



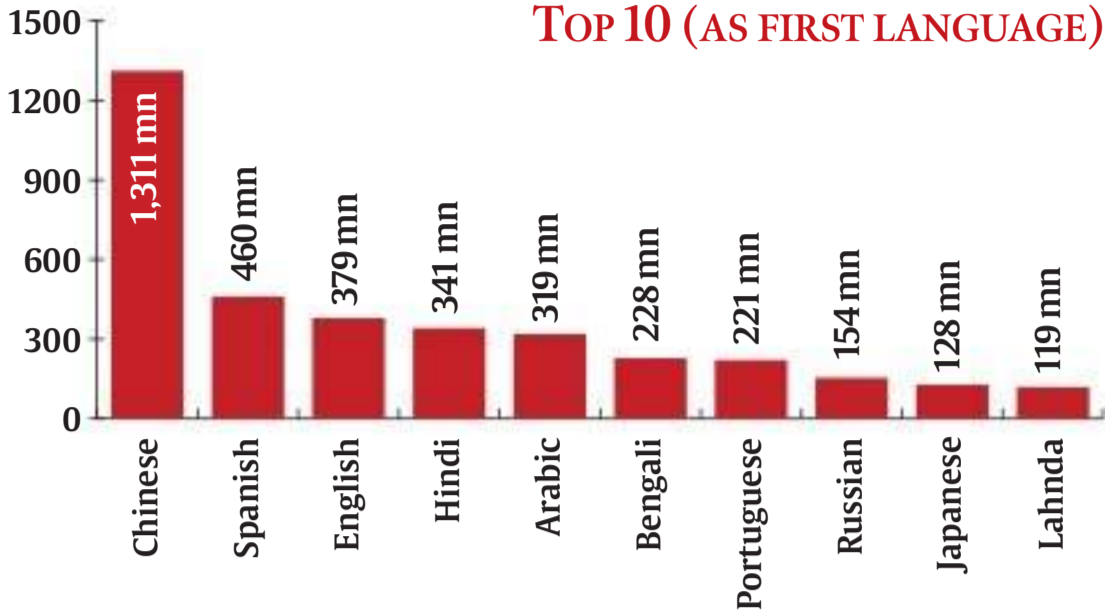
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## TELLING NUMBERS

### Chinese most widely spoken, 2 Indian languages in top 10

TOP 10 (AS FIRST LANGUAGE)



A REPORT in *The Indian Express* Monday described how Zhou Xin of Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU) uses the film *7aum Arivu* (2011) and works of literature to teach her students Tamil. BFSU also has courses in Hindi and Bengali. The latter two Indian languages happen to be among the 10 most widely spoken in the world, while Tamil too features in the top 25. The list is headed by Chinese, a broad category that includes a number of dialects and variants.

Ethnologue, a database whose website describes it as "the world's most authoritative resource on world languages, trusted by academics and Fortune 500 companies alike", provides details on all 7,111 known living languages. Against the broad head for Chinese (macrolanguage), which includes individual languages such as Mandarin and Yue (Cantonese), Ethnologue gives a worldwide total of

### ALSO IN TOP 25

Rank	Language	Speakers (mn)
11	Marathi	83.1
12	Telugu	82.0
19	Tamil	75.0
20	Urdu	68.6
24	Gujarati	56.4
25	Bhojpuri	52.2

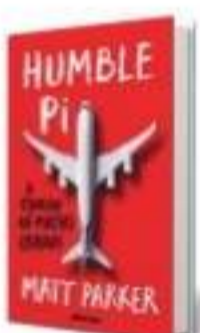
Source: Ethnologue: Languages of the World, 2019

1,311 million speakers, as first language. This is 17 times the 75 million people who speak Tamil, which is the 19th most widely spoken worldwide. Hindi with 341 million speakers is at number four — behind Spanish and English — and Bengali with 228 million is sixth, behind Arabic with all its variants.

## TIP FOR READING LIST

### WHEN MATHEMATICS GOES WRONG

BEHIND ALMOST everything we do, a lot of mathematics is at work. Computer programmes, finance and engineering revolve around mathematics, which goes largely unnoticed because it works quietly in the background. But what if the maths does not work? Matt Parker of Queen Mary University of London explores the dangers of mathematical mistakes in his new book.



frequency of the building, causing it to vibrate. The entire building had to be evacuated.

In another example, both engines on a passenger jet failed midflight because the fuel had been weighed in pounds rather than kilograms. The pilot eventually managed to land safely.

Parker stresses the importance of learning from such mistakes. He presents this serious message with humour, and by engaging the reader throughout. The book contains puzzles, jokes and deliberate mistakes. "...Parker is consistently very funny. His chapter on geometrical errors reports with pride that he started a petition for the UK government to replace all football signs — which show an impossible football made entirely out of hexagons — with the mathematically correct figure, comprising 20 hexagons and 12 pentagons," *The Guardian* writes in its review.

One of the most engaging examples is about the group Snap's 1990 hit *I've Got The Power*. On the 12th floor of a 39-storey building in South Korea, a gym class was working out to that song, with their tempo matching the resonant

## SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

# How Lokpal will take shape

Chairman of national anti-corruption ombudsman selected, other members next. A look at the road ahead

SHYAMLAL YADAV  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

ON SUNDAY, a selection panel finalised the name of former Supreme Court judge Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose as the first head of the Lokpal, a national anti-corruption ombudsman. This comes five years after the President had given assent to the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013. A look at how the rest of the Lokpal will be selected, and how it will function:

### Who all remain to be selected?

Justice Ghose was selected by committee headed by the Prime Minister. The same selection committee will choose the Lokpal's other members. Under the 2013 Act, the Lokpal should consist of a chairperson and such number of members, not exceeding eight, of whom 50% should be judicial members. The selection procedure for these posts is the same as that for the chairperson. A search committee will prepare a panel of candidates, a selection committee will recommend names from among this panel, and the President will appoint these as members.

The Act states that not less than 50% of the members of the Lokpal should be from among persons belonging to the SCs, the STs, OBCs, minorities and women. The same rules apply members of the search committee.

Salaries, allowances and service conditions of the Lokpal chairperson will be the same as those for the Chief Justice of India; those for other members will be the same as those for a judge of the Supreme Court.

### What happens after these selections?

The Lokpal will set about creating its various wings. It will have an "Inquiry Wing, headed by the Director of Inquiry, for the purpose of conducting preliminary inquiry into any offence alleged to have been committed by a public servant punishable under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988". It will also have a "Prosecution Wing, headed by the Director of Prosecution, for the purpose



Anna Hazare celebrates in Ralegan Siddhi after Lok Sabha passed the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Bill in 2013. Sandeep Daundkar

of prosecution of public servants in relation to any complaint by the Lokpal under this Act". Once the other members of the Lokpal are appointed, the process for more appointments will start: Secretary, Director of Inquiry and Director of Prosecution and other officers and staff of the Lokpal.

### What kind of public servants will come under the purview of these wings?

For a wide range of public servants — from the Prime Minister, ministers and MPs, to groups A, B, C and D employees of the central government — various rules are in place. If a complaint is filed against the Prime Minister, the Act says, "Lokpal shall inquire or cause an inquiry to be conducted into any matter involved in, or arising from, or connected with, any allegation of corruption made in a complaint". However, certain conditions will apply. The Act does not allow a Lokpal inquiry if the allegation against the Prime Minister relates to international relations, external and internal security, public order, atomic energy

and space. Also, complaints against the Prime Minister are not to be probed unless the full Lokpal bench considers the initiation of an inquiry and at least two-thirds of the members approve it. Such an inquiry against the Prime Minister (if conducted) is to be held in camera and if the Lokpal comes to the conclusion that the complaint deserves to be dismissed, the records of the inquiry are not to be published or made available to anyone.

The Act also includes the Lokpal's own members under the definition of "public servant". "The Chairperson, Members, officers and other employees of the Lokpal shall be deemed, when acting or purporting to act in pursuance of any of the provisions of this Act, to be public servants... It shall apply to public servants in and outside India," it states. It clarifies that "a complaint under this Act shall only relate to a period during which the public servant was holding or serving in that capacity."

### How is an inquiry to proceed?

The Lokpal may, after receiving a complaint

against any public servant, order a preliminary inquiry (to be completed within 90 days) or investigation by any agency. After receiving the report of the preliminary inquiry, the Lokpal may order an investigation by any agency or departmental proceedings or any other appropriate action against the concerned public servants by the competent authority, or it can order closure of the proceedings.

### What are the Lokayuktas mentioned in the Act?

These are the state equivalents of the central Lokpal. "Every State shall establish a body to be known as the Lokayukta for the State, if not so established, constituted or appointed, by a law made by the State Legislature, to deal with complaints relating to corruption against certain public functionaries, within a period of one year from the date of commencement of this Act," states Section 63 of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act. This means establishment of the institution of the Lokayukta including any appointment therein falls within the domain of the states.

### When are the states expected to set up their respective Lokayuktas?

In some states, Lokayuktas were already functioning when the 2013 Act was passed. Most states, however, are without a Lokayukta. Last year, the Supreme Court observed, "It appears that... Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh have not appointed any Lokpal, Lokayukta or Up-Lokayukta." It asked the chief secretaries of these states "whether steps have been taken for appointment of Lokayukta/ Up-Lokayukta and if so the stage thereof... The reasons for non-appointment of Lokayukta/ Up-Lokayukta... be also laid before the court."

The Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram Assemblies had passed Lokayukta Bills in 2014. Following the SC order, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry Assemblies passed their respective Bills in July last year.

## THIS WORD MEANS | J&K'S SPOs

# Under-trained, poorly paid militant targets

BASHARAT MASOOD  
SRINAGAR, MARCH 18

SUSPECTED MILITANTS killed a woman Special Police Officer (SPO) in South Kashmir's Shopian Saturday. How are the SPOs of J&K recruited, and what are they expected to do?

### The recruits

The state's 30,000 SPOs work alongside 90,000 regular police personnel, and are in many ways the unacknowledged backbone of the force. Under the Jammu and Kashmir Police Act, an SPO may be appointed "when it shall appear that any unlawful assembly or riot or disturbance of peace has taken place or may be reasonably apprehended and that the police force ordinarily employed... is not sufficient for its preservation and protection of the inhabitants and the security of property...". SPOs were first appointed to deal with militancy in 1996 when Farooq Abdullah's National Conference government was in power.

### Recruitment

Initially, SPs appointed SPOs directly,

based on need. There was no screening, and appointments were often made on "compassionate grounds". The power to appoint SPOs later went to the Deputy Commissioners. After the July 2016 killing of Hizbul Mujahideen's Burhan Wani triggered massive protests, the Home Ministry announced that 10,000 SPOs would be recruited. District Level Screening Committees were constituted under Deputy Commissioners, which recruited SPOs through a proper process. Men and women between the ages of 18 and 28 who have cleared Class 10 are eligible. Candidates must meet physical eligibility requirements, which includes the ability to run, for men, 1,600 m in 6 minutes and 15 seconds and, for women, 1,000 m in the same time.

### Their salary

At the time SPOs were first appointed, their monthly salary was a paltry Rs 3,000, with the promise of absorption in the regular force after three years of "excellent performance" in counter-insurgency operations. After a revision in September 2018, SPOs with up to 5 years' experience get Rs 6,000, those with 5-15 years' experience get Rs 9,000, and veterans with over

15 years get Rs 12,000. By contrast, a regular policeman starts at more than Rs 25,000. SPO salaries are part of the Union Home Ministry's Security Related Expenditure, and the state government has no say in what they get.

### Job profile

SPOs maintain law and order, gather intelligence, and fight against militants. Women SPOs are exempt from anti-militancy operations. Their only training is a week-long course at which they don't learn much more than how to wear uniforms and salute officers. SPOs engaged in anti-militancy operations get a short course in handling weapons, but senior police officers say there is a gulf between this training and what regular police personnel get.

SPOs are contractual employees who must have an "excellent" counter-insurgency record to qualify for a regular job. To be promoted as a constable, the SPO must also be less than 37 years old, and meet physical requirements. Failure to qualify on account of age, education or physical measurements could still earn the SPO promotion as a 'follower', and appointment as a barber, cook, etc. in the police.

It is, however, an open secret that the pro-

motion of an SPO is dependent on his "proximity to a police officer". On several occasions, SPOs posted as cooks or auxiliary staff at officers' homes have allegedly been falsely shown to have participated in gunfights with militants, then promoted to constable or follower.

In 2018, a screening of SPOs appointed over the past six years was ordered to "weed out undeserving" appointees. It was felt that a number were recruited on the direction of politicians; also, the exercise was expected to be a check for links, if any, with militants. Over the last two years, several SPOs have decamped with weapons and joined militant ranks.

### Soft targets

Since 1996, police records show, 504 SPOs have been killed in militant attacks. Militants believe police use SPOs to collect intelligence. Police officers claim to have intercepted militant communication from across the border last year asking for SPOs absorbed into the force and promoted as constables to be targeted. The SPOs are often unpopular with the people during anti-government protests, they are taunted with calls of "panda shath ti bati (Rs 1,500 and food)".

# EC to meet social media firms today: What's on the discussion table?

KARISHMA MEHROTRA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

THREE WEEKS ahead of India's most digitally-influenced Lok Sabha election so far, the Election Commission will meet with representatives of Internet companies Tuesday to discuss unresolved issues related to social media content at a time when the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is in force.

### How did we get here?

In January this year, a 14-member EC committee chaired by Deputy Election Commissioner Umesh Sinha suggested changes to Section 126 of The Representation of the People (RP) Act, which prohibits campaigning in the last two days before voting. The panel studied the impact of social and new media during this "silence period" and recommended appropriate changes to the MCC. New media and social media are currently not covered under Section 126.

Two weeks ago, the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) — which is representing Facebook, Twitter, Google, WhatsApp and ShareChat in working with the poll panel to draw up a 'Code of Ethics' — agreed to "priority channels for the EC within their grievance redressal mechanisms" and other election-related educational programs on these platforms.

On March 9, the EC said parties and can-

didates can't use photos of defence personnel and defence functions for election purposes. Subsequently, Facebook was asked to remove political posters bearing Wg Cdr Abhinandan's pictures, shared by BJP leaders.

On Friday, the EC wrote to Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Google, ShareChat, and TikTok calling them for a meeting on Tuesday to discuss channels of grievance redressal, evolve a mechanism to prevent abuse on social media and a "notification mechanism" for the EC to flag violations, and work out awareness programs particularly during the silence period and a "general Code of Ethics by Social Media intermediaries".

### What is likely to be discussed?

Based on the Sinha recommendations and IAMAI's response, the following unresolved issues are likely to be put on the table:

■ **Process of pre-certification for political advertisements online:** The EC has said that all political advertisements on social media will require pre-certification from its Media Certification and Monitoring Committees (MCMCs). The IAMAI disagrees: "The onus of pre-certification is on advertisers and not on intermediaries." The industry body has quoted a 2004 Supreme Court ruling that said parties and candidates must apply to the EC before issuing TV ads. "Pre-monitoring", the intermediaries say, would require them to forego legal safe-harbour provisions, which exempt them from liability for



The misuse of social media in democratic processes has been a cause for concern in multiple countries. In this file photo from 2018, Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg testifies before Senate committees in Washington on, among other things, Facebook's failure to stop Russian election interference. *The New York Times*

content on their platforms before it is brought to their attention.

■ **Time for companies to remove content in the silence period:** In its report, the Commission said that companies must remove content in the 48-hour silence period within three hours of notice. IAMAI did not explicitly respond to this stipulation. IAMAI president Subho Ray said it could either agree to abide by the request "as soon as possible" or explain in a "time-bound manner" why the content could not be taken down.

■ **Who is a political advertiser?** A third unresolved issue mentioned in IAMAI's response to the EC is whether an expression "political advertiser" also includes those who pay platforms to "boost" or "promote" a post created by somebody else. "...There is... concern regarding individual posts of endorsement that may not qualify as 'paid

political advertisement' in the most commonly understood form of the term. The EC [has]... referred to issuing an FAQ on the norms for 'paid political advertisement'. The platforms request the EC to expedite this FAQ," IAMAI said in its response.

India-based social media platform ShareChat sought further clarification from the EC over "what constitutes a political advertisement...; which entities are bound by the obligations to ensure pre-certification, and time frame from when such obligations apply on candidates, parties, and (if relevant) third parties."

■ **Citing specific legal provisions:** After EC's first takedown notice to Facebook last week, the company informally pointed out to the EC that it had not cited the specific legal provision that the content had violated. IAMAI's Ray told *The Indian Express*: "We want a legal order that cites a legal provision. One, it will help us establish the legality of the notice. And two, in case we challenge it, we will have to explain to the court that this notice does not pass the muster of the cited act or law."

In its response to the EC's proposed guidelines, IAMAI said: "The platforms would also like to engage with the office of the EC to train the designated officer on how to reach out to the platforms, and also conduct mock 'fire drills' to fine tune the process."

### Why does social media matter so much

### in this election?

The Election Commission began conversations about social media in 2013, but the scale and reach of public engagement on Internet-based platforms has increased enormously since then. According to IAMAI, the Internet base has more than doubled to almost half a billion users since the time of the last elections.

Political parties have made a significant advertisement push online. According to Facebook's advertisement portal, Indians spent almost Rs 10 crore between February 24 and March 9 this year on political ads on the platform. Both the BJP and Congress have expanded their social media volunteers and office-bearer groups massively. Digital marketers, such as the Congress's Silverpush, have entered the picture.

Most significantly, Facebook's Cambridge Analytica controversy made election integrity and social media a topic of discussion in India. Cambridge Analytica's Indian partner Oveleno Business Intelligence (OBI) named the BJP, Congress, and JD(U) as clients on its website, but all the parties denied working with the data firm.

Since then, social media executives have been called into European and American government hearings, and Indian government institutions too, have joined in the questioning of these companies. Twitter came under fire earlier this year for alleged anti-right-wing bias.





The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

# National insecurity

An institutional mechanism needs to be urgently created to depoliticise defence procurement



JANMEJAYA SINHA

## QUALITY OF GIVING

Azim Premji, India's top individual philanthropist, sets an example. Unfortunately, not many follow it

LAST WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENT by Wipro's founder, Azim Premji, that all earnings from 34 per cent of his share in one of India's leading software services firm worth \$7.3 billion or Rs 52,753 crore would be transferred to an endowment that supports his philanthropic foundation, is enormously welcome. It sends out the signal of a corporate conscious — a larger social responsibility in a country not known for corporates that acknowledge such a duty. India is home now to the third largest number of billionaires in the world (after the US and China). The numbers being added to the list of Forbes billionaires from the country has swelled considerably in the last couple of decades and will only continue to do so, as more and more entrepreneurs reap the benefits of liberalisation in diverse sectors. But there is also a parallel — and sobering — story of rising income inequality flagged by many, including Thomas Piketty.

The French economist and author of the bestselling "Capital in the Twenty-First Century" has estimated that the top one per cent in India account for almost one-fourth of the share of its national income. True, India has not so far seen any demonstrable backlash against this trend, unlike in the western world where it could even be said that socialism, or a version of it, is making a comeback in mainstream political discourse. But welfareism and entitlement programmes are something that both the Congress and the BJP, not to speak of many regional parties, are increasingly projecting and promoting. Of course, inequality of income and wealth cannot per se be considered bad. It is unlikely many would grudge anybody making it big through enterprise and hard work. Many of the Indians in the Forbes list are actually first-generation entrepreneurs. But the problem lies, more, with inherited wealth and lack of churn at the top. When the people see the same set of businessmen and their progeny becoming bigger and more dominant players across sectors, a degree of revulsion and alienation sets in.

Premji is, by a fair stretch, India's top individual philanthropist, having pledged to commit \$21 billion or 50 per cent of his wealth to philanthropic causes — specially in the field of education to improve the quality of teaching — besides others such as Nandan and Rohini Nilekani who, too, have pledged to give away 50 per cent of their wealth, Kiran Mazumdar Shaw who has committed 75 per cent, and N R Narayana Murthy and his wife Sudha Murthy, besides P N C Menon of Sobha Developers. India needs many more of them.

## A MODEL PROBLEM

Fall in emigration, and reverse migration from the Gulf, challenge Kerala's welfare model. The state must find a way

MIGRATION TRENDS INDICATE that the Gulf, which had long funded the Kerala development story, may soon turn out to be a headache if not a nightmare. Economic slowdown in the Gulf countries, state policies favouring replacement of migrants with local labour, influx of workers from Africa and countries such as the Philippines, are forcing a reverse migration that has serious repercussions for Kerala's economy and society. Fortunately, the rising dollar-rupee exchange rate has prevented a fall in foreign remittances to Kerala, but the return of a large number of migrants, many of them blue collar workers, could squeeze employment and impact consumption and retail trade.

According to the Kerala Migration Survey, 2018, by the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, overall migration from the state has been showing a negative trend in the last five years. In fact, over the past decade, the number of people migrating to the Gulf has fallen (it stands at 1.89 million in 2018, down from 1.94 million in 2008 after peaking at 20.7 million in 2013) whereas the number of reverse migrants has gone up in the same period. The prolonged slowdown in the Gulf economies since 2008 and visions of a post-oil economy influenced many of these countries to embark on policies such as Nitaqat in Saudi Arabia, which encouraged employment of local labour over migrants. The welfare society built by the Kerala model of development and higher wages, both partly facilitated by remittances, has also worked against migration: Higher wages have turned Kerala labour non-competitive in the Gulf countries and demographic changes, especially population reduction in the migration prone age-group, militate against migration. The state government realises the implications of this trend and has been introducing policies to cushion the impact of the reverse migration. The state budget in February has proposed new pension, savings and loan schemes for expatriates. Loans, technical advice to start businesses, have been offered to integrate the returning migrants in the local economy. It is too early to say if these steps are sufficient to address the looming crisis. For instance, nearly a quarter of the households in Kerala have a migrant — and 90 per cent of migrants from the state are in Gulf countries — who sends money home. Any large-scale change in the numbers are sure to influence spending patterns at home, and thereby, Kerala's service economy.

Kerala's outward migration has co-existed with inward migration of labour from northern and eastern India. Studies indicate that nearly 2.5 million migrants, mainly from West Bengal, Odisha, UP, Bihar, are a part of the workforce in Kerala, mostly doing relatively low-paying jobs. Kerala's way out of the reverse migration crisis may hinge on the economy expanding to absorb the returnees in the workforce and for the low-skilled among them to compete with the non-Malayali internal migrants.

## ON THEIR WATCH

BJP's use of chowkidar as a Twitter prefix may turn the spotlight on the watchman. Or it may not

A SLEW OF BJP personalities have prefixed "chowkidar" to their Twitter identities. This move follows the launch of a social media campaign by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, "Main bhi chowkidar (I, too, am a watchman)". This, in turn, appears to be a response to Congress president Rahul Gandhi's anti-corruption campaign in which, referring to the PM, he said, "Chowkidar chor hai (the watchman is a thief)".

Chowkidars are the modern-era guardians of our individual galaxies, tirelessly and invisibly ensuring our well-being, always in the background. But while trying to appropriate any identity you tend to not remain in character sometimes. A bit like trying to imitate Charlie Chaplin when you have forgotten to shave off the Salvador Dali-moustache from last summer. So, if one suddenly assumes the identity of chowkidar, it might leave scope for questions — such as when former J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti said in a tweet: "Vijay Mallya, Mehul Choski, Nirav Modi all fled under this chowkidar's watch".

All this political jousting is bound to perpetuate negative stereotypes of a group already enduring hard livelihoods. The actual chowkidars, mostly migrants, don't have it easy. A recent report on blue collar jobs for 2019 revealed that there are 2.5 lakh security guards in Bengaluru: 60 per cent are from Odisha, 30 per cent from Tripura and Bengal, and the rest from Jharkhand and other regions — essentially, a community of displaced people trying to eke out a livelihood with little stability. The same report says that jobs such as those of security guards see high attrition rates ranging between 40 and 300 per cent, with people switching for a few hundred rupees. Those in power can afford to use-abuse the chowkidar metaphor. But the social media game of one-upmanship may or may not shine the light on those stuck with the chowkidar tag as a lived reality.

THE STAIN OF the Bofors scandal that was unearthed in 1987 has diseased India's defence procurement ever since. Be it the purchase of howitzers or AgustaWestland choppers or indeed the Rafale aircraft, every Indian defence procurement initiative invites severe political challenge. Given that the Bofors scandal brought down the Rajiv Gandhi government, every Opposition party sees the purchase of any defence equipment from abroad as a political opportunity to attack the government of corruption. This has reached such a stage that defence procurement in India has become well-nigh impossible and as a country we are imperiling our security at a time when the world is geopolitically unstable. As Thucydides remarked in 457 BC, "It was the rise of Athens and the fear that this instilled in Sparta that made war inevitable". Read China for Athens and the US for Sparta. The stresses are apparent even if the shape of this war may not be conventional but rather economic, cyber or in artificial intelligence.

It is also a time when over a 5, 10 or 25 year period, India's GDP has grown at 7 per cent per annum making India the second fastest growing large economy over the last two decades. This year it has even surpassed China's GDP growth rate. But it is a fact that between 2000 and 2015, China went from a \$1.2 trillion dollar economy to an over \$11 trillion economy while India went from a \$0.48 trillion economy to a \$2.2 trillion dollar economy, making India only one-fifth the size of the Chinese economy. But what should concern us much more is that if we were to do this comparison in respect of defence equipment and overall military might, we would likely be more like one-fifteenth the size of China. Even if we shift this discussion to Pakistan, the difference in our economic might does not reflect in our comparative military advantage against Pakistan. We are today seven times the size of

Pakistan's GDP but the armies and military equipment are much more comparable. This is not okay in today's world as even Japan and Germany are discovering with the arrival of Donald Trump in the US and his taking away the US protective umbrella for them.

The fact that the Air Force pilot who was shot down by Pakistan recently was flying a MiG-21, termed by many as a flying coffin, is shameful. We have no right to talk of ourselves as a global force with such an ancient and depleted level of military equipment. We don't spend enough, either, on intelligence or defence armaments. We have faced at least six major attacks since Kargil — Kashmir assembly, Parliament and the year of standoff thereafter, Mumbai, Pathankot, Uri, and Pulwama now. Imagine how Israel might have responded to similar provocations. The key question is: Can we?

First, we should agree to a certain minimum defence equipment purchase budget as a percentage of our annual budget. The Parliament should be informed each year whether the allocated amount was spent on defence equipment. Second, we need to create a new institutional mechanism for defence purchase. This mechanism needs to both de-risk the officials involved in defence procurement, provide robust oversight and yet be conducted in a time-bound manner.

Given that our polity is unlikely to change, what institutional mechanism can we create to depoliticise and facilitate defence procurement? Today kickbacks from defence procurement cannot be a large part of election funding because our elections cost a lot and our defence procurement is meagre. Yet for 10 years Defence Minister A K Antony made sure that no defence equipment was purchased under his watch, as it might stain his clean reputation. Many of my friends in the IAS tell me that a sure way to get hauled into a CBI inquiry is to put one's signature on a defence procurement file.

What we need, therefore, are some rules to ensure that we do not weaken ourselves so much that we endanger the nation. We need to ensure equipment gets purchased in a time-bound manner and a certain amount of the annual budget is allocated to defence equipment and that an interparty group approves the final purchases. What I suggest hereafter is a decision starter that needs careful but expeditious consideration

to ensure our safety as a nation is not compromised any further.

First, we should agree to a certain minimum defence equipment purchase budget as a percentage of our annual budget. The Parliament should be informed each year whether the allocated amount was spent on defence equipment. Second, we need to create a new institutional mechanism for defence purchase. This mechanism needs to both de-risk the officials involved in defence procurement, provide robust oversight and yet be conducted in a time-bound manner. I can imagine three parts to it, including a technical committee comprising defence officials, a separate commercial negotiations team from the finance and defence ministries, including possibly officials from the CAG, and a PM-led approval team that includes the leader of Opposition, CAG, defence minister and possibly the chief vigilance commissioner. Each part would need to complete its job within a pre-set time limit that should also be reported to the Parliament.

Thereafter, these discussions should be kept outside the purview of the media. A record of the comments of the approval committee should be viewed by a select joint party committee after a pre-determined time period as a check. Any complaints on the process followed can only be made to the Supreme Court, which would hear the complaint and pronounce judgement in secrecy to depoliticise procurement and not allow it to become an election issue. Allowing for this challenge, though, would ensure probity.

It is important to create a national consensus on this vital issue to guard our national sovereignty. The time to act is right after the upcoming election.

The writer is chairman, BCG India. Views are personal



KALPANA SHARMA

## GOODBYE, DARRYL

A passionate journalist who lived by his convictions, left a lasting legacy

I NEVER thought I would be writing an obituary about a friend and a colleague. Darryl D'Monte — journalist, author, environmentalist, human rights activist, and, above all, a good human being has passed. He died on March 16 in a hospital in Mumbai, a city he lived in, loved and fought to save from environmental destruction.

I knew Darryl for decades, as a fellow journalist with whom I worked for a short period in a newspaper, but more than that as a person with whom I shared many common concerns. Apart from his stints as an editor in *Indian Express* and *Times of India*, it is Darryl's pioneering work as an environmental journalist that will be long remembered.

When he wrote about the Silent Valley controversy in the 1970s, where a dam would have destroyed precious biodiversity including the habitat of one of the world's rarest and threatened primates, the Lion Tailed Macaque, the concept of "environmental" journalism was unknown. Yet, it is the controversy surrounding the dam in Kerala, and the prospect of habitat destruction, that yanked the issue away from conservation to questioning developmental policy. Eventually, the campaign to save the area led to the creation of a national park that would be excluded from the project area of the dam. In his book *Temples or Tombs: Industry vs Environment* (1985), Darryl recorded this early environmental battle between the interests of saving the natural environment and the demands of development.

Although Darryl worked for much of his life in mainstream media, he never gave up his convictions on environment, human

rights, civic and urban issues and on the rights of the most marginalised. Indeed, being a "committed" journalist was a label Darryl wore unapologetically. Through his reporting, he established that even if we, as journalists, have strong convictions, we can report with rigour and professionalism. His environmental reports stood out for the absence of polemics and for the thorough research that they contained. This kind of reporting set a gold standard for generations of journalists that have followed in his footsteps.

Darryl consciously mentored others. In the cut-throat competitive world in which journalists operate, this stood out then, and stands out even more now, as an unusual trait. But he was more concerned that the issues — whether to do with loss of biodiversity, destructive developmental policies, or climate change — were addressed by many more journalists than just those of his generation. By setting up the Forum for Environmental Journalists (FEJ), Darryl extended support and opened up opportunities for scores of journalists, many from outside the big metros who are not plugged into professional networks, to be trained in environmental reporting.

It is the city of Mumbai, with which Darryl was closely engaged, where he is most remembered and cherished. In Bandra, where his family has lived for generations, he was a known person, actively engaged in civic and cultural affairs — always ready to battle against insensitive and environmentally destructive developmental plans initiated by the municipality or the state government.

His book *Ripping the Fabric: The Decline of*

*Mumbai and its Mills* (2002) is especially important from the perspective of the city's maldevelopment: Darryl captured the indifference of the government to the rights of workers and its willingness to accede to the millowners and land sharks who only saw Girangaon (the area in central Mumbai once known for its flourishing textile mills) as prime real estate. In hindsight, what began then in terms of myopic city development has now cascaded into a situation where Mumbai has become a city in perennial crisis.

Till the end, Darryl never tired of raising the red flag on this. His most recent intervention was questioning the wisdom of building a coastal road to accommodate the needs of a small, well-heeled population owning private vehicles at the cost of the livelihoods of Mumbai's fisherfolk, its coastal environment and the needs of the majority who have to contend daily with crumbling infrastructure. Unfortunately, the state government is determined to push ahead with the plan and the courts, so far, have not been sympathetic to the pleas of the fisherfolk.

There is never a good time for anyone to go, but this was not a good time for Darryl to go. His sane voice is needed today more than ever before. As this country hurtles towards becoming a violent and fractious society, where the voice of people at the margins is drowned, and where saving the environment is just empty words as policy forges ahead to destroy it, the passion of journalists like Darryl D'Monte is irreplaceable. One hopes the legion of younger journalists he mentored will carry forward his legacy.

The writer is a Mumbai-based journalist



## MARCH 19, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

**NO SAUDI SUPPORT**  
THE US PRESIDENTIAL envoy, Brzezinski, after apparently failing to seek Saudi Arabian backing to the Egyptian-Israeli peace pact, arrived here in Amman today to persuade King Hussein to support the West Asia peace moves. Brzezinski, heading a delegation that includes Chip Carter, son of the American President, flew here from Riyadh, where he had conferred with King Khaled and his foreign minister, Prince Saud Al Faisal. A statement by Prince Saud, broadcast by Riyadh Radio just as Brzezinski was arriving here, strongly indicated that the American envoy had failed to swing the Saudis behind the treaty.

**INDIA'S NO TO NUCLEAR**  
PRIME MINISTER MORARJI Desai reiterated that India would not manufacture nuclear weapons. "We shall not use nuclear weapons and we will not make them," Desai told a seminar on "Gandhi and the contemporary world", at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi. How can we tell others not to manufacture nuclear weapons if we ourselves have them?" Desai asked. He said Gandhi's relevance lay in the fact that he had, long ago, foreseen that mankind was heading towards doom by harnessing science and technology for destructive purposes. He wanted science to be used for the good of the world so that man became happier, not fearful.

**FUNDING THE FUTURE**  
PRIME MINISTER MORARJI Desai has appealed to the business and industrial houses and the people in general, to contribute generously to the National Children's Fund, and thus, "for the welfare of the future of mankind." In a nationwide appeal, he stated that it was the responsibility of the community to see that their children, received full facilities required for their growth and development. The Prime Minister stressed the role of voluntary organisations in the development of children "who require to be brought up with care and affection which only dedicated individuals in voluntary organisations can provide."



# 13 THE IDEAS PAGE

## The Chief Minister next door

Never before has a leader from a state as small as Goa enjoyed such a pan India acceptance and popularity



NITIN GADKARI

MY LAST MEETING with my friend Manohar Parrikar was on January 27. He stunned everyone when he travelled from the makeshift medical facility at his residence to join me for the inauguration of the third bridge on the Mandovi river in Goa. Manohar told me that he could not miss the historic event, and thanked me for helping Goa achieve speedy and all-round development. As I sat next to him, I couldn't but feel emotionally choked. His voice was extremely feeble and he had a feeder tube inserted in one of his nostrils. Yet, his discomfort was not visible. What was visible was the indomitable "josh" to serve the people of Goa till his last breath, as he put it. Three days later, on January 30, Manohar presented the budget in the Goa Assembly in the same condition, addressing the House for nearly two hours. On February 4, he tweeted a brave message to the world: "Human mind can overcome any disease."

As I think of all the moments I have spent with Manohar, I can only say that apart from his impeccable integrity, dedication and hard work, he has also emerged as an iconic inspiration for cancer patients. He has shown the world that a terminal illness cannot drain your commitment to the country.

Manohar was my contemporary in public life. My association with him dates back to about 35 years ago. Both of us were inspired by the ideology of the RSS, its discipline and the sense of commitment it invoked in us towards nation-building.

A brilliant student who did B.Tech from IIT Bombay, he entered Goan politics at the instance of the RSS to stall the growing influence of the regional parties in the state. He made his debut in the state assembly in 1994 from the Panaji constituency on the BJP ticket and went on to leave an indelible mark, not only on state politics but also at the Centre as the country's defence minister.

Parrikar's tenure as defence minister was historic in many ways. The One Rank One Pension scheme was implemented, the Rafale deal was finalised and India carried out successful surgical strikes in PoK in response to the Uri attack. However, in his personal life, Manohar remained an epitome of simplicity and frugal living. Till a few years ago, he would sometimes drive a scooter to office even after becoming CM. As the defence minister, he often travelled in the economy class of low cost airlines. His needs were minimal. His focus was always on the larger picture.

Manohar believed in pro-active but clean politics. He was among the most selfless politicians I have known, always ready to do what the party asked him. He truly epitomised our party's spirit of Nation First, Party Second, Self last. In October 2000, Manohar staged an internal coup against a coalition government led by the Congress in Goa without indulging in any kind of horse trading.

Having been the CM of Goa four times, Parrikar has made a pivotal contribution in expediting infrastructure projects and minimising corruption. When I was the BJP president, I would constantly look up to him for new ideas and initiatives to spruce up our good governance agenda.

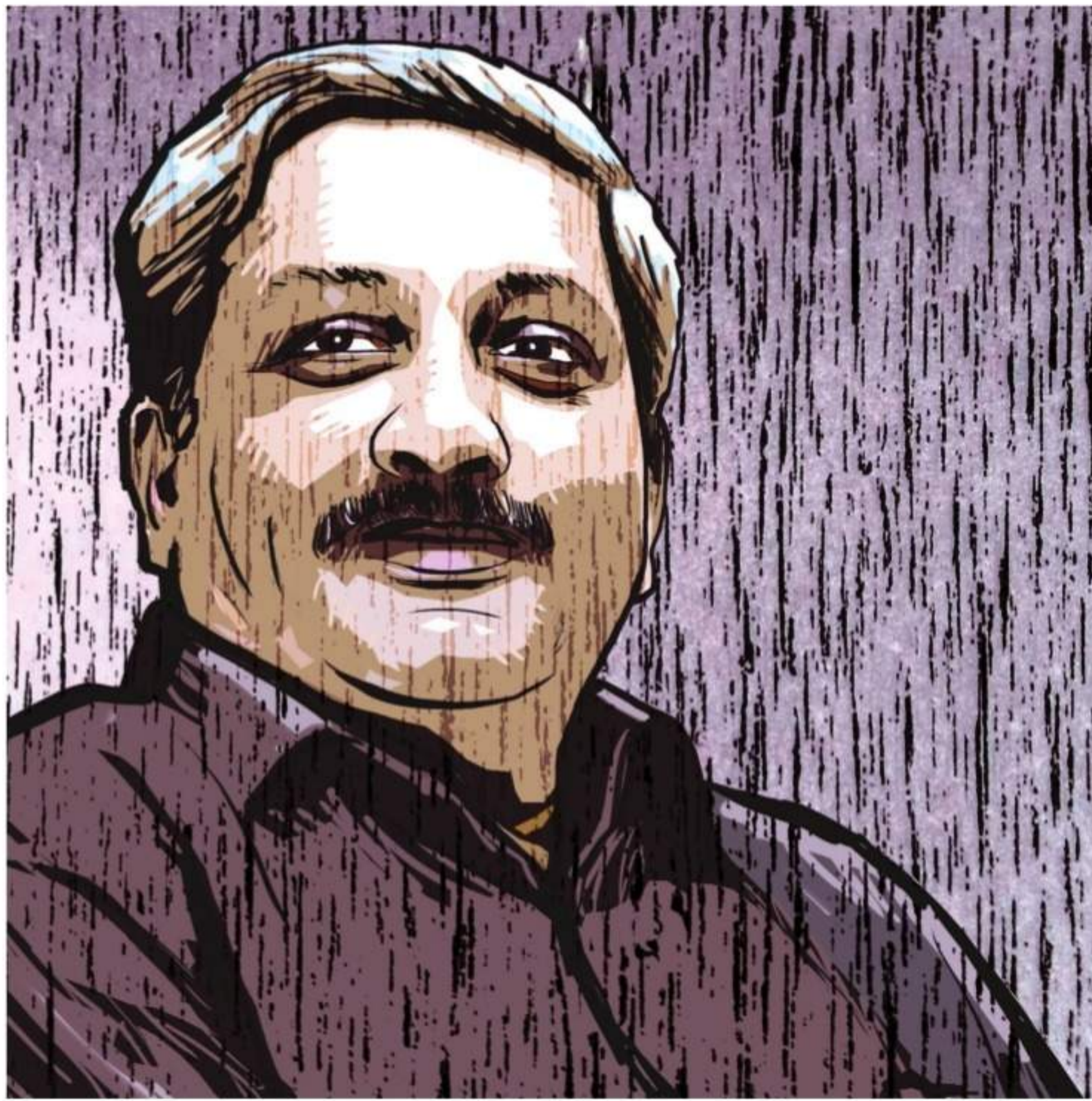
Manohar quit as defence minister and returned to Goa as CM in March 2017, when we managed to woo parties such as the Goa Forward Party and MGP to support him to form the government. Since I was the overseeing the elections for my party, I have interesting memories of our working together to outsmart the Congress.

However, since February 2018, Manohar had been fighting an arduous battle with cancer. Pancreatic cancer has a low survival rate but looking at Manohar's zest and energy through this battle, we were hopeful that he will pull off the biggest coup of his life.

But God had other plans. As I recall my association with Manohar, let me make another important point — in my knowledge never before has a leader from a state as small as Goa enjoyed a pan India acceptance and popularity. The reason is simple: Manohar was your next door CM, the kind of relative or uncle you could identify with or relate to, whether you met him at a government office or the vegetable market.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has aptly described Manohar as the builder of modern Goa. Manohar's death is a loss for every Goan and every Indian. For me, the loss is deeply personal.

The writer is the Union minister for road transport and highways, shipping and water resources, river development and Gangetic rejuvenation



C R Sasikumar

### Politics in Goa revolved around Manohar Parrikar, irrespective of whether he held office or not



RAM MADHAV

SOMETIME IN THE early 2000s, I visited Goa in connection with some RSS work. A meeting with the state's chief minister was arranged at his residence in the morning before he began his official work. I was at the CM's residence by about 8.30 am. After a few minutes, I found Parrikar, the then CM of Goa, driving in in his personal car, a Maruti Zen, if I remember correctly. A bit surprised, I asked him if there was no driver available that morning. The CM replied in a very matter-of-fact way that he uses his personal car every morning to drop his children to school. He used the services of the government driver only for going to the Secretariat later in the morning.

What is integrity after all? It is about "choosing courage of conviction over comfort, choosing what is right over what is fun, fast or easy and, most importantly, choosing to practise values rather than simply professing them". Parrikar lived a life of integrity. He never spoke about it or showed off.

He was not a great communicator. The longest speeches he delivered would have been about 20-30 minutes long. But his popularity had no limits. He was the glue that kept the BJP and the government in Goa going. Everyone surrendered before his exemplary personality.

A swamyamsevak of the RSS since childhood, Parrikar personified quintessential RSS-ness: He was disciplined, unassuming, transparent and courageous. Those who have seen him from the days when he was the sanghachalak, local head of the Goa RSS, vouch for the fact that he remained unchanged through his political journey. Power and position didn't change him. He was dedicated to his job, but detached from its aura. Parrikar, who graduated from IIT Bombay in 1978, could have opted for a well-paying career abroad. Instead, he returned to his native town of Mapusa in Goa and got into a small manufacturing business. He became the sanghachalak of the Goa unit of the RSS at the relatively young age of 26. It was during the Ram Janmabhoomi movement that I had first heard of this well-educated young leader of the RSS.

When the BJP decided to expand its influence in the erstwhile Portuguese colony, in whose struggle for liberation many RSS volunteers had actively participated in, the party commissioned several functionaries of the RSS, including Parrikar, to work for it. Thus started Parrikar's political innings.

In his political career of 25 years, Parrikar held several important and prestigious posts. He became the chief minister of the state three times — first in year 2000, then in 2012 and finally in 2017. He had made a special place for himself in Goa politics, which had

seen many ups and downs since the BJP started challenging the hegemony of the Congress. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in the last two decades, politics in Goa revolved around Parrikar. Whether in power or out of it, whether he was in Goa or in Delhi, Parrikar would control the state's politics. "You may take me out of Goa but you cannot take Goa out of me," he used to say.

After the BJP's victory in the 2014 parliamentary elections, some of us who had known Parrikar well felt he should now move to Delhi and play a bigger role at the Centre. Incidentally, the BJP had announced the candidature of Narendra Modi for prime ministership at its conclave in Goa in 2013 and Parrikar, who was the state's chief minister at that time, played an important role in the making of that decision. Naturally, Prime Minister Modi liked our idea and sent word to Parrikar in November 2014 to join his cabinet.

### WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Brexit is not a single moment, but a process. Neither 2016 nor 2019 is the last word." — THE GUARDIAN

## Foreign hand returns

With cyber domain emerging as a new theatre of global political rivalry, parties should pay attention to cyber security of their campaigns



RAJA MANDALA

BY C RAJA MOHAN

IT IS widely accepted that the current general elections would be India's first polls to be shaped by the social media. As rival parties weaponise new digital tools in a rather charged political moment, the question of preserving the integrity of India's elections has come right to the top.

Foreign manipulation of elections is a major problem around the world. In the last few years there have been charges of external intervention in elections in countries as different as the US, Cambodia, Madagascar and Taiwan. Consider, for example, Indonesia, one of the world's largest democracies. About 190 million people are set to elect the president, national parliament, provincial assemblies and local councils — all at one go — on April 17.

Last week, Arief Budiman, the chairman of Indonesia's general election commission, told the press that hackers from Russia and China were trying to attack the voter data base and that these attacks were taking place not just every day, "but by the hour". It was unclear whether the motive was to disrupt the elections or to help one of the candidates win, Budiman said.

"Voter behaviour can be changed by delegitimising the election commission," Budiman pointed out. He was careful to not attribute the attacks to state authorities in Russia and China. But political campaigners in the closely fought presidential race between incumbent Joko Widodo and his only opponent, Prabowo Subianto, have not been that careful. Last month, Widodo reacted strongly against charges that he was a "foreign stooge". He hit back by accusing his rival of resorting to "Russian propaganda" of "defamation, lies and hoaxes". A picture of Prabowo shaking hands with a Russian Embassy official went viral along with allegations that he had hired a Russian consultant. Moscow was of course quick to deny intervention in the Indonesian elections.

There was a time when the Indian political classes routinely accused the "foreign hand" for many unexpected developments, electoral or otherwise. Most of the time, the "foreign hand" was a code for the US and its Central Intelligence Agency. As the Congress, under Indira Gandhi, drifted close to the Soviet Union after 1969, the non-left opposition parties would often charge the KGB of meddling in the elections in favour of the Congress.

To be sure, interfering in the internal politics of other societies — through overt and covert means — is as old as statecraft. Before the age of mass politics, it was about influencing royal succession, ensuring friendly sovereigns in one's neighbourhood, suborning key members of a foreign court, including ministers and military leaders. As mass politics began to change governance in the 20th century, the Cold War dramatically elevated the great power stakes in the outcomes from domestic political contestation in other countries. According to one study, America and Russia intervened in at least one in nine elections around the world between 1946 and 2000.

As the global war for political influence raged during the Cold War, the CIA was accused of helping the Congress Party to push back against the Communists in Kerala and West Bengal. Russia and China, in turn, have been charged with supporting the Indian communists.

As India steadily became less vulnerable to outside political interferences, the tendency to blame the "foreign hand" began to recede. The fragmentation of Indian politics and the rise of regional formations since the end of the 1980s made it hard for any outsider to understand, let alone shape, electoral results. The end of the Cold War and the relative harmony among major powers meant there was less pressure on the great powers to intervene in India.

Over the last decade or so, things have begun to change. The contestation between great powers has returned, slowly but certainly. As the cyber domain emerged as a new theatre for political rivalry, charges have flown thick and fast about foreign intervention in the domestic politics of other countries. The US remains the most important case.

Donald Trump's surprising victory in the 2016 presidential elections has been followed by allegations of Russian intervention to manipulate the social media during the campaign. While official US investigations into the Russian role continue, there is no doubt that someone had hacked into the Democratic Party headquarters and leaked the emails of the party into the public domain. Nor is there any question that platforms like Facebook were deliberately used to spread disinformation during the elections.

This is not a problem that is limited to one country. The unprecedented speed of online communication, the relative ease of spreading misinformation, the growing sophistication of fake news, the extraterritoriality of the web, the increasing impact of the digital influence operations by individuals, professional cyber consultants, criminal mafias, and above all governments, has helped constitute a new global cyber landscape that few could have imagined a decade ago.

Even as the older and technologically advanced democracies struggle to cope with the challenge of foreign manipulation of electoral processes, the Indian political class has not devoted enough attention to the issues involved. The problem needs to be addressed at least at three levels.

One is for parties and political leaders to pay greater attention to cyber security of their campaigns and social media accounts. Hacking and leaking of personal and sensitive information could have an explosive effect on the 2019 elections. Two, the BJP and the Congress need a small, quiet and credible mechanism for mutual communication to contain the damage from hostile attempts to undermine Indian elections. This will not be easy amidst the current political bitterness. But the two parties must find the will to protect the legitimacy of the 2019 elections.

Finally, the national security establishment must extend full support to the Election Commission in fending off many likely threats to the integrity of the elections and help raise the awareness of the political class on the new dangers of the digital age.

The writer is director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore and a contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### GREEN ACTION

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A greener way' (IE, March 18). The paradox with ecology is there is no dearth of quality research that establishes the link between ecological destruction and people's livelihoods, but there is very little action. It's rightly said that the science of climate change is awakened but not politics. Treaties, seminars and reports are unlikely to make much headway. Only a sustained public movement can address the current ecological crisis.

Suchak Patel, Ahmedabad

#### MORE PARITY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'In equal measure' (IE, March 18). The higher allocation of tickets to women by the BJD and TMC should be welcomed. It could push other parties to field more women candidates. However, political parties often use the winnability factor as an excuse for not fielding women candidates. But this argument is not backed by studies. Reservation is a more effective way of ensuring more representation.

H Upadhyay via e-mail

#### NEW LEADER

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Decoding the Priyanka gamble' (IE, March 18). With issues like Rafale and unemploy-

#### 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](mailto: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

ment failing to attract the voters, the Congress has gambled on Priyanka Gandhi. PM Narendra Modi's popularity after the Balakot strikes has neutralised the gains Congress made in three assembly elections. But it would be wrong to see Priyanka's entry as admission of defeat. A month is a long time in politics.

Anirudh Parashar, Solan

The writer is general secretary, BJP and director, India Foundation