may become true of the CAB. Elections are decided by multiple factors and ideology is only one among them. Yet, if the BJP fails to address ideological issues, it will always feel like a stranger in the Northeast.

The writer is assistant professor in political science at Churachandpur College, Lamka, Manipur

The call of democracy

Those schooled in universal values need to be involved in public-political debate



FRAZER MASCARENHAS SJ

WITH ELECTIONS AROUND the corner, who would think of educators and their influence? At an event last week, Father Arturo Sosa SJ — the Superior General of the worldwide Jesuit organisation and a political scientist himself — met a few hundred alumni from Jesuit-run schools and colleges. The latter were happy to acknowledge the influence of Jesuit education on their lives. The Society of Jesus runs 12 acclaimed educational institutions in Mumbai — five institutions of higher education, St. Xavier's College, Xavier Institute of Communications, Xavier Institute of Management, St. Xavier's Institute of Education, Xavier Institute of Engineering and seven schools, Campion, St. Xavier's, Holy Family, St. Mary's SSC, St. Mary's ICSE, Xavier's Boys Academy and St. Stanislaus. To mark this occasion, a video depicting the contribution of Jesuits to education was released at the Magis Conclave held at St. Stanislaus High School, Bandra.

Twelve eminent alumni of Jesuit institutions feature in the video — Soli Sorabjee, Adi Godrej, Adille Sumariwala, Adil Chagla, Farokh Udawadia, M M Somaya, Shubha Tole, Rajdeep Sardesai, Major General Ian Cardozo, Venkatesh Srinivasan, Josy Paul and Renuka

Shahane. They paid tributes to the contribution of their Jesuit alma mater to their lives. Sardesai pointed out that if all the alumni from these institutions, who have made a mark in different fields, were to be featured together, they would fill a stadium. The value-based education that the Jesuits and their faculty have provided for well over a century has resulted in alumni who have made significant contribution to Indian society in varied walks of life. All have imbibed the values of excellence and of integrity, wanting to reach for the "more" — the "Magis" in Jesuit terminology.

The Magis Conclave itself brought together eminent alumni including several interviewed for the video, others like Anu Aga, Julio Ribeiro and about 200 more; all expressed grateful sentiments and encouraged Jesuit education to take bold steps. Education that fosters inclusiveness, discipline, freedom of thought, impartiality across communities and classes, and instills courage to oppose evil was seen as a part of the "tremendous vision" ascribed to the Jesuits' value system by Soli Sorabjee.

Father Sosa, in turn, commended the alumni for living the values they imbibed and

invited them to a partnership with the Jesuits in contributing to the formation of a community of people who "live for others". Today, as Jesuits take quality education to the margins — rural areas, tribal communities, Dalits and other disadvantaged groups — while remaining committed to engaging with all sections of Indian society, the alumni have a crucial role to play in bringing expertise, resources and civil society support in times of crisis and in contributing to a vision for education for the future so that the needs of a global but much-fragmented world may be addressed. Father Sosa spoke passionately of the great resource that the network of Jesuit alumni could be in society.

The Jesuits are known to focus on "discernment" — seeking and getting in touch with divine wisdom and in reading the signs of the times. The action of the alumni, who are influenced by this principle, would surely have political repercussions, especially at a time when propaganda, false claims, fake news and suppression of dissent are great challenges. Jesuit alumni, who bring excellence to their own fields, should also summon the courage to raise voices against hatred, exclusiveness and sectarianism. Civil

society involvement in public policy is the guarantee of true democracy and those schooled in universal values and human rights need to be involved in the public debate on development and democratic institutions. A network of influential alumni would be a force to reckon with.

The Magis Conclave saw Jesuit alumni encouraging their mentors and educators to continue the task of bringing quality education to those most in need. But the take-away from the event was the great need for Jesuit institutions to harness the goodwill, expertise and the support of the alumni in the task of developing a vision for good education and taking such education to the millions of Indians thirsting for it. The alumni acknowledged that the Jesuit system of education that inculcates values and inspires compassionate commitment would make a significant difference to India in the 21st century.

Will such education and educators have an influence in the elections that are around the corner?

The writer is a former principal, St. Xavier's College, Mumbai

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SWARAJ FOR ALL

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Swaraj for the kisan' (IE, February 14). The writer correctly argues that ground conditions in agriculture have been changed since the 1950s and policymakers are yet to grasp that. The same holds true for labour. Most of our labour laws were enacted to serve the demands of the manufacturing sector in the 1960s while today the service sector dominates the economy. Likewise, higher education regulations also require overhaul and so do regulations pertaining to the infra sector, especially ports.

Suchak D Patel, Ahmedabad

WHERE IT HURTS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Beyond Masood Azhar' (IE, March 14). Instead of focusing on the UNSC, India must direct all its energies towards the FATF. It should endeavour to get the forum to declare Pakistan as a "rogue state". This will financially cripple Pakistan. India must transfer the heat back onto China by raising tariffs, combine with the US in acting against Huawei and recognise the struggle for an independent Tibet.

Ashok Goswami, Mumbai

MANDATES, TASKS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The class monitor' (IE, March 14). The Election Commission can be expected to desist from acting as a partisan body. But each opposition party is busy beating its own drum. The much-

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to

editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

THE WINNER RECEIVES SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS

touted grand alliance seems to have developed cracks. This will embolden the BJP to resort to jingoism.

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The class monitor' (IE, March 14). The Election Commission must have the authority to decide on the list of subjects that should not be politicised. The EC is an invigilator; the real examiners are the voters.

Ketan Kishan, Gurugram

16 THE INDIAN EXPRESS, FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 2019 EXPLAINED

@ieExplained #ExpressExplained If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@expressindia.com

THIS WORD MEANS

ASTROBATRACHUS KURICHIYANA Frog species, millions of years old, newly found in Ghats



A TINY frog species has been identified for the first time in the Western Ghats. What makes the 'starry dwarf frog' significant is that it is millions of years old but had evaded attention until now.

WHAT IT IS LIKE: The species has been named Astrobatrachus kurichiyana for its constellation-like markings and the indigenous people of Kurichiyamala, the hill range where it was found.

Astrobatrachus kurichiyana. Seenapuram Palaniswamy Vijayakumar via Florida Museum of Natural History

family Astrobatrachinae that is a long branch on the frog tree of life. The Florida Museum of Natural History quoted herpetologist David Blackburn as describing it as 'an oddball frog - it has no close sister species for maybe tens of millions of years'.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT: A kurichiyana has been classified as the sole member of an ancient lineage - the newly named sub-

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

What next after China's block

Beijing has once again blocked New Delhi's move to get Jaish chief Azhar listed by UN as a global terrorist. Yet there are some takeaways for India in the way it has lobbied support. Where can this lead to?

SHUBHAJIT ROY NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

How often has China blocked UN action against Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist Masood Azhar?

In the last 10 years, China has repeatedly blocked India's listing proposals at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1267 sanctions committee to designate Azhar as a global terrorist.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Sabarmati waterfront in 2014. PIB Ahmedabad

was trying to score political points over Islamabad. So in 2017, when India asked its influential strategic partners US, UK and France to move the proposal, it negated the narrative that it was a India-Pakistan tussle and was rather placed as the international community's fight against terrorism.

So, India was prepared to see China doing so again? There were indications, in the form of continuous and consistent statements from Beijing about 'rules and procedures'.

Is this latest move frustrating from the previous occasions when China acted similarly? This latest move is significant. In 2009 and 2016, it was India that had moved the proposal.

Are there also continuities in the way China has gone about blocking India's

proposals on listing Azhar? China has always used Pakistan, as senior Indian officials say, a 'strategic weapon' against India.

What does China gain by repeatedly frustrating India and the global consensus on fighting terrorism emanating from Pakistan? For China, Pakistan is an 'all-weather ally' and an 'iron brother'.

What is the way forward for Indian diplomacy on this issue? The technical hold gives India nine months to lobby with China, so that it lifts the hold and allows the listing of Azhar.

India will also need to work all its diplomatic levers so that Pakistan takes concrete and verifiable actions against terrorism. The FATF gives India an opportunity; it can try and persuade the international community to even blacklist Pakistan by May-September this year.

reputation, even if it means that it is perceived to be standing on the wrong side of the global fight against terrorism.

Is there anything at all for India to feel satisfied about after the latest disappointment?

The support from the global community, which was reflected in the 13 co-sponsors of the listing proposal, is a reflection of broad global support India has been able to rally. In the current bout of Indo-Pak tension, China had taken a very calibrated position - which India sees as a positive - until its blocking of the proposal on Azhar.

Beyond the listing of Azhar, China has also been blocking India's aspirations to become a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. New Delhi took up this matter vigorously in June 2016, when then Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar travelled to Seoul to lobby with key NSG members.

It has strategic investments in Pakistan, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. For its all-weather friend, it is ready to take a hit on its

TELLING NUMBERS

Canada's Indian languages

AMONG THE 157 killed on board the Ethiopian Airlines crash on March 10, six were members of an Indian-origin family based in Brampton city, Canada (The Indian Express, March 14).

TOP 5 SPOKEN LANGUAGES (other than English, French)

Table with 2 columns: Region and Language. Rows include Population, Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi, Tagalog, Spanish for both Canada and Brampton, Ontario.

TIP FOR READING LIST

A MAN'S WORLD, DEFINED BY DATA

THE PRONOUN "he" is often used as the default to mean "he or she", but many people picture a man when they hear it. British activist and author Caroline Criado Perez delves into data that show how the world has been largely built for and by men.



proach to supposedly gender-neutral products is disadvantaging women," Criado Perez writes in Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men.

While acknowledging that the book offers endless nuggets to chew on, science writer Angela Saini, author of Inferior: How Science Got Women Wrong and the New Research That's Rewriting the Story, observes that an equal world can only be one in which people change.

"There is plenty of data showing that women have, on average, smaller hands than men, and yet we continue to design equipment around the average male hand as if one-size-fits-men is the same as one-size-fits-all. This one-size-fits-men ap-

FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

How does autopilot match up to a (good) pilot?

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

EXCEPT WHEN landing or taking off, modern aircraft largely fly on their own. In the aftermath of the Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines crashes, questions have been raised over automation.

On March 12, President Donald Trump tweeted: "Airplanes are becoming far too complex... Pilots are no longer needed, but rather computer scientists from MIT... Seeking to go one unnecessary step further, when often old and simpler is far better. Complexity creates danger... I want great flying professionals that are allowed to easily and quickly take control of a plane!"

Is too much automation making aircraft unsafe?

The criticism Critics of "over-automation" say pilots spend more time trying to understand complicated automated systems than actually flying.

on multiple interviews with pilots and instructors. If computers malfunction at any time, a pilot who is more a "systems operator" than an aviator could be too late reacting.

Old concerns

Back in 1997, an American Airlines pilot-training video flagged the overdependence on automation.

About six years ago, the US aviation regulator Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) asked pilots to practise tackling an aircraft that is losing lift. But it did not enforce the directive until this week.

In 2011, a US federal study found that in 60% of 46 recent accidents, pilots struggled to fly manually, and were sometimes confused by complicated automation systems.

In 2013, another US government report recommended that pilots should focus on flying better manually. In the Asiana Airlines crash in San Francisco that year, investigators found an over-reliance on automation.

In 2016, an internal report indicted the FAA for not making sure that pilots were adequately trained in manual flying, and for not monitoring how much manual flying they really did.

Sully Sullenberger, the hero pilot who landed a loaded aircraft in the Hudson off Manhattan in 2009, has been quoted as



Inside the cockpit of a Jet Airways Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft in Mumbai. Reuters file photo from June 2018

warning that fatal accidents were "inevitable if we continue down this path (of relying too much on automation)".

Industry constraints

Aircraft are becoming increasingly more automated and the global shortage of pilots is growing, so airlines are using less experienced pilots who, as an international airline pilot with a PhD on pilot training told The NYT, "can punch the buttons" but may not "be able to fly that airplane when it breaks".

200 hours - a small fraction of what the FAA requires, but the same as the requirement for a commercial pilot's licence in India.

Some critics have blamed insurance companies for capping the amount of manual flying training that flight school students are allowed in poor visibility. Others have argued that the real problem isn't with the training, but with the loss of learnt skills once pilots get used to autopilot.

After the 2013 San Francisco crash, investigators found that Asiana had "emphasised the full use of all automation and did not encourage manual flight", The NYT reported.

A stellar record

Still, automation has made a massive contribution to improving airline safety. Many pilots say the advantages of automation are too many to bear comparison with any risks it might carry in certain situations. The NYT quoted former FAA inspector David Williams as saying: "The data is there that we've got a good system. The reduction of training is over-ridden by the advances in the equipment."

All the world's 47 airlines flying nearly 350 MAX 8s have now grounded these planes. Until then, MAX 8s had completed an estimated 8,600 flights in a typical week, according to data from Flightradar24.

Itself in grey zone, why Pak has complained to terror finance watchdog about India

RAHUL TRIPATHI NEW DELHI, MARCH 14

PAKISTAN'S FINANCE Minister Asad Umar has written to the president of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) asking that India be removed as co-chair of the FATF's Asia-Pacific Joint Group (APJG), which is reviewing Islamabad's progress on action against terrorist financing.

Umar wrote to FATF president Marshall Billingslea that "India's animosity towards Pakistan is well-known and the recent violation of Pakistan's airspace and dropping of bombs inside Pakistani territory was another manifestation of India's hostile attitude."

process is fair, unbiased and objective".

The FATF

The FATF was established in July 1989 by a G-7 Summit in Paris to examine and develop measures to combat money laundering. In October 2001, it expanded its mandate to incorporate efforts to combat terrorist financing as well.

The FATF monitors the progress of members and non-members in implementing the FATF Recommendations, "a comprehensive and consistent framework of measures which countries should implement in order to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, as well as the financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction".

identifies jurisdictions with "weak measures to combat money laundering and terrorist financing (AML/CFT) in two FATF public documents that are issued three times a year".

The FATF's decision-making body, the FATF Plenary, meets three times in Paris between July and June - usually in October, February and June. The FATF's 38 members (36 member jurisdictions and two regional organisations, the European Commission and Gulf Cooperation Council), two observer jurisdictions (Indonesia and Saudi Arabia), and multiple observer organisations (mainly international banks and law enforcement bodies) attend the Plenary. India is an FATF member; Pakistan is not.

The APJG

APJG is a working group that functions under the FATF, and is not to be confused with the Asia/Pacific Group (APG) headquartered in Sydney, Australia. The APG is the largest of nine FATF-Style Regional

Bodies (FSRBs) whose 41 members include both India and Pakistan. Eleven of these members are members of FATF as well. India became a member of the APG in March 1998; Pakistan in May 2010.

The APG examines AML/CFT efforts of members countries every 10 years. Pakistan will be reviewed in 2019-20. "While FATF will look into the 26-point action plan, APG will hold a separate review," an Indian official said.

26-point plan

In 2018, FATF approved the nomination for monitoring of Pakistan under its International Cooperation Review Group, commonly known as the 'grey list'. The resolution against Pakistan was moved by the US, and supported by the UK, France, Germany, and India. It said Pakistan was not doing enough to comply with anti-terrorist financing and anti-money laundering regulations.

In June 2018, Pakistan submitted a 26-point action plan to the FATF, committing to

implement it over the next 15 months. The action plan included a squeeze on the finances of Jamaat-ud Dawa, Falah-i-Insaniyat, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Haqqani Network and the Afghan Taliban. The failure to negotiate the action plan could have led to Pakistan being blacklisted.

In January 2019, the FATF decided to keep Pakistan on the grey list, based on a review that concluded that the country had made "limited progress" in curbing money laundering and terrorism. Expressing dissatisfaction, FATF said Pakistan could "not demonstrate a proper understanding of the terror financing risks posed by Daesh (ISIS), al-Qaeda, Jamaat-ud-Dawa, Falah-i-Insaniyat Foundation, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Haqqani Network, and persons affiliated with the Taliban".

Whether Pakistan remains in the grey list or is placed in the black list will be clear by October 2019. Pakistan was on the FATF watchlist between 2012 and 2015 as well,

but only for money laundering.

What happens now

Officials said it was unlikely that Pakistan's complaint against India to the FATF would have an impact. Pakistan is not a member of FATF; India, on the other hand, has been an active member in the FATF and in its various sub-groups after 2013 following New Delhi's effort to introduce changes to the AML/CFT systems and laws.

India has been lobbying hard with the US for the strict monitoring of Pakistan, and highlighting the funding of terrorist activities by that country. India has in the past provided evidence of the involvement of Pakistani officials in peddling fake currency, and planning attacks on Indian assets on foreign soil.