



A global label

With Masood Azhar listed as a terrorist, India must work to ensure the mandated sanctions

Masood Azhar's listing as a designated terrorist by the UN Security Council at long last closes an important chapter in India's quest to bring the Jaish-e-Mohammad chief to justice. He eluded the designation for 20 years, despite his release in 1999 in exchange for hostages after the IC-814 hijack, and his leadership of the JeM as it carried out dozens of deadly attacks in India, including the Parliament attack of 2001, and more recent ones like the Pathankot airbase attack in 2016 and the Pulwama police convoy bombing this year. China's opposition to the listing has long been a thorn in India's side, given the toll Azhar and the JeM have exacted, and Beijing's veto of the listing three times between 2009 and 2017 had driven a wedge in India-China relations. Despite the frustration over China's last hold on a proposal moved by the U.S., the U.K., and France just weeks after Pulwama, the government has done well to approach Beijing with what the Ministry of External Affairs called "patience and persistence". There is much disappointment, however, over the final listing released by the Security Council, with no mention of Mr. Azhar's role in any of the attacks against India, or directing the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir. A specific reference to Pulwama, which was in the original proposal, was also dropped, presumably to effect China's change of mind on the issue. Pakistan's claims of a victory in this are hardly credible; Masood Azhar is one of about twenty 1267-sanctioned terrorists who have Pakistani nationality, and more are based there, which is hardly a situation that gives it cause for pride. It is necessary to recognise that India's efforts and those of its partners in the Security Council have been rewarded with a UNSC designation at its 1267 ISIL and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee. The focus must now move to ensuring its full implementation in Pakistan.

But this is easier said than done. Pakistan's actions against others on the 1267 list have been far from effective, and in many cases obstructionist. Hafiz Saeed, the 26/11 mastermind and Lashkar-e-Toiba chief, roams free, addresses rallies, and runs a political party and several NGOs without any government restrictions. LeT's operations commander Zaki Ur Rahman Lakhvi was granted bail some years ago despite the UNSC sanctions mandating that funds and assets to the sanctioned individuals must be frozen. It will take constant focus from New Delhi, and a push from the global community, to ensure that Masood Azhar is not just starved of funds, arms and ammunition as mandated, but that he is prosecuted in Pakistan for the acts of terror he is responsible for. Azhar and his JeM must lose all capacity to carry out attacks, particularly across the border. Global terror financing watchdog Financial Action Task Force will also be watching Pakistan's next moves closely, ahead of a decision, that could come as early as in June, on whether to "blacklist" Pakistan or keep it on the "greylist". Both financial and political pressure should be maintained on Islamabad to bring the hard-fought designation of Masood Azhar to its logical conclusion.

Lost lives

India must meet the Maoist challenge in a holistic manner

The death of 15 security personnel in a landmine attack in Gadchiroli on Wednesday is another grim reminder of the Indian state's continued failure to crush naxalism. Less than a month ago, a legislator and some security personnel lost their lives in a similar attack in the neighbouring State of Chhattisgarh ahead of polling. That this attack should occur despite the deployment of 30 companies of the Central Reserve Police Force – a company comprises 135 personnel – and 13 companies of the State Reserve Police Force as well as 5,500 personnel of the local police in Gadchiroli and neighbouring Chandrapur district shows not only the audacity of the perpetrators but also the unpreparedness of the security forces. A Quick Response Team was going down the road to Dadpur in Kurkheda where extremists had set fire to three dozen vehicles of a road construction company earlier in the day when the explosion blasted the team to smithereens. The ease with which the extremists were able to torch so many vehicles is alarming, and the manner in which the response team blithely drove into an ambush is a shocking example of poor planning. The naxals set the bait and the security forces blindly took it. In the process, standard operating procedures, including letting a road-opening team lead the way, seem to have been ignored. Yet, the authorities still remain in a state of denial.

It is no coincidence either that the perpetrators chose the Maharashtra Foundation Day, after the polling in the district, to send this violent message. That the naxals should be able to control the narrative, remain on top of the intelligence, stay nimble and several steps ahead of the security planners should be a matter of deep concern. It is some comfort that the polling percentages in both Gadchiroli and neighbouring Chandrapur have risen, compared to the 2014 Lok Sabha election, from 70.04% to 71.98% and from 63.29% to 64.65%, respectively. But the path of the voter to the polling booth in the naxal-dominated districts is still paved with disincentives. And, the security forces deployed in the region have not been able to instil in them a greater level of confidence. On top of everything else, most of the police personnel who perished in this latest attack seem to have been local citizens. What effect could this have on the larger process of weaning away the populace from the naxalites? Reality beckons. Even in the prevailing circumstances of a hostile external environment, India cannot afford to take the challenges of internal security lightly.

Don't give in to polarisation

In Sri Lanka, the challenge is to turn national mourning into a call for coexistence and democracy



AHILAN KADIRGAMAR

As reports about those behind the Easter Sunday attacks in Sri Lanka emerge, many questions remain about the motives of the extremists. The full picture of the formation of this extremist force and the objectives behind their heinous crimes may take time. However, they have succeeded in creating a spectacle of death, mayhem and fear.

I focus here on the historical backdrop and the broader consequences of these attacks. In the months ahead, the climate of fear is going to drastically shape the workings of the state, the political character of future regimes and relations between communities.

The political leadership in the country has descended into a blame game with this being an election year. The progressive forces committed to a plural and democratic society have a historical challenge before them, as Sri Lanka is on the verge of falling into the abyss of polarisation.

Historical turn

The Easter attacks have implanted horrendous images in the minds of Sri Lankans. The fallout can tear apart the body politic of Sri Lanka with political shifts similar to the U.S. after September 11, 2001 and the July 1983 pogrom in Sri Lanka.

The "war on terror" in the U.S. after 2001 led to the draconian USA PATRIOT Act, the detention and surveillance of Muslims and the institution of Homeland Security, undermining the democratic and liberal structures within the U.S. With many other countries

sucked into the "war on terror" coupled with the Bush regime's military adventures in Afghanistan and Iraq, great social and political turmoil was created in West and South Asia, and fuelled extremist Islamist forces.

In Sri Lanka, the "war on terror" manoeuvred an internationalised peace process between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), by pushing for a deal between a so-called "failed state" and a "terrorist organisation". Eventually, as the peace process failed with heightened international engagement, Sri Lanka's version of a brutal "war on terror" cataclysmically ended the civil war with tens of thousands of lives lost in May 2009.

On the other hand, the armed conflict itself escalated following the government-orchestrated July 1983 pogroms where over 2,000 Tamil civilians were massacred. That pogrom over-determined the political economy of the country with an ethnic conflict over the next two and a half decades. Indeed, the Easter massacre leading to hundreds of casualties is loaded with dangers of religious forces entering the mix of a country historically fraught with ethno-nationalist tensions and conflicts.

Polarised politics

Some actors are drawing parallels between the perpetrators of the Easter attacks and the LTTE. However, the similarities are limited to the LTTE's use of suicide bombings and targeting of civilians. The LTTE had a clear agenda of creating a separate state and worked to build a base within the Tamil community through a combination of separatist nationalist mobilisations, totalitarian control and ruthless elimination of dissent.

The extremist Muslim youth behind the Easter attacks are a fringe group and their nihilist politics



without a social base is one of divisiveness and isolation. They have drawn as much on globally circulating contemporary technologies of terror as on the alienation of Muslim youth with rising global Islamophobia, but their politics are eschewed by the Muslim communities in Sri Lanka.

In this context, even though the attacks were mainly against Christian churches, the fallout may take unpredictable forms. Thus far, the Christian communities' response has been restrained. However, chauvinist Sinhala Buddhist forces see these attacks as targeting state sovereignty and feel vindicated in their distrust of Muslims. Their anti-Muslim campaigns have greatly influenced the Sinhala population's prejudices against Muslims over the last decade; the Mahinda Rajapaksa regime stoked anti-Muslim violence and the Sirisena-Wickremesinghe government hardly addressed its continuation.

Even as reports of the perpetrators behind these harrowing attacks unfold, many international and national actors are projecting narratives to suit their geopolitical and power seeking agendas. The number of international actors now providing assistance to confront "terrorism" does not bode well given the disastrous history of internationalised engagement in Sri Lanka.

There are social and political dangers in projecting hasty solu-

tions either removed from or with limited understanding of problems. While security in the aftermath of the attacks is a real concern, a solution solely focussed on militarised policing and surveillance is worrying. For close to a decade, progressives have called for demilitarisation. However, the current state of Emergency with militarised check points and surveillance are further militarising the country. In weeks before the Easter attacks there was much discussion of repealing the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act enacted in 1979, which in no small measure was linked to torturing and alienating Tamil youth during the war and Sinhala youth during the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna insurrection. We are now looking into the black hole of a far severe legal and surveillance regime, with little discussion of its long-term impact on democratic freedoms.

Political ramifications

In the panic and clamour for a security response, the ideological, economic and political ramifications of the current crisis are missed. Drawing on Islamophobic discourse, Muslims characterised as the "other" are called to explain and take responsibility for the Easter attacks. There are escalating demands to ban madrasas and Muslim women's attire without extensively consulting the Muslim community. Furthermore, as with the previous riots that targeted Muslim businesses, scapegoating Muslims for future economic problems is a real fear.

The fragile national economy is bound to decline with a major hit on the significant tourist industry. The July 1983 pogrom and the armed conflict brought tremendous disorder and isolated Sri Lanka at a time when its peers such as Malaysia and Thailand gained economically from major foreign investments. In these times of pro-

tectionism, an economic shock affecting international investment, capital flows and trade with Sri Lanka can lead to a national economic crisis.

Even more dangerously, an authoritarian anti-terrorist leadership is now the kneejerk call for the upcoming presidential elections. Predictably, the Rajapaksa camp gaining ground over the last year capitalising on mounting economic problems, is seeking further political gain out of this disaster. They claim only a strongman leader can redeem the country. They are projecting their role in decimating the LTTE as the solution for the current crisis. However, the defeat of the LTTE was about taking on a totalitarian organisation with a pyramidal military structure, where the decapitation of the leadership led to its end.

The challenge now beyond the immediate security concerns is mainly of social and political proportions. The attacks by extremist Islamist forces on the Christian churches can shift into conflicts that involve chauvinist Buddhist and for that matter Hindu reactionary forces. Hindutva in India, Buddhist extremism in Myanmar and the circulation of their ideologies and practices are imminent dangers for an already fraught Sri Lankan polity.

The liberal and left forces in the country, and the Sinhala intelligentsia in particular, have to find the courage and discourse to take on the chauvinist anti-Muslim rhetorical barrage. A likely casualty of the Easter attacks is going to be the rights of Muslim youth and the broader freedoms of the citizenry. The challenge before the country is to turn national mourning and grief into a call for coexistence and democracy.

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The gender ladder to socio-economic transformation

More than a 'more jobs' approach, addressing structural issues which keep women away from the workforce is a must



DIVITA SHANDILYA

India is in the middle of a historical election which is noteworthy in many respects, one of them being the unprecedented focus on women's employment. The major national parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress, have reached out to women, and their respective manifestos talk of measures to create more livelihood opportunities in rural and urban areas, which include incentives to businesses for employing more women.

What data show

Currently, the participation of women in the workforce in India is one of the lowest globally. The female labour force participation rate (LFPR) in India fell from 31.2% in 2011-2012 to 23.3% in 2017-2018. This decline has been sharper in rural areas, where the female LFPR fell by more than 11 percentage points in 2017-2018. Social scientists have long tried to explain this phenomenon, more so in the context of rising levels of education for women.

The answers can be found in a complex set of factors including low social acceptability of women working outside the household,

lack of access to safe and secure workspaces, widespread prevalence of poor and unequal wages, and a dearth of decent and suitable jobs. Most women in India are engaged in subsistence-level work in agriculture in rural areas, and in low-paying jobs such as domestic service and petty home-based manufacturing in urban areas. But with better education, women are refusing to do casual wage labour or work in family farms and enterprises.

Education and work

A recent study observed a strong negative relationship between a woman's education level and her participation in agricultural and non-agricultural wage work and in family farms. Essentially, women with moderately high levels of education do not want to do manual labour outside the household which would be perceived to be below their educational qualifications. The study also showed a preference among women for salaried jobs as their educational attainment increases; but such jobs remain extremely limited for women. It is estimated that among people (25 to 59 years) working as farmers, farm labourers and service workers, nearly a third are women, while the proportion of women among professionals, managers and clerical workers is only about 15% (NSSO, 2011-2012).

However, it is not the case that women are simply retreating from the world of work. On the con-



trary, time-use surveys have found that they devote a substantial amount of their time to work which is not considered as work, but an extension of their duties, and is largely unpaid. The incidence and drudgery of this unpaid labour is growing. This includes unpaid care work such as child-care, elderly care, and household work such as collecting water. The burden of these activities falls disproportionately on women, especially in the absence of adequately available or accessible public services. It also encompasses significant chunks of women's contribution to agriculture, animal husbandry, and non-timber forest produce on which most of the household production and consumption is based.

Any government which is serious about ensuring women's economic empowerment and equal access to livelihoods must address the numerous challenges that exist along this highly gendered continuum of unpaid, underpaid and paid work. A two-pronged approach must entail facilitating women's access to

decent work by providing public services, eliminating discrimination in hiring, ensuring equal and decent wages, and improving women's security in public spaces. It must also recognise, reduce, redistribute, and remunerate women's unpaid work.

An ActionAid document, which has compiled a people's agenda through extensive discussions across States, provides critical recommendations to policymakers on issues of concern to Dalits, tribal people, Muslims and other marginalised communities with a focus on the needs of women. On the question of work, women's demands include gender-responsive public services such as free and accessible public toilets, household water connections, safe and secure public transport, and adequate lighting and CCTV cameras to prevent violence against women in public spaces and to increase their mobility. Furthermore, they want fair and decent living wages and appropriate social security including maternity benefit, sickness benefit, provident fund, and pension.

Women have also expressed the need for policies which ensure safe and dignified working and living conditions for migrant workers. For example, in cities, governments must set up migration facilitation and crisis centres (temporary shelter facility, helpline, legal aid, and medical and counselling facilities). They must also allocate social housing spaces for

women workers, which include rental housing and hostels. They must ensure spaces for women shopkeepers and hawkers in all markets and vending zones.

Recognition as farmers

In addition, women have strongly articulated the need to enumerate and remunerate the unpaid and underpaid work they undertake in sectors such as agriculture and fisheries. Their fundamental demand is that women must be recognised as farmers in accordance with the National Policy for Farmers; this should include cultivators, agricultural labourers, pastoralists, livestock rearers, forest workers, fish-workers, and salt pan workers. Thereafter, their equal rights and entitlements over land and access to inputs, credit, markets, and extension services must be ensured.

Women also reiterate the need to recognise and redistribute their unpaid work in the household. For this, the government must collect sex-disaggregated household level data with suitable parameters. Unless policymakers correctly assess and address the structural issues which keep women from entering and staying in the workforce, promising more jobs – while a welcome step – is unlikely to lead to the socio-economic transformation India needs.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Azhar listing

The UN Security Council has finally designated Masood Azhar as a global terrorist and it is a symbolic win for India (Page 1, "UN Security Council designates Masood Azhar as global terrorist", May 2). Now, how much of terrorism pursued by this man in India can be arrested remains to be seen. The common man also needs to know the exact details about the behind-the-scenes diplomatic activities. The role of certain countries in West Asia in supporting terrorism needs to be exposed which could be difficult as the U.S. supports some of these regimes.

A. BHUYAN,
Nagaon, Assam

In reality, it is the European countries and the U.S. and the U.K. that played pivotal roles in pressuring China to toe the line. But there is no denying the fact that the UNSC's action will be extremely beneficial for India which has also been working hard to ensure that Pakistan is forced to initiate action against Azhar. India should now mount pressure on the UN and the clutch of nations that are on the same page as India as far as fighting terrorism is concerned to ensure that India's most wanted are extradited to face trial in Indian courts.

C.V. ARAVIND,
Bengaluru

Election 2019

The general election in 2019 is a historic one as its results

will affect Indians for many years. The narrative this time is mostly on race and religion rather than an evaluation of progress made from 2014. The discerning public would like to know the truth about demonetisation, two crore new jobs and steps to recover black money. This election is very much about the role of the Election Commission of India, which is supposed to monitor all candidates and ensure that the rules are followed. However, the EC is either too timid or biased against the Opposition. Most candidates in the ruling party are polarising the electorate. The worst part is the Indian media which is not being objective. An independent media is the backbone of India's democracy and if it is

being strangled, democracy and freedom will be impacted.

ZEN BHATIA,
Ontario, Canada

Against natural justice

It is unfortunate that the former Supreme Court staffer, who has alleged sexual harassment by the Chief Justice of India has been denied even the basic opportunity of being assisted by a lawyer which goes against the principles of natural justice (Page 1, "ESC staffer walks out of Bobde panel hearing", May 1). In such a situation, the judges concerned on seeing the woman's plight, helplessness and inexperience, should have come forward to help her. The obstacles she faced (listed in the report) give the

impression that the inquiry is a mere procedural formality. If this facility had been given, nothing would have been lost. For example, in *Board of Trustees of the Port of Bombay vs. D.R. Nadkarni*, the Supreme Court held that when an employee is pitted against trained prosecutors, it would amount to denying the principle of equality when an employee is denied permission to engage a legal practitioner to defend themselves. Such an inference can be drawn when a helpless employee is

pitted in an inquiry conducted by Supreme Court judges. The committee has to remind itself that the preamble to the Constitution, which is part of the basic structure, begins with the words 'We the people'. The committee has to ensure that the inquiry should satisfy the people of India that it has been more than fair.

N.G.R. PRASAD,
RAM SIDDHARTHA,
Chennai

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CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In the report, "CJI appears before panel probing sexual harassment charge" (May 2, 2019), there was a reference in the penultimate paragraph to the crisis in the Supreme Court when a clutch of websites published allegations against the CJI on Easter Day morning. It should have been April 20 morning.

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Is India doing enough to combat climate change?

PARLEY

The challenges in tackling a problem that requires a global collective effort

In the run-up to the UN Climate Action Summit in New York in September, in a discussion moderated by G. Ananthakrishnan, T. Jayaraman and Navroz Dubash talk about the fairness of the global climate regime, and what India could do to green its growth. Edited excerpts:

How serious is climate change as an issue today?

T. Jayaraman: Climate change is certainly the most serious global environmental crisis that we face. It is not the only environmental problem, but it is unique in its multi-scalar characteristic, from the global to the local. And in many ways, it is arguably the most immediate. But there is also a substantial section of the world that does not see it in the same terms. That is perhaps one of the most serious aspects of dealing with this problem.

Navroz Dubash: I think climate change has been with us for 25 years at least. At one level, for many people climate change has become an existential problem that risks undermining the conditions for productive life and therefore a problem that does not override but certainly permeates all kinds of other issues. For many others, it is a distant problem that is overwhelmed by more immediate issues. But this ignores the linkage between current issues and climate change. We don't have the option in India of thinking about anything that is innocent of climate change any more.

Global warming has touched about 1°C above pre-industrial levels. India is not responsible for the stock of CO2 in the atmosphere, but can it afford to wait for developed countries to make their move or should it aggressively pursue its own measures?

TJ: I don't think there is an either/or about this. We must recognise climate change as a global collective action problem. If one country cuts its emissions to the bone, that is going to be of little use if the others do not follow suit. That country will suffer the consequences of climate

change despite the extent of its sacrifice. Equally, waiting for others to do something and not doing something oneself is also not an option, especially in terms of adaptation.

If India does more mitigation, that doesn't reduce the risk in India. It is not a local exchange. We have to have good intent, show it in action, but on the other hand, we must do far more than we are doing today to call the developed countries to account. They are nowhere near meeting their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) targets. And some countries we don't even have on board, like the U.S. We need to move climate change to the top of our foreign policy agenda. This is a critical move we need to make.

ND: I agree that the performance of the developed world has been very poor compared to their capacities, wealth and promises.

The extent to which we have to turn around globally is dramatic. Rapidly emerging countries are part of the story, but that does not mean countries that have already emitted a lot and have built their infrastructure shouldn't actually be creating space for countries like India. So where does that leave India? It is a bit of a dilemma. We are also one of the most vulnerable countries.

I view it in the following way. One, there are a number of things that India could do that will bring development gains and also lead to mitigation benefits. For example, how we design our cities: we want more sustainable cities, cities with less congestion and with more public transport because we want cities that are more liveable. Those kinds of cities will also be low carbon cities. Two, more mitigation in India does not mean India gets to keep those benefits. Because at the end of the day, we are only 6% or 7% of global emissions. But what we are recognising is that the global carbon system is an interlocked system. So, what we have to think about is the global transition to low carbon systems and there are spillover effects there, from changes in one economy to changes in another economy, changes in politics in one place to changes in politics in another place.

TJ: The very form of your question is problematic. You can do whatever you want with your NDC. It doesn't matter. The question is, as a developing country, in the matrix of all other NDCs, where does India fit and what are other NDCs like? In the scheme of things as they are, what are we doing? I think within that we are doing pretty well. I think the problem for India is hedging its future, not simply what we consume now or what we expect to gain in immediate terms. What is it that we want as our long-term future and how much of it in terms of carbon space do we need to hedge? But I repeat, with our NDC, though our performance is good, we cannot respond with more commitments in our NDC until we see serious action at the international level.

ND: The Paris Agreement basically said, every country, please tell us what you can feasibly do within your country. It was always therefore going to be a relatively low set of pledges, and in that context India's doesn't push the envelope very



In its Paris Agreement commitments, India had pledged to reduce its intensity of GDP emissions by 33-35% over 2005 levels by 2030, and at Copenhagen, by 20-25% by 2020. Are we in sync with what is needed from us? With the goal of keeping temperature rise to 2°C or below 2°C or 1.5°C, how does India's NDC fit in?

TJ: The very form of your question is problematic. You can do whatever you want with your NDC. It doesn't matter. The question is, as a developing country, in the matrix of all other NDCs, where does India fit and what are other NDCs like? In the scheme of things as they are, what are we doing? I think within that we are doing pretty well. I think the problem for India is hedging its future, not simply what we consume now or what we expect to gain in immediate terms. What is it that we want as our long-term future and how much of it in terms of carbon space do we need to hedge? But I repeat, with our NDC, though our performance is good, we cannot respond with more commitments in our NDC until we see serious action at the international level.

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Everybody says electric mobility is a good thing. But what that does is to make the users of public transport pay for the well-being of the people still driving cars.

far, doesn't do minimal stuff. So, how do we know whether the pledge is ambitious or not? There's no good way to know.

The idea of the Paris Agreement is to get countries moving towards a low carbon economy, with the idea that each country will see that it is not too costly and not so hard and there are developmental benefits.

The pledges in an ideal world are setting the floor not the ceiling – countries will fulfil and hopefully exceed those pledges. And in India's case, we will probably exceed the pledges, because for reasons like urban congestion and air pollution, we will want to move in the direction of low carbon anyway, quite apart from climate change.

Now, in terms of what the politics of it are, we can try and arm-twist the rich countries. They have definitely been recalcitrant, they have dropped their responsibilities. But at the end of the day, India is a deeply vulnerable country. What we have learned in the last 20 years is that countries don't move further because of international pressure. Certainly not the rich and industrial countries. They move further because they found ways, in their enlightened self-interest, to do so.

If you look at the manifestos of the two national parties, climate change ekes in a small mention at the end, but it is really not thought through. In my informal conversa-

tions, they are still stuck in the language of saying we still need to have a lot more fossil fuels for more growth, when that is an open question in an era when the price of solar power is coming down and the price of storage is coming down. It is not a settled debate by any means, but we need to engage in that debate much more vigorously.

TJ: With regard to NDCs, I think we are risking a great deal if we take the current numbers in India in terms of consumption, energy as the benchmark for what we need. India still has huge development deficits. Unfortunately, the intersection between erasing development deficits and genuine adaptation has been poorly explored. So, every time there is a drought, some go around chanting 'climate change' when indeed it is regular climate variability. And we have always left our farmers at the mercy of the drought.

So, I think in adaptation, our focus should be understanding what our development deficits are. At the same time, a whole new diversionary argument is emerging. There is this recent paper from the U.S. that has appeared saying that India lost 31% of its potential GDP growth due to global warming between the 1960s and 2011. I don't buy that. Without accounting most importantly for institutions, if you simply examine temperature and GDP, you will get all kinds of correlations.

What we really need to invest in is our conceptual agenda. Take electric vehicle mobility. Everybody says electric mobility is a good thing, and cheaper than conventional transport, by factoring in the cost of fossil fuels in terms of health, etc., using the Disability-Adjusted Life Years concept. But what that does is to make the users of public transport pay for the well-being of all the people still driving cars. So, arguing that electric mobility is cheaper really does not fly. Electric mobility is actually more expensive, in immediate terms, in terms of cost per vehicle kilometre.

ND: I agree that the entry point for this conversation should be the development deficits. For example, to say that we need to find a way for cleaner transportation shouldn't actually lead to a conclusion that it should lead to more electric vehicles – the first priority has to be im-

proved, more accessible public transport.

What could be the feasible climate diplomacy or politics for India under the UN framework or outside?

ND: The climate game has now firmly moved to a series of multiple national conversations. The Paris Agreement process is an iterative process where countries put something on the table, they try to implement it, they see if they could do it more easily than they thought, and they come back to the global level. It is a two-level game but the driving force is at the national level. Countries are not going to be arm-twisted by international pressure. We can try, but what will drive them is enlightened self-interest. Where the global role is going to be important is in technological cooperation, in spill-over effects. One of the big success stories is the fall in renewable energy prices, driven by Germany's domestic programme that supported global prices for renewables.

India has to play a role diplomatically, but our diplomatic game has to construct a development model that takes into account all our needs, including climate change, and keeps the pressure on the West on issues like finance and technology.

TJ: All that we do domestically should be framed in the context of development deficits. Within that context, whatever we can explore or do, we should. For instance, how do we ensure that we double the productivity of our main food crops? If we do something that is concrete, we will see the nexus between agricultural productivity and climate and climate variability, and learn something for the future.

My great disappointment is with the Indian private sector. They are willing to donate, willing to tell farmers how to be sustainable, invest in such kinds of activities outside their firms. But making their own firms models of sustainability, sustainability within the plant boundary, drivers of innovation, they still have to measure up. I think part of the reason for our not-so-coherent engagement with the international process is perhaps that we are not defining our own local priorities as clearly as we could and should have.



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Navroz Dubash is Professor at the Centre for Policy Research and coordinator of the Initiative on Climate, Energy, and Environment



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SINGLE FILE

Priyanka's U-turn in U.P.

Keeping her out of the Varanasi contest has sent the message that the only challenger to the BJP is the gathbandhan

SANJAY KUMAR



There is no doubt that by declaring that Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will not be contesting against Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency, the Congress has lost this round of public perception to the BJP. There is hardly any doubt that this has demoralised the party's local leaders, workers, and supporters. While this decision of the Congress might be viewed as the party fleeing from a "serious" race in Uttar Pradesh, it has nevertheless made the BJP's task slightly more difficult in the State now. Keeping Ms. Gandhi out of the contest has sent a silent message – that the only challenger to the BJP in U.P. is the gathbandhan (SP-BSP alliance), not the Congress. This might help consolidate the anti-BJP votes behind the gathbandhan candidates.

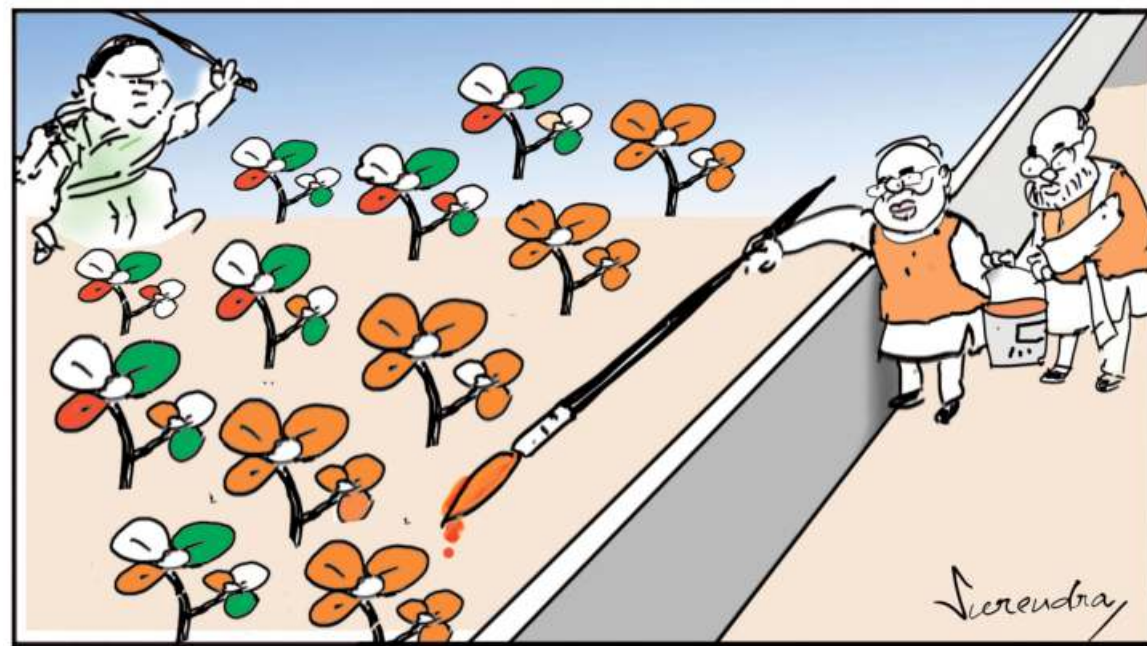
After it failed to form an alliance with the SP and the BSP, the Congress's decision to contest elections alone raised speculation on how much it could damage the electoral prospects of the BJP by cutting into its upper caste – mainly Brahmin – support base. There was also speculation on what impact it might have on the prospects of the SP-BSP alliance, especially if there is a shift amongst the Muslim voters towards the Congress.

In many constituencies, Muslims would like to vote for candidates who are best placed to defeat the BJP, but the complexities of making this strategy succeed are sure to result in the split of the Muslim votes between the Congress candidates and gathbandhan candidates. Studies conducted when the campaign had just begun indicated a significant possibility of a split in the Muslim vote, while they also indicated the Congress' inability to make inroads into the Brahmin vote. The Congress's announcement has given a clear signal to the Muslim voters: the real contest in U.P. is between the BJP and the gathbandhan. This will help consolidate the Muslim vote in favour of the gathbandhan.

Half of U.P. has already voted, but there are still numerous constituencies that head to the polls in the remaining phases, where Muslim votes matter. In constituencies such as Amethi, Lucknow, Barabanki, Faizabad, Sitapur, Bahraich, Kaiserganj, Shravasti, Gonda, Domariaganj, Sant Kabir Nagar, Maharaganj, Kushinagar, Varanasi and Ghosi, Muslims constitute more than 20% of the total voters. Their consolidation behind the gathbandhan candidate could pose considerable challenges to the BJP.

Further, there was no way Ms. Vadra could have defeated Mr. Modi in Varanasi, even if her candidature against him might have enthused the Congress workers. Nevertheless there are enough signals that the weeks of suspense and hype around her candidature may have anyway helped generate an atmosphere favouring the Congress in the constituencies going to polls in the coming phases.

The writer is a Professor and currently the Director of Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi



NOTEBOOK

Reconnecting with a messenger's messenger in Bihar

Pushpraj has many causes to fight for but few platforms to articulate them

VARGHESE K. GEORGE

In the nearly 16 years since I met him last, nothing much has changed about Pushpraj. His beard is now salt and pepper and his *jhola* has now been replaced with a backpack. He now has a motorbike to move around, a sign of some marginal material improvement. Pushpraj lives between Begusarai and Patna in Bihar, and travels all around the country to any place where he finds a sub-altern political cause to fight for.

I first met him in 2003 when I was the only reporter for Bihar for a national newspaper, and he, a man for all seasons. He introduced me to some intricacies of Bihar's rural politics, and became a companion in many of my travels around the State during my two-year stint there then. If journalists are messengers, Pushpraj is a messenger's messenger.

He would land up at my office quite often with some lead to a story. Though not a full-time journalist, he has been a writer-activist, getting a national perspective on all issues while sitting in a village in Begusarai.

When I dialled his old number, Pushpraj was predictably campaigning for Kanhaiya Kumar, former JNU Students Union president and CPI candidate for Begusarai. Pushpraj does not have a surname – his grandfather, a freedom fighter who burned his sacred thread and gave up his caste surname, bequeathed that legacy to the grandson. Pushpraj's revolutionary quest has taken him to Narmada Valley, Bhatta Parsaul, Nandigram and, in recent times, the JNU student agitation and the protests triggered by PhD student Rohit Vemula's death.

Pushpraj says he has no material ambitions, and his

life is witness to that. He has been offered a golden handshake to back off from the several agitations that he has taken part in Bihar. His book, *Nandigram Diary*, was published by Penguin. He has a few acres of ancestral land, which he wishes to sell to fund a Che Guevara centre. "There is no centre for Che in India," he says. That could be a fast route to martyrdom, I warn him, among his land-loving Bhumihar brethren. He is always there to help journalists from all over who land in Bihar any time, but rues the fact that most Hindi publications, which until recent years were keen to publish stories of local struggles, are no longer doing so. Pushpraj is an unsung hero, and I was happy to connect with him after many years.

Patna gave me the best bottom-up perspective on capitalist democracy during the first two years of my career, and my recent stint

for *The Hindu* in Washington, DC for three years gave me the best top-down perspective of it. Hence, returning to Patna after several years was an opportunity to refresh memories that I could process in a more holistic fashion.

It is not only that Pushpraj now has fewer platforms to publish his ground reports; even the building that used to house several outstation newspaper offices in Patna – Ojha's Mansion – now wears a deserted look. Most newspapers have shut down their Patna offices due to the severe business pressure on the media industry. Pushpraj used to be a regular visitor to Ojha's Mansion, recounting stories from the hinterland that he had come across and providing story ideas.

He has not run out of causes to fight for, but the platforms to articulate those causes have sadly shrunk.

FROM THE HINDU ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 3, 1969

P.M. invites 15 Telangana leaders for talks

The Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, has invited Mr. A. Madan Mohan, Chairman of the Telangana Praja Samithi, Mr. S. Venkatarama Reddi, Secretary, and 13 others to meet her in New Delhi on May 6 for discussions on the Telangana issue. The invitations were conveyed to them through the Andhra Pradesh Government. The Prime Minister had already completed a round of talks with the Telangana leaders in pursuance of her statement to the Lok Sabha. The 13 others who have been invited to meet the Prime Minister are: Messrs. S.B. Giri, Hind Mazdoor Sabha leader, K. Achuta Reddy, M.L.A. (Congress), Badri Vishal Pitti, M.L.A. (S.S.P.), Purushottam Rao, M.L.A. (Ind.), Ch. Venkateswara Rao, Sreedhar Reddy, Pulla Reddy, Mallikarjuna, Gopal and Wazahat Qadri, student leaders, P. Venkateswara Rao and Raghuvver Rao, journalists and G. Narayan Rao, advocate. Complete hartal was observed today [May 2] in Hyderabad and Secunderabad in response to the call given by the Praja Samithi to protest against the Police firing and "police excesses" in the city yesterday and to mourn the death of those who died in yesterday's Police firing.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 3, 1919.

'Independent' Security Case.

In connection with Rs. 2000 security demanded from the 'Independent', the Hon'ble Pandit Motilal Nehru, who represented Pandit Shamlal Nehru, keeper accompanied by Mr. Syed Hussain, editor, attended the court of the District Magistrate [in Allahabad] and presented a petition praying for the withdrawal of the order. The Hon'ble Pandit argued at length that the Court had no jurisdiction to pass the order. The Magistrate in rejecting the application said: If we turn to the plain meaning of the words of the section there is not the slightest reason for supposing that the words "may from time to time vary any order under section" refer only to the orders calling for security and not the orders dispensing for special reasons with security.

POLL CALL

Lottery

What happens when two candidates in a constituency poll the same number of votes? According to Section 102 of the Representation of the People Act, if there is equality of votes and if one additional vote would entitle either of them to win, and if no decision has been made by the Returning Officer under the provisions of the Act, then the High Court decides by a lot. The candidate who wins the lottery wins the election. In 2017, for instance, in the election to ward number 220 of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, Shiv Sena's Surendra Bagalkar and the BJP's Atul Shah got the same number of votes. The result was decided by lottery, and Mr. Shah won.

MORE ON THE WEB

Denisovans lived in Tibetan Plateau, fossil evidence shows

<http://bit.ly/DenisovansVideo>