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FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

HOW THE KILOGRAM HAS CHANGED, WHY YOUR BODY MASS HAS NOT

KABIR FIRAQUE
NEW DELHI, MAY 20

THE KILOGRAM is no longer what it used to be. It still means the same amount of mass as before, but the way it is defined changed across the world on Monday, World Metrology Day.

In India, schools and technical institutes have been advised to incorporate the change in their syllabi. The National Physical Laboratory (NPL), custodian of the fundamental units of measurement, has sent recommendations to the NCERT, the All India Council for Technical Education, the IITs, the NITs, and other institutions.

How has the definition changed? Will it affect the way we measure body mass or weigh our groceries?

Why the change

The global standards for measurement are set by the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM), of which India became a member in 1957. At BIPM in Sèvres, near Paris, stands a cylinder of platinum-iridium locked in a jar. Since 1889, the kilogram has been defined as the mass of this cylinder, called Le Grand K, or International Prototype Kilogram (IPK). In India, NPL maintains the National Prototype Kilogram (NPK-57), which is calibrated with IPK.

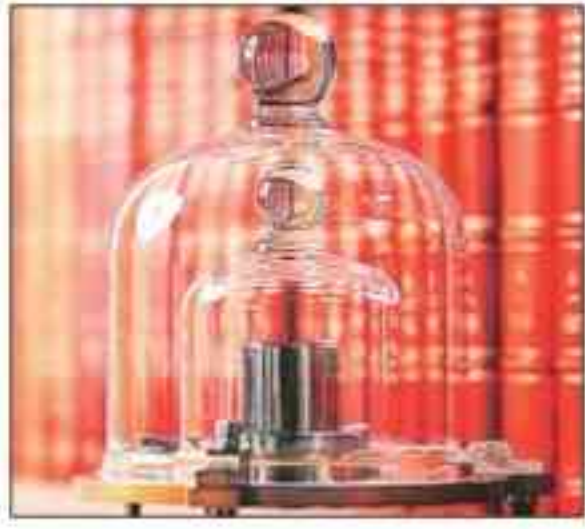
The IPK was the last physical artifact used to define any of the fundamental units. "What guarantee is there that the IPK kept at BIPM has not changed?" NPL Director Dinesh K Aswal told *The Indian Express*. IPK would put on a little extra mass when tiny dust particles settled on it; when cleaned, it would shed some of its original mass.

Scientists have long stressed that the fundamental units should be defined in terms of natural constants. On November 16, 2018, following a vote at BIPM, representatives of 60 countries agreed that the kilogram should be defined in terms of the Planck constant, Aswal said. The Planck constant is a quantity that relates a light particle's energy to its frequency.

Using a machine called a Kibble balance, in which the weight of a test mass is offset by an electromagnetic force, the value of the Planck constant was fixed, the kilogram was redefined, and the date for the new definition was fixed for May 20, 2019, Aswal said.

What does not change

What was 1 kg earlier is still 1 kg today. A person hoping to lose weight would still need to shed the same num-



A replica of Le Grand K at BIPM in France. From 1889 until Monday, the cylindrical piece of metal was the standard for the kilogram. Reuters

ber of kilos she had targeted earlier, and a shopper would not be paying any more or less for their groceries.

All that has changed is the definition, for the sake of accuracy. As Aswal explained, a mass measured as 1 kg earlier would have meant 1 kg, plus or minus 15-20 micrograms. Using the new definition, a mass measured as 1 kg will mean "1 kg, plus or minus 1 or 2 nanograms".

Measure for measure

The new definition for kilogram fits in with the modern definitions for the units of time (second) and distance (metre). Today, the second is defined as the time it takes for a certain amount of energy to be released as radiation from atoms of Caesium-133. Once the second was defined, the metre fell into place. By its modern definition, a metre is the distance travelled by light in vacuum in 1/299,792,458 of a second (which is already defined).

This is where the Planck constant comes in. It has been measured precisely at $6.626069... \times 10^{-34}$ kilograms per second per square metre. With the second and the metre already defined, a very precise definition for the kilogram follows.

Along with the units of time and distance, the unit of luminous intensity (candela) is already defined in terms of a natural constant. On Monday, along with the kilogram, the units of current (ampere), temperature (kelvin), and amount of substance (mole) too took on new definitions. That covers all seven fundamental units.

The modern definition of the second has already helped ease communication across the world via technologies like GPS and the Internet. Scientists have often been quoted as saying the change in the kilogram's definition will be better for technology, retail and health.

THE SEVEN FUNDAMENTAL UNITS

UNIT	QUANTITY	HOW IT IS CALCULATED
Metre	Distance	Based on speed of light
Kilogram	Mass	Calculated from Planck constant
Second	Time	Based on radiation of caesium-33 atom
Ampere	Current	Based on electron's charge
Kelvin	Temperature	Based on Boltzmann constant
Mole	Amount of substance	Based on Avogadro constant
Candela	Luminous intensity	From efficacy of light of specific frequency

'Efficiency' & promotion quota

AN EXPERT EXPLAINS

Supreme Court has upheld a Karnataka law that provides for seniority as a consequence of promotion via reservation. The past arguments around this, and how SC has settled the debate on 'efficiency' in Art 335



FAIZAN MUSTAFA

A TWO-JUDGE Bench of the Supreme Court last week pronounced a historic judgment on reservation in promotions in favour of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The court was dealing with a 2018 Karnataka law that provided for reservation with consequential seniority — a person promoted would also get seniority as a consequence. In *B K Pavitra* (2017), a similar law was struck down by a Bench of Justice A K Goel and Justice U U Lalit, who in March 2018 diluted some provisions of the SC/ST Act, 1989. The central government brought a law to overturn the judgment; the court is yet to pronounce its judgment on the review petition. In the latest case, Justice D Y Chandrachud authored the judgment and Justice Lalit concurred.

History of quota in promotions

In general, courts have opposed reservation in promotions, and favoured reservation at initial appointment. In 1963, the government notified that there shall be no reservation in promotions to Class I and Class II positions; a five-judge Bench headed by then CJI K N Wanchoo upheld this policy in *CA Rajendran* (1968). In *State of Kerala vs N M Thomas* (1975), the Supreme Court extended the benefit of reservation to promotions, while upholding a rule giving a two-year extension to pass a special test for promotion of SC/ST employees. Justice H R Khanna, however, authored a minority judgment holding such exemption as violative of "efficiency in administration".

In *Indra Sawhney* (1992), a nine-judge Bench held that in future there should be no reservation in promotions.

Reservation in promotions for SCs/STs was introduced in Karnataka on April 27, 1978 in Class I. In the 1992 case, the court saved promotions already made and allowed continuance of promotions for another five years from the date of judgment. Parliament responded with the 77th Amendment in 1995 to overturn the judgment. The amendment came into effect on June 17, 1995.

Catch-up, consequential seniority

Many general candidates who were recruited along with SC/ST candidates, or were senior to them, were frustrated when their SC/ST colleagues became senior to them due to reservation in promotion. To address this, the Supreme Court in *Virpal Chauhan* (1995)

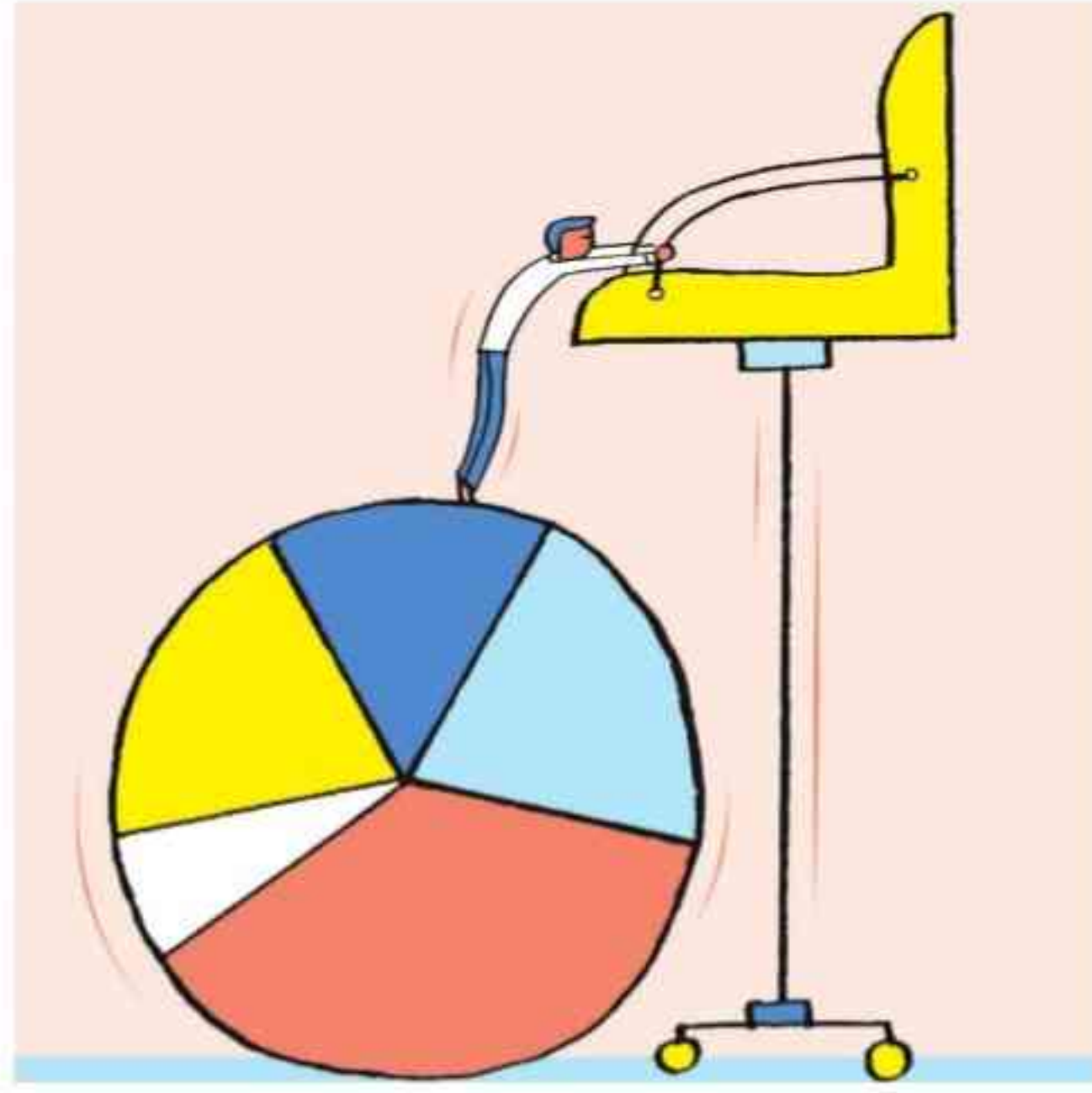


Illustration: CR Sasikumar

held that once a general candidate is promoted, he would become senior to an already promoted SC/ST candidate if he/she had been senior in the lower cadre. This was termed the "catch-up" rule. In *Ajit Singh* (1996), the court said seniority of the lower cadre will remain intact to avoid "reverse discrimination".

On February 3, 1999, Karnataka enacted the law laying down that reservation in promotion would continue until representation of SCs and STs reached 15% and 3% respectively. In *Ajit Singh II* (1999), the Supreme Court clarified the seniority rule — a general employee will regain seniority over an earlier promoted SC/ST employee if the former is promoted prior to the latter to the next higher cadre.

Parliament intervened again in 2001, with the 85th Constitutional Amendment that retrospectively came into effect from June 17, 1995, simultaneously with the 77th Amendment. In 2002, Karnataka too made its law effective from June 17, 1995, incorporating consequential seniority for SCs/STs promoted under reservation in promotions.

The two Amendments were challenged in *M Nagraj* (2006) but the Supreme Court held both to be valid. It rejected the argument that replacement of "catch-up rule" with "consequential seniority rule" violates the basic structure of the Constitution. It said Article 16(4A) is just an enabling provision, and the state is not bound to provide for reservation in promotion

— but if it wants to do so, it must meet the requirement of collection of quantifiable data on three aspects: backwardness of the class, inadequacy of representation, and that general efficiency of services not be affected.

In fact, the backwardness of SCs needs no quantitative proof; the fact that certain castes are notified as SCs is the ultimate proof. Inadequacy of representation needs no proof either, as the country has not yet filled 22.5% positions reserved for SCs and STs.

The Karnataka law

In *B K Pavitra*, the Supreme Court had struck down the Karnataka law as it did not comply with the above three conditions. The state constituted the Ratna Prabha Committee, which submitted its report on May 5, 2017. From data of 1984-2016 across 31 departments, the committee found that SC and STs constituted just 10.65% and 2.92% respectively of filled posts. Based on the report, the 2018 law was enacted. The Presidential assent came on June 5, 2018.

In *Jarnail Singh* (2018), the Supreme Court was requested to reconsider and refer *Nagraj* to a seven-judge Bench. A five-judge Bench headed by then CJI Dipak Misra rejected the request, but diluted *Nagraj*. It observed that there is no longer need to collect quantifiable data on the backwardness of SCs and STs.

In the latest case, Justice Chandrachud said *B K Pavitra* in no way stopped the government from providing reservation in pro-

motion after complying with the *Nagraj* conditions, and held that the Karnataka law is not a brazen overruling of the *Pavitra* judgment. He also observed that adequacy of representation is part of subjective satisfaction of the government.

Interpretation of efficiency

Justice Chandrachud demolished the whole argument of "efficiency" under Article 335. The Article not only protects reservation in promotion, but also allows for lowering the standards of evaluation. This recognises the need for creating a level playing field; thus, in the name of efficiency, fetters are not to be put in the path of correcting historical wrongs and injustices, he ruled.

"Efficiency of administration in the affairs of the Union or a State", Justice Chandrachud said, "must be defined in an inclusive sense, where diverse segments of society find representation as a true aspiration of governance by and for the people... inclusion together with the recognition of plurality and diversity of the nation constitutes a valid constitutional basis for defining efficiency".

Reservation is not necessarily anti-merit; a system that produces or continues with inequalities is anti-merit. A system that promotes substantive equality really promotes merit. Inclusion and reflection of social diversity in the state's institutions furthers, and does not diminish, the cause of merit. This is the innovative meaning of merit as given by the judge.

The court has settled the law on "efficiency" and "merit". Nobody's efficiency can be ascertained prior to appointment. Moreover, no scientific research has ever proved that SC/ST employees are less efficient in the performance of duties than general category employees.

In *K C Vasanth Kumar* (1985), Justice Chinnappa Reddy had already demolished the "efficiency" argument. In observations quoted by Justice Chandrachud, Justice Reddy had stated: "Efficiency is very much on the lip service of the privileged whenever reservation is mentioned. Efficiency, it seems, will be impaired if reservation exceeds 50%; efficiency, it seems, will suffer if carry forward rule is adopted; efficiency, it seems, will be injured, if the rule of reservation is extended to promotional posts." He went on to say that "the underlying assumption that those belonging of upper castes and classes, who are appointed to non-reserved posts, because of their 'presumed merit', naturally perform better than those who have been appointed to reserved posts and the clear stream of efficiency would be polluted by the infiltration of latter into the sacred precincts is a vicious assumption, typical of superior approach of elitist classes."

(The author is a well-known expert of constitutional law)

TELLING NUMBERS

BJP outspent all else on digital ads; on Twitter, Congress spent the most

BIG SPENDERS

KARISHMA MEHROTRA
NEW DELHI, MAY 20

FINAL DATA on digital ad spends on public company portals show how different parties prioritised different platforms during the election campaign. So, while the BJP outspent all parties on Google and Facebook, the Congress spent nine times as much as the BJP on Twitter.

Top Facebook spenders were the pages BJP (Rs 4.3 crore), INC (Rs 1.8 crore), My First Vote For Modi (Rs 1.17 crore), and Bharat Ke Mann

BJP (OFFICIAL)

Google	Rs 17,10,61,750 (for 12,002 ads)
Facebook	Rs 4,32,82,039 (for 2,649 ads)
Twitter	Rs 1,51,100

Ki Baat (Rs 1.15 crore). Another set of ads for Bharat Ke Mann Ki Baat (Rs 1 crore) were removed because they ran without a disclaimer.

The top Google advertisers were the BJP (Rs 17.1 crore), DMK (Rs 4.1 crore), Congress (Rs 2.7 crore), YSRCP (Rs 2.3 crore), and

CONGRESS (OFFICIAL)

Google	Rs 2,71,15,750 (for 425 ads)
Facebook	Rs 1,82,95,046 (for 3,686 ads)
Twitter	Rs 9,40,300

Auburn Digital Solutions, which gave pro-AAP ads (Rs 2.18 crore).

On Twitter, the Congress spent Rs 9.4 lakh, while the BJP spent only Rs 1.5 lakh.

Since February 19, total political digital advertising on Google for nearly 14,900 ads

was a little over Rs 27 crore. Facebook spending amounted to Rs 27.6 crore for roughly 1 lakh ads.

The southern states saw some of the highest spending on digital ads. On Google, Andhra Pradesh saw Rs 5.2 crore worth of ads, followed by Tamil Nadu (Rs 4.4 crore), Delhi (Rs 2.8 crore), and Telangana (Rs 2 crore).

Out of the roughly 40 BJP Google ads seen by over 10 million people, the most viewed was a video titled "Ensuring dignity of the poor!" that cost more than Rs 2.5 lakh. Only four YSRCP videos were viewed more than this BJP ad, according to the portal.

Google has suspended business with Huawei. Why is this important?

SHRUTI DHAPOLA & ANUJ BHATIA
NEW DELHI, MAY 20

GOOGLE IS suspending some business with Huawei, and this could impact the future of Android on smartphones made by the Chinese company and its sub-brand, Honor. The news was first reported by Reuters Monday. Neither Google nor Huawei has issued a detailed official statement.

What has Google done?

According to Reuters, Google has suspended business that "requires the transfer of hardware, software and technical services" with Huawei. Everything is impacted, except features available via open source licencing. In effect, Google has cancelled Huawei's Android licence.

Google acted after the Donald Trump administration added Huawei to a trade blacklist that bars American companies from doing business with blacklisted companies without "explicit approval" from the government. "We are complying with the

order and reviewing the implications," Google said in a statement.

What happens to people who have Huawei phones?

Unless Huawei is taken off the "Entity List", there is a good chance its phones will not be able to run Android's proprietary services and apps like Gmail, YouTube, and Chrome in the future. While Android will continue to work for now, it is unclear what happens next — including whether existing Huawei phones will ever get an Android update again. Android has monthly security updates and yearly operating system updates.

Huawei can still use Android from the Android Open Source Project, but proprietary services cannot be accessed without a commercial licence from Google. Future Huawei phones may not come with Google and Android services.

Google's Android account tweeted: "For Huawei users' questions regarding our steps to comply with the recent US government actions: We assure you while we are complying with all US govt requirements, serv-



Future Huawei smartphones may not be able to run apps like Google Play, Gmail, YouTube, and Chrome. Reuters

ices like Google Play & security from Google Play Protect will keep functioning on your existing Huawei device."

But again, Play Store and Play Protect are proprietary services, and Google has not said what will happen in the future. Access to Play Store is an important part of the Android experience, and is crucial for Huawei in markets outside China. In China, Google and its services are banned, so Huawei phones there

are unlikely to be impacted.

What has Huawei said on the situation?

A spokesperson for the company said: "Huawei will continue to provide security updates and after-sales services to all existing Huawei and Honor smartphone and tablet products, covering those that have been sold and that are still in stock globally. We will continue to build a safe and sustainable software ecosystem, in order to provide the best experience for all users globally."

What it did not confirm was whether existing Huawei phones would be updated to the next version of Android, and whether future phones would run the operating system.

Huawei phones also run EMUI, the company's own OS, on top of Android. It comes its own unique user interface and personalised apps. This is a common approach in the Android world — companies often add their own user interface to Android, although the core Google services are part of all devices.

Senior Huawei executive Richard Yu recently told the German daily *Die Welt* that the company was preparing its "own operating system".

"Should it ever happen that we can no longer use these systems, we would be prepared. That's our plan B. But of course, we prefer to work with the ecosystems of Google and Microsoft," he said.

How will Huawei be impacted?

In the first quarter of 2019, Huawei became the world's second largest smartphone manufacturer. According to numbers from research firm International Data Corporation (IDC), Huawei is ahead of Apple, behind only Samsung in the list of smartphone vendors. The company saw a year-over-year growth of 50.3% in the quarter, with 59.1 million units being shipped. Canalsy, another big research firm, said 50.6% of Huawei's shipments were in China; the rest in international markets.

Huawei's flagship phones, P30 Pro and Mate 20 Pro, have got excellent reviews. Honor is a more affordable, mid-range



The Indian EXPRESS

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RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Politics from the pulpit

Prime Minister Modi crafts messages for the public where he is the preacher, the giver



SUHAS PALSHIKAR

DUTEE'S SPRINT

She shows how breezily revolutions can become real, how easy it is to speak of 'the love that cannot be named'

NOT ALL HEROES wear capes. This one wears running shoes, and her heart on her sleeve. The fastest woman in India, Dutee Chand, has declared that she is in love with another woman, becoming the first Indian sports-person to come out as queer. The Supreme Court's landmark judgment last year expanded the constitutional promise of equality by decriminalising homosexuality in India. Nevertheless, for innumerable LGBTQ people, it remains difficult to step out of the anonymous darkness of the closet. For women who identify as queer, the consequences are even grimmer. But true to her spunk, Dutee Chand has bravely sprinted off, blazing a trail for others to follow.

Chand's journey from impoverished circumstances in a village in Odisha to becoming a silver medalist at the Asian Games is not the typical dream run that sports throws up. It threw up disturbing, existential questions about her gender — owing to the "abnormal" levels of naturally occurring testosterone in her body — that could have devastated any other athlete. She chose to fight, approaching the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) to challenge the hyperandrogenism guidelines which ban women athletes with elevated levels of the hormone from competing in track and field events. For her, at stake was the autonomy to assert her identity (as a woman) and defend her credentials (as a world-class athlete). She won.

Radical change can only be incremental, something which the long history of the queer rights movement in India will attest. But all revolutions need their icons, who can turn theoretical arguments into something stirring, made of flesh and blood — who could forget American boxer Muhammad Ali in the ring, making his body a lightning rod for the black rights movement? Even if far less flamboyant, Chand's dogged determination to not let sporting rules define who she was has held out transformative hope for the LGBTQ community. But that's not all — she is also an icon for the entire sporting fraternity in India, where popular sports remains an overwhelming macho performance. Will she inspire a more honest conversation about sexuality in locker-rooms? Could she inspire young men to step out of toxic masculinity — and, perhaps, even out of the closet? For now, it is enough to listen to a woman in love, who believes that "everyone should have the freedom to love", that no one has the right to judge her for committing to another woman. There is joy in this declaration, a sense of wonder at finding a "soulmate". Most importantly, here is Dutee Chand, who once ran like the wind on the banks of a river, showing us how breezily revolutions can become real, how easy it is to speak of "the love that cannot be named".

RIPPLES OF A CRISIS

The RBI needs to urgently address the liquidity issues plaguing the NBFC sector

THE TROUBLES OF the non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) continue to reverberate through the financial system, with the ripple effects of the crisis being felt in the broader economy, as seen in the sharp decline in car sales. Part of the problem can be traced to the continuing liquidity deficit in the system.

The average liquidity deficit in the banking system widened during the week ended May 17 to Rs 43,001 crore, up Rs 3,191 crore from the previous week, notes CARE Ratings. To be sure, the liquidity deficit has come down from mid-April to the first week of May, when the net outstanding liquidity deficit averaged Rs 92,979 crore. This decline is largely due to an infusion by the RBI through open market operations (OMOs) and currency swaps. And while the liquidity deficit is likely to ease up further as government spending ramps up in the coming months, the fundamental question is whether this rise in systemic liquidity will translate to operational liquidity for NBFCs? Some NBFCs such as HDFC and public sector entities are likely to find it easier to raise funds. But the rest will find it challenging, as banks and mutual funds are likely to continue to be risk averse. With rating agencies downgrading debt papers of several NBFCs, in some cases by several notches, it has further weakened their ability to raise fresh funds. Add to this the rise in the risk premium demanded by the market, and the situation is grim.

There are some options available to the RBI to address this issue. It could, as has been reported, open a special borrowing window for the NBFCs. But there are questions over how this would work. For one, what would be the collateral against which the RBI would lend to the NBFCs? And how would it be valued? Perhaps, the RBI will route liquidity through banks, as it has done in the past. It is also possible that the current crisis will see some of the weaker NBFCs shut shop. Some could be merged with banks, while a few could be granted bank licences. Obviously, this will require the blessings of the central bank which is holding its board meeting this week to look into these issues. The RBI needs to act quickly to prevent the NBFC crisis from growing bigger.

THE TENTH LIFE

Grumpy Cat, who brought the world joy in a troubled decade, has gone to the hereafter. Her frown will be sorely missed

FIRST, THERE WERE lolcats, portraits of cats with linguistically mangled slogans like, "I can haz cheeseburger?" They appeared on internet image boards in 2005 and paved the way to fame for Tardar Sauce, better known as Grumpy Cat, who reached out to the world through a Reddit post in 2012. Her timing couldn't have been better. The world was still tossing in the wake of the Wall Street crisis, the Occupy movement was on, even the Olympics had become controversial because Dow Chemical was a sponsor, and the Mayan Long Count Calendar predicted that the world would end on December 12. An irritable world instantly connected with the picture of Grumpy Cat posted by her family, looking down witheringly on human stupidity.

Grumpy Cat inspired a starburst of memes, including one talking down to the maker of the other pop culture phenomenon of 2012, Gangnam Style: "Congrats, Psy, but you still don't have nine lives." In the years since, she collected millions of fans on social media, starred in the film Grumpy Cat's Worst Christmas Ever, and became the only cat ever to find a place in Madame Tussaud's. On the internet, which is infested with cat images and videos, she was the top cat. When she died before her time in her Arizona home, aged seven, the world mourned.

Grumpy Cat's family have always insisted that she was quite sweet-tempered. An underbite and feline dwarfism accounted for her forbidding aspect. But it made her a satirical symbol of a time when the world frowned upon the capitalist world order, which had narrowly escaped collapse. Now, she has gone to the great cat's cradle in the sky, leaving us to ponder one of her most enduring memes: "If I have said or done anything to hurt you, I don't care."

LAST FRIDAY'S DUD press conference by Narendra Modi-Amit Shah might be seen as yet more proof that the prime minister doesn't face the media impromptu. But that episode and Modi's unwillingness to be more accessible to the media is instructive for a very different reason. It has brought forward the issue of the relationship between political leaders and the public in a democracy.

During the past few weeks, it has been widely commented that the PM shies away from media interactions. He was being compared to Rahul Gandhi on this score. To rebut these charges, Modi began a well-orchestrated media exercise and since that was sure to give good TRPs, media houses lapped it up.

The non-political interview by Akshay Kumar was supposed to be a masterstroke. It could beat the model code of conduct and at the same time, ensure that the image of the leader was carefully projected. One is not sure how many viewers genuinely appreciated that interview — where Modi was ill at ease and the interviewer clueless.

All this while, a question kept cropping up — why not a routine, standard practice of interacting with media persons or holding a press conference? The grapevine has it that the PM probably wanted to avoid awkward questions. Critics said that Modi holds the media in contempt and therefore chooses to ignore them. Both might well be plausible explanations. It looks like the PM was being protected from the media while simultaneously using the media to put across the messages he wanted to communicate to his audience.

But there seems to be a larger issue here. More than fear or contempt (the two can be interconnected), it is a question of leadership style. Modi has brought into practice a style that consists of one-way communication: Giving out messages. He is a leader who does not like to enter into dialogue, doesn't want an exchange with the media. He won't brook hard questioning; soft probing, like Akshay Kumar's, was admissible. Earlier, a demonstration of this genre of interview was given by Praseon Joshi in a "reality show" performed abroad. But no real questioning. After all, there are not many leaders with the distinction of having left an interview mid-way.

Modi has taken the tendency to avoid a two-way traffic with the public to the level of an artful skill. He crafts messages for the public where he is the preacher — the giver. In public speeches, there are the crowds, appropriately excited, and Modi arrives with a set speech, a pre-planned punch line that would arouse response, and the rest would be done by the IT army and the Twitter public that is more loyal than the king. Mann ki Baat has been another instance. In it, again, he is the only messenger, there is no interaction.

Political leaders and the media have a relationship riddled with tension. Leaders get accustomed to deference. Media persons are often expected to stay within limits. Nevertheless, democracy has the potential of introducing a levelling effect whereby the leader gets the taste of political equality. Any journalist can hurl a tough and even personal or awkward question at the leader. Leaders in democracies have to take this in their stride.

They, of course, would make attempts to cultivate a friendly media; they would occasionally browbeat the media. But in spite of all this, media persons with even limited amounts of professionalism are often likely to prove difficult. Political leaders most often appreciate this fact of democratic life and live with it. This allows examination and public questioning of leaders — not just in India but across the globe.

Modi represents a section of political leaders who refuse to submit to such examination, who are unwilling to be tested. They prefer the pulpit. Naveen Patnaik is famous for his reclusive ways, Mayawati rarely allows herself to be grilled, Jayalalitha wove an enigma around herself. They all have won and lost elections and have survived splits or defections from their parties. But they would still remain, as leaders, deeply uncomfortable with questioning by the commoners. The media can be only an instrument to build their image; they would not recognise that it is also the citizen's tool for bridging the gap between the elite and non-elite.

Modi has taken this tendency to avoid a two-way traffic with the public to the level of an artful skill. He crafts messages for the public where he is the preacher — the giver. In public speeches, there are the crowds, appropriately excited, and Modi arrives with a set speech, a pre-planned punch line that would arouse response, and the rest would be done by the IT army and the Twitter public that is more loyal than the king. Mann ki Baat has been another instance. In it, again, he is the only messenger, there is no interaction.

But party politics and electoral competition are strange things. Despite the obvious creation of power hierarchies, they tend

to also strive for political equality of sorts — where the non-powerful have the vicarious satisfaction of bringing the powerholders down from the pulpit. It seems that this campaign exposed this major limitation of Modi — his unwillingness to step down from the pulpit, even momentarily. And the poetic justice of this was that this limitation was drawn out by none other than the "Pappu" he had created.

Most public personalities, but more so politicians, adapt themselves to the ways of an intransigent media, whose excesses and tendency to peep into private lives are legendary (not so much in India, though). This submission of the elite to media scrutiny, with all its evils, needs to be seen as a culture of democracy compensating for the absence of citizen scrutiny. Politicians in democracies come to terms with this democratic culture — and that is why Trump is seen as an aberration.

The question that Modi's extreme reluctance to face such media scrutiny raises is not limited to the persona of Modi, his vanity or to his self-belief in being a new architect of the fate of India — a *bhagyavidhata*. Modi has been in the upper echelons of the power hierarchy for a fairly long time. Yet, he has steadfastly refused to imbibe the primary test of democratic politics — allowing tough questions and trying to answer them. He probably believes that he doesn't need the media to project his image because his power derives from the people. He forgets that without the prolonged love affair that the media had with him, his image could not have been built in the way it was between 2013 and 2018.

But the issue is not confined to Modi's dependence on the media or his autonomy from it; Modi's awkward response to democracy's requirement of willing submission to public scrutiny draws attention to the larger issue: If leaders were to avoid media scrutiny, what does that tell us about their commitment to the democratic culture of political equality?

The writer was professor of political science and is based at Pune



DHARMAKIRTI JOSHI AND PANKHURI TANDON

BAG A BARGAIN

India can benefit from the US-China tariff war if it plays its cards well

A YEAR INTO the US-China tariff war, its implications for India are still unfolding. The glass, as it were, could be seen as half empty, or half full. What we know is India is losing its surplus with the US. It is gaining exports, and hence, narrowing its deficit with China. What we are yet to find out is if India can take the space vacated by the warring partners.

Here are some points to consider. No doubt, the simmering tensions between the world's two largest economies has wrought a knock-on effect, taking down global growth, disrupting trading arrangements and production systems and, above all, injecting uncertainty into the already fragile global environment and weakening investor sentiment. India hasn't escaped unhurt. Its exports slowed to 5.5 per cent in the second half of fiscal 2019, compared with 12.7 per cent in the first half. Overall growth for the fiscal printed at 8.6 per cent on-year, lower than 10 per cent in the previous year. These overall figures, however, hide some crucial details, which tell us not all is lost. Specifically, India's exports with US and China have seen sharp reversals.

India's trade surplus with the US had increased significantly since fiscal 2012. However, this surplus started to shrink in fiscal 2019, as export growth slowed to 9.5 per cent from 13.4 per cent in fiscal 2018, while import growth rose sharply to 32.6 per cent from 19.3 per cent. Protectionist measures by the US were beginning to tell on India's ex-

ports. Key items hit by US tariffs last year were iron, steel, and aluminum. The impact, though, was not significant, as these account for less than 1 per cent of India's total exports.

The opposite was the case with China. India's trade deficit with China has risen rapidly over the past decade. However, this deficit narrowed in fiscal 2019, as exports to China galloped 25.6 per cent, while imports declined by 7.9 per cent. In fact, the top exported commodities to China in fiscal 2019 — petroleum products, cotton, chemicals and plastic products — were products on which China imposed import tariffs on the US last year. A word of caution here, though. Declining imports from China were accompanied by a rise in same products from Hong Kong. Such instances have signalled that the current trade war could lead to trade diversion rather than trade destruction. Until now, the tariff actions by US and China have been one-on-one, making imports from each other expensive. What that has done, quite unintentionally, is also to improve relative competitiveness of other economies exporting the same products.

If this trade war continues over a longer horizon, it could even result in shift of production bases and restructuring of global supply chains. Chinese firms are already moving production to their plants in other countries. India also figures in the list of such probables.

But such opportunities for growing exports have come and passed earlier too. Even before

the trade war, low-end manufacturing (ready-made garments, leather garments and footwear) had started moving out from China, as labour costs rose and it moved to more sophisticated manufacturing. However, India fell behind countries like Vietnam and Bangladesh in capturing export share in these sectors because of higher costs and lower incentives.

That brings us to a more fundamental issue. What hinders India from becoming an export powerhouse? First, it lags in competitiveness. At 58, India still ranks below China (28) in World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Rankings for 2018. In World Bank's Logistics Performance Index 2018, it ranks 44, below China (26) and Vietnam (39). Land and labour reforms are still pending, hindering largescale investments in export sectors. Two, India remains a tightly regulated market. Under the World Bank's Doing Business rankings, India ranks 77, compared with China at 46 and Vietnam at 69. Three, India's slow progress in drafting trade agreements impacts its ability to participate in global value chains, affecting export growth.

India must proactively address these concerns. Reaping every opportunity that presents itself has become more crucial now, given that the global environment is in for even more challenging times.

Joshi is chief economist and Tandon is junior economist, CRISIL Ltd



MAY 21, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

DESAI TO CMS

PRIME MINISTER MORARJI Desai rejected the demand from a majority of the affluent states to include corporation tax and the surcharge on income tax in the divisible pool. Speaking at the chief ministers' conference in Delhi, Desai, however, bowed to the states' plea for a review of the existing rates of additional excise duties levied on textiles, tobacco and sugar in lieu of the sales tax as well as for a review of the grant-in-aid in lieu of the railway passenger tax. The PM also conceded the states' stand against imposition of additional excise duties in lieu of sales tax in respect of four more commodities, namely cement, vanaspati, drugs and petroleum products,

as recommended by the Jha committee on indirect taxation. Desai said if the Centre's resources are diluted further, it would not be able to fulfil its responsibilities towards the weaker states.

BASU'S RESPONSE

WEST BENGAL CHIEF Minister Jyoti Basu suggested that the dialogue on the state governments' demand for a share in the proceeds of corporation tax and surcharge on income tax should continue despite the rejection by the PM of their viewpoint. Basu regretted that Morarji Desai, who had been the finance minister when many of the decisions were taken now being objected to by the states had been taken dur-

ing the one-party Congress regime, was viewing the problem subjectively and as a personal matter. He urged the PM to take an objective view.

TN NOT FOR INDIRA

INDIRA GANDHI WILL not contest the Lok Sabha by-election from the Thanjavur constituency in Tamil Nadu. The Congress-I president was all set for filing her nomination papers. What was needed was a fair assurance from the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M G Ramachandran, that with Anna DMK support she will win the seat. MGR's reluctance to give the assurance about her victory ultimately made her change her mind.

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"While China has a quite different political system and ideology than Europe and Japan, China has given both much more respect than they have received from the US."
— GLOBAL TIMES CHINA

Beginning of the end

If the exit polls are right, then Election 2019 marks a structural change in Indian politics — the end of Congress's dynastic rule



NO PROOF REQUIRED
BY SURJIT S BHALLA

AT THE END of exit poll night, my co-panelist and political scientist/psephologist at CNN-IBN, Rahul Verma, turned to me and quipped: "Congratulations, You got the exit polls right"! By the strangest of coincidences, the election forecast (for the BJP and Congress alone) contained in my book *Citizen Raj* (and reproduced below), the exit polls seemed to centre around 270-280 seats for the BJP and around 50-60 seats for the Congress. My attempt (and the forecast made in February-March) was 274 and 57 seats respectively for the BJP and Congress.

It is no "triumph" to forecast correctly the exit polls. What matters is the real McCoy—which we will all know on May 23. Until then, we can speculate, and update as I do below. And we can begin to discuss what Election 2019 may have all been about (as needless to say, we have all been doing for the last six months).

The first point to be made is that this election was different as witnessed on the major English TV networks. Briefly, we have been told that this election was about voting your caste; that, unfortunately, it was not about economic development and what matters to the poor; that it was not about unemployment, job losses, and farmer distress; unfortunately, it was not about the palpable fear among Indians, especially among intellectuals and those belonging to the minorities and the scheduled castes; that it was not about data suppression, manipulation of data, and not about fudging of data (as claimed by the political opposition to Modi).

I travelled to Karnataka in April 2018; to Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in November 2018; to West Bengal and UP in May 2018. I have talked to many a taxi driver and many a non-elite voter. Indeed, constantly, the discussion with voters has revolved around economic issues. Farmer distress was often talked about in UP, though unemployment discussion was spotty. In UP, the one state where the polls are suggesting the BJP will lose only 10-15 seats from the record 71 level in 2014, almost every rural voter, young, and old, and even those too young to vote, mentioned the menace of the holy cow. And no one seemed fearful of expressing any opinion, and doing so openly.

At the same time, and in direct contrast to the expectations of Delhi-Lutyens-Liberal-Khan Market media, the delivery of social services to "poor" individuals (those belonging to the bottom 70 per cent layer of the income pyramid) was often talked about. List the benefits — roads, toilets, LPG gas, houses, health insurance, bank accounts, bank transfers. A lot of individuals claimed they had never been "touched" by government policies, except now. Another aspect often mentioned was the absolute quality of leadership provided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi (i.e. not just that he was much better than the rest). They trusted him, and despite several faults, wanted to vote for him. Give him another chance, and may be another. And yes, and somewhat surprisingly for me, the rural voter often mentioned that Modi had en-

ELECTION 2019: DOES BJP DO BETTER THAN THE EXIT POLLS?

	Congress alone				BJP alone			
	Total Seats	Won in 2014	Citizen Raj	Updated	Won in 2014	Citizen Raj	Updated	
Big States	502	39	54	41	256	244	258	
Andhra Pradesh	25	2	2	0	2	3	2	
Assam	14	3	2	2	7	9	9	
Bihar	40	2	1	1	22	19	17	
Chhattisgarh	11	1	6	4	10	5	6	
Gujarat	26	0	3	0	26	24	26	
Haryana	10	1	1	1	7	7	9	
Jharkhand	14	0	1	3	12	8	10	
Karnataka	28	9	10	6	17	12	21	
Kerala	20	8	6	9	0	2	2	
Madhya Pradesh	29	2	4	5	27	25	24	
Maharashtra	48	2	2	2	23	23	23	
Odisha	21	0	0	0	1	6	13	
Punjab	13	3	4	8	2	4	2	
Rajasthan	25	0	5	2	25	20	24	
Tamil Nadu	39	0	0	0	1	3	3	
Telangana	17	0	1	0	1	2	2	
Uttar Pradesh	80	2	4	2	71	62	55	
West Bengal	42	4	2	0	2	10	15	
Small States	41	5	3	2	26	30	30	
Total	543	44	57	47	282	274	293	

Source: ECI; authors database on Indian Elections as used in Citizen Raj
Notes: The Congress forecast is reported on page 197 of Citizen Raj and the BJP forecast on page 211



CR Sasikumar

hanced India's standing in the world. I say surprising because I belong to DLLK, and we elite find it difficult to understand why a rural voter should be worried about India's standing in the world.

That is a cardinal mistake, and vividly illustrates why DLLK got this election so wrong (again, assuming exit polls are right — I believe they will be). This is a changed, educated, aspiring, middle-class India. Those who are not yet truly middle-class (about 50 per cent of the population) want to get there, and want to know the means to get there.

These are some of the fundamental reasons for why to me a Modi victory was not a surprise. There is a major "technical" reason why those expecting a genuine fight-back by the political opposition were likely to be disappointed. One important factor behind the "structural change" of the Modi election of 2014 (some disparagingly, and dismissively, called it an exceptional "Black Swan" election) was the margin of victory in some key states. In Gujarat, in 24 of 26 seats, the BJP won by a margin of more than 10 per cent. In Madhya Pradesh, 22 of 29 seats; in Maharashtra 22 of 23 BJP wins were with 10 plus margin; and in Rajasthan 20 of 25 fights. All these states there was no alliance to consider — they were straight fights between the Congress and BJP. I also conjectured in *Citizen Raj* that, perhaps, the most unfortunate event to befall the Congress (and DKLL members) was that the party won three states in December 2018. This lulled them into thinking that they had a good chance of making a come back in these states, and therefore, across India. Congress supporters were serious in believing that they could get within inches of their long-term post-1991 median of around 140 seats. It helped that the DKLL media was dominantly on their side and they did not have to counter questions about the basis for the claim that the Congress was mustering a ten percentage point swing in a head-to-head competition with the Modi-led BJP.

There was something else that hurt the Congress besides hope. It is that the odds of a

There was something else that hurt the Congress besides hope. It is that the odds of a

dynast from the freedom-fighter era would still work charms. I have said it before many times (even when Manmohan Singh was PM, and before) that the Congress needs to shed the dynasty tag. That won't guarantee them a revival — but it is an absolutely necessary condition. Understanding this may have been the major reason why I got the exit polls right. In the inside flap of *Citizen Raj* I state: "Will the Rahul Gandhi-led Congress emerge as the single largest opposition party; or will it become irrelevant and be relegated to electoral history? Most likely, and in the same order".

There will be time to consider the future in the future. The table below provides my "last-minute" adjustments to my over two-month-old forecast. Not much change for the BJP except for West Bengal and Odisha. In West Bengal, the bet has to be that Hindus from the TMC move towards the BJP; they have a mountain to climb in terms of margins, and movement from the TMC will have a two to three times larger effect on the BJP chance of victory than a movement from the Left or the Congress (unless they en-masse move towards the BJP). I believe that West Bengal will reflect the deep polarisation induced by the so-called secular Mamata Banerjee's Muslim appeasement policy.

Odisha is the other major change in my forecast — an increase from 6 seats in *Citizen Raj* to 13 seats now. There is a 50-50 chance that the BJP wins both the assembly and the Lok Sabha election. If this happens, then the BJP could proceed towards the 300 mark.

For the Congress, it is difficult to identify a silver lining. In my book, I had speculated that Karnataka might be the only state in the country where the Congress would reach double digits. It now appears that there will be no state where the Congress is able to achieve that status. If this doesn't herald the beginning of the end of the Congress as we have known to love, and hate, over the last 50 years, then I frankly do not know what will.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express, and consulting editor, Network 18

The case for informal regional diplomacy

Routine meetings between leaders of the Subcontinent will liberate the region from the formalism of summits



RAJA-MANDALA
BY C RAJA MOHAN

WITH NARENDRA MODI looking set to return as India's prime minister, might he want to start his second tenure by inviting all leaders of the neighbouring countries for his inauguration? Five years ago, in May 2014, Modi surprised the region and the world with his invite and spent the first day in office talking to the visiting leaders from the neighbourhood, including the eight South Asian countries as well as Mauritius.

If the 2014 invite generated much diplomatic buzz, it will certainly look less dramatic the second time around. But the invitation for the 2019 swearing-in would hopefully make it a custom and an integral part of Delhi's political renewal every five years.

It is not that the new Indian PM will sit down for negotiations on contentious issues with the visiting leaders. The purpose of having an open-house for leaders from the neighbourhood at the launch of a new government in Delhi is about informal diplomacy — of establishing or renewing personal contact, building mutual trust and generating the political will for resolving the multitude of problems that exist between neighbours.

Others in our neighbourhood too seem to like the idea. When he was sworn in as president of Maldives last November, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih invited the Indian PM to be present. Modi readily accepted and traveled down to Male for a few hours to be at the ceremony.

Earlier in August 2018, when Imran Khan was taking charge as Pakistan's Prime Minister, he toyed with the idea of emulating Modi by inviting foreign leaders for his swearing in ceremony. But the proposal did not fly and Imran limited himself to inviting friends from India — including former cricketer and Congress leader, Navjot Singh Sidhu.

If Modi used the invitation in 2014 to signal his commitment to South Asian regionalism, he was also quick to see the limitations of SAARC (the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation) at the Kathmandu summit in 2014. The summit had failed to sign off on the connectivity agreements that were painfully negotiated by senior officials, because Pakistan chose to pull out at the last stage. Apparently Rawalpindi was not ready for trade and economic cooperation with India.

At Kathmandu, Modi recognised that South Asian regionalism can't be allowed to become a hostage to Pakistan. To be sure, Islamabad had the sovereign right to decide on the need, nature and pace of its integration with the rest of the subcontinent. The only sensible course, then, is for the rest of the SAARC to move forward wherever

they can and let Pakistan join the process whenever it feels comfortable.

Since then Delhi has emphasised other multilateral mechanisms — including sub-regional cooperation between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal and trans-regional cooperation in the east — the littoral of the Bay of Bengal including Burma and Thailand. Modi also revived the bilateral engagement with countries like Sri Lanka that were constrained in the UPA years — thanks to Tamil Nadu's veto over the engagement with Colombo.

Regular official visits to the neighbouring capitals have become the norm at all levels. Early on in his tenure, Modi chose to travel to most neighbouring countries as well as Mauritius and Seychelles. It has become the convention for any new foreign secretary to travel first to all the neighbouring capitals.

Beyond the formal visits, Modi found opportunities to drop by in the neighbourhood — to pray at the Pashupatinath temple in Kathmandu during 2014 and visiting Nawaz Sharif at his home outside Lahore on the occasion of his birthday at the end of 2015. There is also the tradition of South Asian leaders making unofficial visits to temples and dargahs in India.

The Subcontinent can do with more of this kind of engagement — leaders seeing each other on short notice for informal consultations or just watch a cricket match or join a social or spiritual occasion. Informal diplomacy in South Asia will make it easier for India to sustain high-level engagement with the neighbourhood, given the increasingly crowded formal diplomatic calendar of the PM. These include pre-set multilateral summits — from BRICS and SCO to the ASEAN, G-20 and the UN — as well as annual meetings with friendly nations through the year.

Meanwhile, some of these multilateral summits could throw up the possibilities of a meeting with the Pakistani leadership. There is already speculation on the prospects of a meeting between Modi and Imran on the margins of the SCO summit in Central Asia next month. Is it not much simpler to meet Imran in Delhi next week rather than Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan at the end of June?

There is no rule which says an Indian PM can't meet his Pakistani counterpart without it involving a negotiation of differences. If meetings with Pakistan's leadership become routine and informal, Delhi will be able to prevent each encounter seem like a gladiatorial contest that must address all issues and produce joint statements, every word of which is analysed to death.

While Pakistan is a special case, informal high level diplomacy could also help liberate the region from the stuffy and unproductive formalism of the SAARC. Rather than pray for the success of SAARC, the new government in Delhi should double down on informal diplomacy that could help pave the way for more purposeful regional cooperation — both bilateral and multilateral.

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

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

EC'S TASKS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Monitor's test' (IE, May 20). The dissent within the Election Commission of India by one of its election commissioners, Ashok Lavasa, is healthy for the future of the institution. Dissent is one of the vital barometers to check the health of any democracy. However, the poll panel's clean chit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP President Amit Shah on more than one occasion should surprise those who have observed the EC closely. In the 1990s, T N Seshan introduced landmark reforms that gave credibility to the institution. The EC must not only introspect its latest actions but also take actions to allay the fears of the opposition parties. Time has also come to act more seriously against candidates with criminal cases. More than 1,000 candidates in the current general elections declared crimes of serious nature.

Pranay Shome, Kolkata

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Monitor's test' (IE, May 20). During the current elections, the reputation of Election Commission has taken a blow. The EC faces a crisis of credibility like several other institutions including the Reserve Bank of India and the CBI.

Piyush Narula, Ludhiana

WHY THE DISSENT?

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'On eve of last phase, EC split wide open' (IE, May 19). In the past 30 years, the

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

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Commission may have decided thousands of cases of model code of conduct violations during elections and it will be specious to assume that each one of them was unanimous. Ashok Lavasa is the first ever election commissioner who has protested his dissent not being recorded on the clearances given to PM Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah. Neither the rules nor tradition support Lavasa's behaviour. His motive, therefore, seem suspect.

MC Joshi, Lucknow

A polity for our times

Coalitions allow a diversity of voices to be heard, keep fundamentalism at bay



KAPIL SIBAL

DEMOCRACY IN INDIA is evolving. It has not yet matured. It is buffeted by elements, which are inconsistent with what it stands for. A fair electoral process is just the first step in realising democratic values. It occasionally throws up a culture of power, which threatens the fundamentals of our constitutional imperatives.

An absolute majority in favour of a political party has the tendency to threaten democratic values. We are essentially a "maibaap" (feudal) country and easily accept the trappings of patronage. A hierarchical social structure caters to this. For thousands of years, we have not been able to empower Dalits and the marginalised vis-a-vis the dominant Brahminical culture. Absolute majorities tend to exploit this cultural milieu.

This dominance also seeks a supplicant bureaucratic culture through patronage. After Independence, the elite ICS cadre was not subjected to the pressures of politics. With the expansion of education and rising aspirations within caste-ridden communities, the nature of bureaucracy was being transformed with the political empowerment of caste based agglomerations. After Mandal, such pressures became far more urgent and telling. Those in the bureaucracy belonging to a particular caste and community would cater to their respective interests and depend on political patronage in doing

so. There was an element of quid pro quo since political patronage was used to advance the prospects of interest groups for electoral success. Mayawati would largely cater to the interests of Dalits and the Samajwadi Party to the interests of Yadavs. The present dispensation in Uttar Pradesh caters to the Hindutva agenda, again for electoral gain and seeks the obedience of the bureaucracy for that purpose. The ones in the bureaucracy, who are ready to oblige are noticed and empowered. They willingly offer obedience even if, in the process, constitutional values are jettisoned — survival within the system becomes an end in itself. The dominance of an absolute majority, therefore, weakens constitutional values. In the long-term, liberal constitutional values are sacrificed at the altar of vested interests and political expediency.

In the past 70 years, political structures have responded to the needs of a highly complex societal structure. The creamy layer of the backward communities do not cater to the needs of its most backward. This is also true of the creamy layer within the Dalits. Brahminical structures are inherently antithetical to the backward communities and Dalits since they consider merit as the only yardstick for equal treatment. Therefore, the debate on reservation for the backward classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled

Tribes rages on. The dominant political structure may pay lip-service to reservation for electoral gain, but would welcome outcomes in which the dominant class seeks admissions to educational institutions and public employment on the basis of merit alone.

Of late, our constitutional values have also been diminished by a majoritarian state which has captured institutions for serving majoritarian purposes. In a highly complex socio-political milieu, there is no policy prescription which can cater to the needs of all sections of the community. A healthcare policy prescription does not have the capacity to deal with the complexity of our healthcare needs. Policy prescriptions in education cannot cater, in one stroke, to the demands of higher education and the imperatives of basic quality education at the secondary and senior secondary levels. Part of the problem, of course, is the absence of both infrastructure and adequate human resource. Willy-nilly, the political class enjoying absolute majority looks to cater to the interests of those who, in turn, will advance the political interests of the establishment.

The Hindu majority represented by a Hindutva culture will have the political strength to foist upon a highly complex social structure, its vision. All institutions serve the ends of this majoritarian mindset.

The majority, therefore, is the zamindar of

political power. It seeks obedience and uses brute force against those who dare to dissent. Its representatives are rent-seekers, who demand their share as "zamindari" from both industry and trade. Patronage is distributed to serve political objectives.

Believe India, as a nation, is a coalition. It is a coalition of shared values, of interests that may be in competition, but they must still be served. It is a coalition of different mindsets with different cultural values. It is a coalition where languages identify culture, yet the commonly-valued identification is that of being an Indian. It is this coalition that has to be represented, if democracy is to survive in the political structure that seeks to take India forward.

It is my belief that coalition politics helps different interest groups to be heard. It allows policies to evolve, seeking to serve multifarious needs. We have to evolve from an illiberal mindset based on patronage to one which is tolerant and inclusive. Coalition politics alone can cater to this constitutional value. That alone will keep fundamentalism of any form at arm's length. The coalition of minds and of politics must go hand in hand. They have served us well in the past. Their future depends on what happens on May 23.

The writer, a senior Congress leader, is a former Union minister