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FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

Guests at today's swearing-in, what the PM's outreach signifies

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, MAY 29

WHEN HE became Prime Minister five years ago, Narendra Modi invited SAARC leaders for his swearing-in. As he re-enters office Thursday, the ceremony will be attended by leaders from the BIMSTEC countries, Kyrgyz Republic, and Mauritius.

The invite to leaders from Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal, and Bhutan — countries in the Bay of Bengal Initiative for

Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation — is part of Modi's "Neighbourhood First" focus. The Kyrgyz Republic is currently Chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO); the Prime Minister of Mauritius was the Chief Guest at this year's Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.

After the 2014 outreach to SAARC countries failed to take off due to tensions with Pakistan; this is the PM's fresh effort to reach out diplomatically to the neighbourhood, the diaspora, and the China-Russia-led regional grouping of Central Asian countries.

MOHAMMAD ABDUL HAMID
President of Bangladesh



President Hamid, 75, was elected to his first term in April 2013, and re-elected in 2018. He was Speaker of Bangladesh's Parliament from January 2009 to April 2013. He will represent Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who is travelling to Japan.

2014 GUEST: Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhary

KHADGA PRASAD SHARMA OLI
Prime Minister of Nepal



Prime Minister Oli, 67, is Chairman of the Nepal Communist Party, and was PM earlier from October 2015 to August 2016.

His relationship with India soured during the infamous Nepal blockade, but ties have improved since he returned to power in 2018.

2014 GUEST: Prime Minister Sushil Koirala

MAITHRIPALA SIRISENA
President of Sri Lanka



President Sirisena, 67, who has been in office since 2015, is the first president from the North Central Province. His attempt last year to replace PM Ranil Wickremesinghe with former President Mahinda Rajapaksa was thwarted by Sri Lanka's top court.

2014 GUEST: President Mahinda Rajapaksa

LOTAY TSHERING
Prime Minister of Bhutan



Prime Minister Tshering, 51, assumed office in November 2018. He is a doctor who studied medicine in Dhaka. The leader of the Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa is not a conventional politician, and appeared on the scene only in the last few years.

2014 GUEST: Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay

U WIN MYINT
President of Myanmar



President Win Myint, 67, is a former political prisoner who has been President since March 2018. He is an important ally of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, who is constitutionally barred from becoming President. He is representing Suu Kyi, who is travelling to Europe.

2014 GUEST: Myanmar was not invited

PRAVIND KUMAR JUGNAUTH
Prime Minister of Mauritius



Prime Minister Jugnauth, 57, has been in office since 2017, and is also his country's Minister for Finance. He is the son of former PM Sir Anerood Jugnauth, and visited India in January this year as the Chief Guest of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.

2014 GUEST: Mauritius was not invited

SOORONBAY SHARIPOVICH JEENBEKOV
President of the Kyrgyz Republic



President Jeenbekov, 60, took office in November 2017; he was the Prime Minister from April 2016 to August 2017. He is a livestock specialist by training who has been in charge of several ministries. He is attending the swearing-in as Kyrgyz Republic is the Chair of the SCO.

2014 GUEST: Kyrgyz Republic was not invited

GRISADA BOONRACH
Special Envoy of Thailand



Grisada Boonrach, 61, has been Thailand's Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister since 2017. A trusted aide of Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha, Minister Boonrach is attending on behalf of the Prime Minister, who is busy with the formation of the government in Thailand.

2014 GUEST: Thailand was not invited

SIMPLY PUT

The making of a Union Cabinet

BJP enjoys a majority but the PM looks to keep allies on board. Forming the Cabinet has been a complex exercise over the years, with the ruling party looking to give representation to allies, states, communities



1997 photo shows A B Vajpayee with L K Advani and George Fernandes, both part of his 1999 Cabinet, along with Manohar Joshi, Speaker from 1999. Express Archive

PRADEEP KAUSHAL
NEW DELHI, MAY 29

AHEAD OF Narendra Modi beginning his second stint as Prime Minister, the names of prospective members of his Council of Ministers surfaced by the minute until Wednesday, as if somebody were drawing lots. It is not in the least so.

Cabinet formation is a complex exercise, given the diversity of India. The Prime Minister has to ensure that he or she puts in place a team with experience and talent, while ensuring representation for all states and communities. The task is even more challenging when it is a multi-party government.

Though the BJP has a comfortable majority — 303 out of 542 — Modi has chosen to keep his NDA partners on board.

Vajpayee with allies

The credit for running the first successful NDA coalition government at the Centre goes to Atal Bihari Vajpayee. His two previous attempts had failed. Having acquired multiple allies by the time elections were held in 1999, the BJP had gained the self-confidence and skills for running an alliance government.

The composition of the 1999-2004 Vajpayee government underlines the patchwork he had to do to accommodate not just different interests from within his own parties, but also allies, from the DMK and its Tamil fellow-travellers to the JD(U), Trinamool Congress, Akali Dal and Shiv Sena.

At the core of the government were senior BJP leaders L K Advani (Home), Jaswant Singh (External Affairs), Yashwant Sinha (Finance), Murli Manohar Joshi (Human Resource Development), Shanta Kumar (Consumer Affairs), Pramod Mahajan (Telecom), Sushma Swaraj (Health), M Venkaiah Naidu (Rural Development), Rajnath Singh (Agriculture), Arun Jaitley (Law) and Uma Bharti (Drinking Water).

Samta Party (later merged with JD-U) leader George Fernandes, who was the first important leader from the "secular bloc" to align with the BJP, was rewarded with Defence, which implied a slot in the Cabinet Committee on Security. Fellow Socialists Nitish Kumar and Sharad Yadav were given Railways and Labour, respectively.

Manohar Joshi of the Shiv Sena was made the Lok Sabha Speaker after having been Minister for Heavy Industries. Suresh Prabhu, also of the Shiv Sena, was given Energy. Ram Vilas Paswan of the LJP had the attractive Communications portfolio. Naveen Patnaik of the BJD was allocated Mines. Muraloli

Maran and TR Bala, both of the DMK, were given Commerce & Industry and Environment & Forests, respectively. Mamata Banerjee was given Railways, until she decided to leave the government.

Regions and communities

UP was represented by Vajpayee himself, besides Murli Manohar Joshi, Rajnath Singh, Santosh Gangwar, Maneka Gandhi and many others. Advani represented Gujarat; Jaswant Singh was a face from Rajasthan. Bihar had a large representation — Yashwant Sinha, Nitish, Shatrughan Sinha, Shah Nawaz Hussain, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Sanjay Paswan and Rajiv Pratap Rudy; Madhya Pradesh had Sunderlal Patwa, Satyanarayan Jatiya, Uma Bharti, Sumitra Mahajan and Prahlad Patel. Kariya Munda and Babul Marandi, both Adivasis, were faces from Jharkhand.

Apart from the Shiv Sena leaders, Maharashtra had prominent names like Ram Naik, Pramod Mahajan, Balasaheb Vikhe Patil, Annasaheb Patil and Ved Prakash Goyal and Jayawantiben Mehta in the government.

The BJP did not have many MPs from Andhra Pradesh, but the state had many representatives in the government — M Venkaiah Naidu, Bangaru Laxman, Bandaru Dattatreya and Ch Vidyaasagar Rao. Tamil Nadu too had many ministers, from the Dravida parties, including P R Kumaramangalam, Jana Krishnamurthi, Pon Radhakrishnan and S Thirunavukkarasu.

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah and BJP MP Chaman Lal Gupta represented Jammu and Kashmir. Kerala leader

O Rajagopal was brought into the Rajya Sabha and made a Minister of State.

While Vajpayee, Joshi, Sushma Swaraj, Mahajan, Jaitley, Shanta Kumar and Ananth Kumar happened to be Brahmins, Jaswant Singh, Rajnath Singh and Rudy were Rajputs. Advani hailed from the Sindhi community, as did Ram Jethmalani. The Dalits were represented by Paswan, Satyanarayan Jatiya, Kailash Meghwal and Sanjay Paswan. Uma Bharti and Prahlad Patel were Lodh Rajputs. Sunderlal Patwa and Ved Prakash Goyal were Vaishyas. Sahib Singh Verma came from the Jat community; the two Sinhas and Prasad were all Kayasths. Nitish, Sharad Yadav and Nagmani of the Rashtriya Janata Dal-Democratic were all OBCs.

P C Thomas of the Indian Federal Democratic Party represented both Kerala and the Christian community.

Fernandes represented Bihar and the Christian community. Mamata was the voice of West Bengal. Nitish belonged to the backward Kurmi community.

The Manmohan Cabinets

According to political folklore, the parting advice of Vajpayee to his successor Manmohan Singh of the Congress was not to have any representative of an ally or a supporting party in the Cabinet Committee on Security. In effect, it meant that none of them should be given any of the top four portfolios — Home, Defence, External Affairs and Finance. And these portfolios were indeed given to Congress ministers in 2004.

Then Congress president Sonia Gandhi

personally visited important regional leaders to get them on board the UPA after the general elections. The Left Front, which did not want to join the government, was given the post of Lok Sabha Speaker (Somnath Chatterjee). The SP and the BSP stayed out.

In the 2009 Lok Sabha polls, the UPA won 262 seats, of which the Congress alone got 206.

The Sonia-Manmohan combine followed the NDA model in running a coalition government. Allies were given substantial portfolios — NCP chief Sharad Pawar got Agriculture, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution; DMK leader TR Bala got Road Transport & Highways and Shipping; RJD's Lalu Prasad got Railways; Paswan got Chemicals, Fertilisers and Steel.

Muslim faces included A R Antulay, Saifuddin Soz, Taslimuddin and E Ahamed, while A K Antony and Oscar Fernandes were Christians. Key Dalit representatives were Sushil Kumar Shinde, Meera Kumar, Mahaveer Prasad and Kumari Selja. Santosh Mohan Dev, B K Handique and P R Kyndiah came from the Northeast.

UPA-II had many of the same faces as in UPA-I, but it saw a greater representation of minorities and Dalits. They included Antony, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Salman Khurshid, K Rahman Khan, Shinde, Mallikarjun Kharge, and Oscar Fernandes.

Modi's first Cabinet

Modi, who came to power with a full BJP majority in 2014, showed less concession to allies than PMs running previous coalitions had done. He included Paswan of the LJP, Anant Geete of the Shiv Sena and Harsimrat Kaur Badal (SAD) in his government, but gave them less important portfolios. The JD(U) had to make do just with the post of Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha. The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill put off BJP allies in the Northeast, but the BJP held its ground. It is another matter that the Bill lapsed.

Relations with the Sena came under strain to the extent that the two parties fought the Maharashtra Assembly polls separately. However, they patched up for state government formation, and later for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. Similarly, the BJP also repaired ties with the JD(U).

Considering that the BJP has a full majority in Lok Sabha, the obvious question is: need the party accommodate its allies in the government? There are two reasons for doing so. One, the party is far from a majority in Rajya Sabha and needs support to pass Bills. Two, if the regional allies are abandoned, they may make things difficult for the BJP in the long run.

THIS WORD MEANS: MUSLIM TADVI BHIL

Mumbai doc rare talent in small community

TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA & ZEESHAN SHAIKH
MUMBAI, MAY 29

DR PAYAL Tadvil (26), committed suicide in her hostel room on May 22, allegedly due to harassment by three seniors at Mumbai's T N Topiwala National Medical College. Payal was a Tadvil Bhil Muslim, a tiny community with low literacy rates that lives in small pockets of four states: Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh.

The Islam practised by the Tadvil Bhils is syncretic and unrigid, and the community retains many aspects of Hindu culture and tradition. "They wear saris, and even though they offer namaaz, they will fold and join their hands in front of an idol," said Shekhar Madhukar Sunarkar, a Gandhian social worker who has worked closely with the community.

Jalgaon-based researcher M S Tadvil has reported that Tadvil Muslims don't wear the burqa, usually have a tattoo and, while observing Ramzan, also celebrate Holi and

Akshay Tritiya. Tadvil Bhil Muslims seek divorce through *jaat panchayats*.

Payal was from Jalgaon, which is home to the largest number of Tadvil Bhil Muslims in Maharashtra — estimates of numbers range from 62,000 to over a lakh, concentrated mainly in the district's Raver, Yawal, and Chopda blocks. There are Tadvil Bhil populations in Nandurbar (where more Hindu Tadvils live) and Dhule as well. The 2011 Census, however, put the total number of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) Bhils in Maharashtra at 66,578; the Tadvils are one of the 12 Bhil clans in the state.

Razia Patel, a retired head of the minority cell at the Centre for Educational Studies at Pune's Indian Institute of Education, said the original nomadic lifestyle of the Bhil Muslims was disrupted by the Forest Acts passed by the Raj, and members of the community gradually took up farm jobs.

Sunarkar said that large numbers of Tadvil Bhils converted to Islam during the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707). Tadvil has written that those who converted were initially called

Muhammadan Bhil and, subsequently, "Tadvil", which means "piece (*tukde*)" in Marathi, and "one who shows the way" in Arabic. Tadvil's book quotes the British officer Capt John Briggs as saying that the Tadvil Bhils served in the police from 1815-21; Tadvil's research has found that members of the community joined the 1857 revolt against the British.

Payal's husband too, is a Tadvil Muslim and a doctor; however, very few in the community are educated, and have generally failed to derive benefits from government schemes and quotas for STs. Shirish Chaudhary, a former MLA from Raver who runs the Satpura Vikas Mandal for education and agriculture, said only about half of all Tadvil Bhil children study up to Class 10, even though literacy levels have been rising of late.

According to Payal's family, she was the first woman from the community to become a gynaecologist. Sunarkar said a Tadvil Bhil Muslim woman had obtained an MBBS degree some three decades ago; Payal, however was the first to study for an MD. Most Tadvils are engaged in activities dependent

on the forest; some sell honey or wood, others are farm labourers, and some seek government employment in towns.

While the popular perception is that most tribals are animists, Hindus, or Christians, there is a small population of Muslim tribals across India. Some 18.58 lakh of the country's 10.42 crore STs described themselves as Muslim in the 2011 Census (1.8%). Over 70% of the Muslim tribal population lives in Jammu & Kashmir (13.20 lakh), followed by Maharashtra (1.12 lakh), Lakshadweep (61,037), and Karnataka (44,599). Maharashtra's Muslim tribal population is limited to four out of the state's 47 notified tribes.

However, Muslim tribal communities are the second fastest growing demographic group after Christian tribals, the Census data show. The numbers of Christian tribals grew 61% from 63.90 lakh in 2001 to 1.03 crore in 2011; the numbers of Muslim tribals grew 52% from 12.25 lakh to 18.58 lakh over the same period. Overall, the population of STs increased 23% to 10.4 crore in 2011 from 8.43 crore in 2001.

J&K: how 8% vote share got NC three seats when 28% got Congress none

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, MAY 30

IN THE election results from Jammu and Kashmir's six Lok Sabha seats, the National Conference and the BJP won three seats each. Their vote shares, however, were miles apart. While the BJP secured 46.39%, the NC had less than 8%. In comparison, the Congress's vote share was 28.47%, almost four times as high as the NC's — yet the Congress won no seats. This dichotomy is explained by the varying performance and extent of parties' participation in the three regions of Kashmir, Jammu, and Ladakh.

Voter turnout

The Jammu region of two seats, Udhampur and Jammu, polled 26.59 lakh

votes from an electorate of 37.33 lakh, or 71.22%. Ladakh's single seat had a turnout of 72.25% (1.26 lakh out of 1.75 lakh). These two regions were not affected by the separatist-called poll boycott, which had a huge impact on the Kashmir Valley of three seats — Anantnag, Baramulla and Srinagar. Of the 40.1 lakh voters in the Valley, only 7.67 lakh (19.13%) turned out to vote.

Who was where

The BJP fielded candidates in all six seats while the Congress fielded candidates in five, leaving Srinagar for NC president Farooq Abdullah as part of an understanding. The NC fielded candidates only in the three seats of the Valley; so did the PDP. While these two regional parties contested against the Congress in the Valley seats of Anantnag and Baramulla, they announced

their support for the Congress candidates in the two Jammu seats, and for an independent candidate in Ladakh. This was tactical: the Congress (like the BJP) has the bulk of its support base in Jammu and Ladakh regions, while the NC and the PDP enjoy their support within the Valley.

How the votes add up

The bulk of the votes were polled in the Jammu and Ladakh regions. Of the 35.52 lakh votes counted in the state, 27.85 lakh (78.4%) came from these two regions. In the absence of the NC and the PDP, most of these votes obviously went to the BJP or the Congress. Again, of the votes polled by the two national parties, the bulk came from these two regions. Of the 10.11 lakh votes secured by the Congress, 9.43 lakh (93.27%) came from Jammu and Ladakh. The BJP's

votes were concentrated to an even greater extent in these two regions — of its nearly 16.48 lakh votes in the state, 16.25 lakh (98.61%) came from Jammu and Ladakh.

The contest in Kashmir, on the other hand, was essentially between the two regional parties. Of the 7.67 lakh votes polled in these three seats, the NC won 2.8 lakh (36.53%) on its way to bagging all the three seats. The PDP managed only 1.2 lakh (15.73%). The Congress bagged only 8.87% of the votes in the Valley while the BJP got only 2.96% from the Valley. The BJP is seen as having won most of the votes of Kashmiri Pandits living outside the Valley and voting for one or the other among the three Kashmir seats. The total votes from Kashmiri Pandits were 11,648, which is over half the 22,750 votes polled by the BJP in the three seats of the Valley.

EACH IN ITS OWN REGION

Party	Jammu & Ladakh	Kashmir	All J&K
BJP			
Votes	16.25 lakh	0.23 lakh	16.48 lakh
Vote share	58.34%	2.96%	46.39%
CONGRESS			
Votes	9.43 lakh	0.68 lakh	10.11 lakh
Vote share	33.87%	8.87%	28.47%
NC			
Votes	-	2.80 lakh	2.80 lakh
Vote share	-	36.53%	7.89%
PDP			
Votes	-	1.20 lakh	1.20 lakh
Vote share	-	15.73%	3.39%



WORDLY WISE
IF YOU PLAY GOOD CRICKET, A LOT OF BAD THINGS GET HIDDEN.
—KAPIL DEV

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

New beginnings, old friends

In an uncertain world, the Japan-India relationship is a force for stability



KENJI HIRAMATSU

THIS YEAR, THE month of May has brought with it a breath of fresh air and a new ray of hope for both India and Japan. Today, India witnesses the inauguration of the second Narendra Modi administration. A strong and stable government in India, with renewed validation from the voters, is warmly welcomed across the globe, and not just in Japan. My congratulations to all the people of India, young and old, for the emphatic demonstration of their democratic will. We are confident that this administration will ensure greater prosperity and better lives for India's people. And India will become an even more indispensable player for the peace and stability of the region and beyond. Japan wishes to be one of the most trusted partners of India in their joint quest for a better future.

Japan also entered into a new era earlier this month. May 1 ushered us into the Reiwa ("beautiful harmony") era, with the historic succession to the Imperial Throne by His Majesty Emperor Naruhito. In this new era, Japan is fully committed to building upon the legacy of the past era and contributing to the peace, stability and prosperity of the world, even more proactively.

Japan is aware that such lofty aspirations cannot materialise without working together with friends. Japan and India are already blessed with warm friendship and solid trust. With the continuation of the Modi administration, Japan and India have been given a valuable chance to elevate our relationship to "greater heights", as Prime Minister Modi assured Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

To achieve this, Japan is willing to focus on the following three areas.

First, Japan and India will continue to team up for India's economic and social development. Japan will vigorously support the people of India by meaningfully combining our official development assistance (ODA) and private sector engagement. Japan has been the largest supporter of India in terms of ODA and will further broaden and deepen its efforts. Big infrastructure projects such as Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail as well as metros in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Ahmedabad and Bengaluru are well known. Japan has also been a long-standing ad-

vocate for bettering the lives of Indian people, including at the grass roots level, so that they can fulfill their potential. Take the example of Swachh Bharat, where Japan is assisting efforts to clean the Ganga, to construct sewage treatment plants, and to ensure better sanitation through reliable and affordable toilets. Women are at the center of our projects. Metro trains are providing comfort and safety to countless women going to work and supporting their families. We are building schools for disadvantaged people, so that children — girls, in particular — can have a bright future. Japan is also determined to support projects related to rural development, sustainable forest conservation and disaster risk reduction.

A vibrant private sector is an indispensable ingredient to our collaboration. Japan is already one of the largest investors in India and we expect even more Japanese companies to invest and operate here in the next five years. We hope the Indian government will continue its economic reform efforts to make the Indian market more investment and business friendly. Japanese companies will continue to bring technologies and skills in the manufacturing sector. But the window of business collaboration is wide open for digital, IT, AI and telecommunications. India's incredible IT talents complement Japan's technological vigour beautifully. Japan has established a start-up hub in Bengaluru which has attracted young talents.

Second, the partnership between Japan and India carries increasing weight for the peace and prosperity of a wider region. Our Special Strategic and Global Partnership is literally special, because it is supported by shared values such as democracy, freedom, and the rule of law. A free and open Indo-Pacific is a manifestation of our commitment to a stable and prosperous region that upholds these values. Working with other like-minded countries, including the US, ASEAN members and Australia, Japan and India are at the forefront of the international community's increasing affinity for this concept. In particular, the Japan-India-US framework plays a key role as it has been elevated to the summit level.

Japan and India are collaborating on development projects in countries, in regions as diverse as South Asia and Africa, to translate this vision into a reality. Quality infrastructure holds the key to enhancing connectivity in the region, providing long-term and sustainable benefits. The most recent effort includes a joint collaboration with Sri Lanka to develop the Colombo South Port and make it a shipping hub of the Indian Ocean. Japan's commitment to the development of and better connectivity in India's Northeast is a part of our joint efforts for regional stability and prosperity.

Third, Japan and India will be true partners on the global stage, closely collaborating in such areas as the SDGs, United Nations reform, including Security Council reform, global warming mitigation and free and open multilateral trading systems. We are looking forward to a meaningful conclusion of the RCEP negotiations by the end of this year. As Japan hosts the G20 Summit Meeting next month and welcomes Prime Minister Modi, we would like to work with India on digital data governance, quality infrastructure and other international challenges and opportunities.

India could become the most populous country in the world by the end of the new government's tenure, with its economy on a steady ascent. Prime Minister Abe stresses that "A strong India is in Japan's interest, and a strong Japan is in India's interest". Building upon the trust between our two leaders, Japan-India relations will take greater strides in the coming five years. Our strong relations are not only for ourselves but for the entire humanity. In a world where uncertainties and unpredictability are pervasive, a firm Japan-India relationship exemplifies a strong force that promises stability.

At this critical juncture when India is leaping to further greatness coinciding with the 75th anniversary of her Independence in 2022, I am pleased that Japan and India have so many potential areas to tap jointly. We are ready to kick-start a fresh beginning in our relationship with our friends in India.

The writer is Ambassador of Japan to India

WHAT DIDI DOES

Much will depend on how Mamata Banerjee addresses the political setback in the Lok Sabha polls

WHEN A SHIP sinks," remarked Trinamool Congress leader and West Bengal minister Firhad Hakim on Tuesday, "rats start deserting it". But as the BJP's West Bengal unit welcomed into its fold three MLAs and 60 councillors — a number of them from the TMC — the party and its supremo seemed to be concerned more with the deserters than the sinking ship. For Mamata Banerjee, a politician of the street and the masses who has thrived in the past by playing David against political Goliaths, the defections coupled with the massive gains the BJP made in the Lok Sabha polls in the state — up to 18 seats from just two — are a turning point. This can be a moment for Banerjee to reinvent the vocabulary, organisation and forms of political mobilisation in the state. Else, it could be the beginning of an unstoppable decline.

Banerjee, more than most, likely understands that a politics that seeks hegemonic control based on a ruthless party organisation and intimidation is one that yields diminishing returns. As a feisty Opposition leader at a time when the CPM seemed unbeatable in Bengal, she received more than her share of arduous challenges. In the end, Banerjee gained as much from the fatigue with a politics of violence and control as from her own persona and political action. But since assuming office, one of the primary criticisms against the chief minister and her party has been that the structures of violence and intimidation that the CPM put in place in its nearly four decades in power have been kept intact, and even extended, by the TMC — the incidents of poll-related violence reported in the state during the just concluded general elections bear testimony to this fact. Now, with the defections, Banerjee faces yet another formidable organisational challenge — to maintain inner-party cohesion.

With the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah led BJP, Banerjee faces a political machine with a dedicated cadre, ideological clarity and a strong government at the Centre. The politics of identity and religion could become even more salient with the BJP leadership promising, or threatening, to extend the National Register of Citizens to the state. The BJP now controls at least four crucial municipalities in West Bengal, and senior party leaders have asserted that there will be more defections in the near future. After her first term as chief minister, before the state assembly elections in 2016, Banerjee also campaigned on a development plank — by all accounts, schemes like Kanyashree and subsidised rations were delivered to the intended beneficiaries and played a crucial role in her return to office. The TMC now has until 2021 to build on that beginning. How she responds to her setback now will determine the future — her own and of her state. It will also help shape the still incoherent Opposition space at the national level.

RENEW THE CUP

Cricket's World Cup needs to break the old order, throw up a new champion

THERE SEEMS GENUINE belief across England that, armed with an all-new approach, they can finally lay their hands on the glittering golden globe. They've come close thrice — the last time in 1992, only to be blown away by the wicked beauty of a swing-bowling genius. But this time, for the first time in the Cup's 44-year-old history, they are labelled the overwhelming favourites. Should they vindicate the prophecies and bookmakers, there will be a new world champion for the game. It could be the same if either South Africa or New Zealand hold the trophy aloft and spill the champagne at the famous Lord's balcony. There couldn't be a better impetus for the game than the emergence of a new champion, the sign, or at least a promise, of a new (cricket) world order, breaking a two-decade monotony.

The last new champions were Sri Lanka — ever since the tally reads Australia 4; India 1. In a way it's symbolic of cricket's power dynamics. Australia has been the undisputed cricketing powerhouse of this century; India perhaps have been the second best, though outmuscling Australia in financial heft. Almost everything in the game revolves around India. More so after the IPL. From revenue sharing to scheduling, India's opinions, concerns and convenience are indispensably pertinent. Even the format of this World Cup was tweaked so that India could get to play nine games without any fear of a premature exit that would have dwindled the eyeballs consuming the game. So, for the first time since 1992, the group stages will be a 10-team round-robin format with each country playing the other nine and the top four progressing to the semi-finals. The agenda was crystal clear — more India matches for the broadcasters.

The inevitable casualty was the under-dog romance of the World Cup. This time, the cricket narrative would be poorer without the endearing tale of a motley crew of electricians and plumbers upstaging a team of pros. It's a much-repeated story, but one that keeps its novelty even after the hundredth recounting. But then, in the 10-team round-robin format, teams like Ireland and the Netherlands are redundant, who are best suited to the four-team group stage than an elaborate runaround. The argument of brevity is fine — too many dud matches make the World Cup boring. But in doing away with teams like Ireland, the Netherlands or Zimbabwe, the already tiny world of cricket has shrunk further, stripping it of an intrinsic charm. Now, it's upto England or South Africa or New Zealand to break through the clutches of sameness, and to decentralise the game.

NEXT, PLASTICENE

The Holocene is drawing to a close, and the Age of Humans will dawn in 2021. But the Anthropocene lacks a sub-category

JUST WHEN THE human race seems ready to annihilate itself and enter the fossil record for keeps, the Anthropocene Working Group of the International Commission on Stratigraphy is propelling it into the Anthropocene Age — the era in which the imprint of this industrial and agricultural species becomes visible planetwide. Of course, stratigraphers work with geological slowness. The process of defining the Anthropocene was initiated in 2016 and, while the working group has voted overwhelmingly for the motion, it will be formally proposed only two years later to the commission.

Humans have also left their mark on the Holocene, the era which began about 11,650 years ago, when the glaciers retreated. Ruined cities like Petra and Ur are stirring tourist attractions. Further back in time are the odds and ends of material culture — Acheulian hand-axes, Jomon pottery — and much further back are fossils like Lucy, and fossilised human footprints on the sands of time. Signs of the Anthropocene are less poetic — traces of pollution in tree rings, layers of soot in the substrata of industrial towns, massive deforestation and erosion, millions of acres of concrete, space junk in orbit.

However, there is time yet, until 2021. Time to define a subsidiary age of the Anthropocene, in recognition of a human stain that is far more pervasive than all these vile signs — plastic. Undegraded plastic is everywhere, from landfills to kitchens and the innards of cows. Rivers of plastic flow down to the sea, where it breaks down into microscopic particles that are now found in maritime life forms. Plastic is the most enduring sign of the human race. It is significant enough to be eponymous, identifying a subsidiary of the Anthropocene. It must be named Plasticene.

THE HUAWEI BOGEY

India needs to prove company aids Chinese government, or risk playing into US hands



GURSHABAD GROVER

THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION has not only passed orders restricting the US government and its departments from procuring networking equipment from Chinese companies, but is exerting considerable pressure on other countries to follow suit. The fear that Huawei and ZTE will aid Chinese espionage and surveillance operations has become common even though there has been no compelling evidence to suggest that Huawei's equipment is substantively different from its competitors.

These events have also sparked a larger debate about the security of India's communications infrastructure, an industry powered by foreign imports. Commentators have not shielded away from suggesting that India ban the import of network equipment. C Raja Mohan, in 'The tech wars are here' (IE, December 11, 2018), expressed these concerns and asked whether Chinese telecom equipment manufacturers should be allowed to operate in India. A larger point was made by D S Hooda in his piece, 'At digital war' (IE, October 25, 2018). He pointed out threats that arise from using untrusted software and hardware all over the stack: From Chinese networking middleboxes to American operating systems and media platforms. As a method to establish trust in ICT infrastructure, Hooda recommends "indigenis[ing] our cyber space".

The path towards indigenised manufacturing of networking equipment is an expensive, elaborate process. Restricting certain for-

eign companies from operating in the country without evidence would be a knee-jerk reaction solely based on cues from US policy, and would undermine India's strategic autonomy.

At the heart of threats from untrusted software or hardware, lies an information asymmetry between the buyer and seller. It is not always possible to audit the functioning of every product that you purchase. Open technical standards, developed by various standards development organisations (SDOs), govern the behaviour of networking software, and remove this information asymmetry. They allow buyers to glean or implicitly trust operational and security aspects of the equipment.

It is clear that various governments including India have repeatedly failed to advance privacy and security in the 5G standards, which are developed at the 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) — the organisation developing standards for telephony. Government and industry dominance at the 3GPP has ensured that telecom technologies include security vulnerabilities that are euphemistically termed as "lawful interception". From an architectural perspective, 5G does not contain any significant vulnerabilities that were absent in older telecom standards. Unfortunately, these vulnerabilities are indifferent to those who exploit them: A security exception for law enforcement is tantamount to a security vulnerability for malicious actors. As the report from UK's Huawei Cyber Security Evaluation Centre Oversight

Board confirmed, there is perhaps no technical way to mitigate the security risks that 5G poses now. But there is still no evidence to suggest that Huawei is operating differently from say Ericsson or Nokia.

India needs to establish that Huawei is aiding the Chinese government through their products (5G or otherwise) before reacting. That Chinese companies are rarely insulated from Beijing's influence is indisputable. However, the legal requirements placed on Chinese companies by Beijing are equivalent to de facto practices of countries like the US, which has a history of intercepting equipment from American companies to introduce vulnerabilities, or directly compelling them to aid intelligence operations. Such influence should be fought back by pushing for international norms that prevent states from acquiring data from companies en masse, and domestic data protection legislation.

In the long term, the Indian government and its defence wings would benefit from understanding the argument Lawrence Lessig has made since the 1990s: Decisions of technical architecture have far-reaching regulatory effects. A long-term strategy that focuses on advancing security at technical SDOs will prove more effective in ensuring the security of India's critical infrastructure than the economically expensive push for indigenisation.

The writer is senior policy officer, Centre for Internet and Society, Bangalore

MAY 30, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO



UP HARTAL CONTINUES

HARTAL WAS OBSERVED in major towns of Uttar Pradesh for the second day in protest against alleged police atrocities on traders in Lucknow on May 26. Vishambhar Dayal Agrawal, president of the Vyapar and Udyog Mandal, claimed that the bandh was complete and would continue indefinitely until their demands were conceded. In Lucknow, not a shop was opened even during the relaxation of curfew for three hours. The city wore a deserted look as shopkeepers too kept their shutters down. The Vyapar Udyog Mandal reaffirmed its decision to continue the hartal till a judicial inquiry was ordered into Saturday's police firing and lathicharge.

POLITICE PROTEST

THE POLICEMEN'S AGITATION in Rajasthan is showing no signs of respite with demonstrations and relay hunger strikes continuing as usual. About 350 policemen again took out a procession at Udaipur and held a protest meeting. At Ajmer, more than 100 policemen participated in a procession. About 50 policemen took out a procession at Barmer today as well. They later presented a memorandum to the additional district magistrate. Chittor is another place where about 70 policemen participated in demonstrations in a bid to highlight their demands, and, at Kota, the agitating policemen are planning to take out a torch-light procession.

BANDH IN NEPAL

A "BANDH" CALLED by the Nepali Bhasa Samiti, marked the arrival of Prime Minister Morarji Desai in Darjeeling. But for a raid on the telephone exchange in the hill town by a group of samiti volunteers, the hartal was peaceful and total, according to information received at the Writers Building. The telephone exchange was damaged, disrupting for some time the telephonic link of Darjeeling with the rest of the country. The "bandh" was called to pressurise the PM to include the Nepali language in the sixth schedule of the Constitution. Desai had reportedly rejected the demand when a samiti delegation met him in Delhi some time back.

15 THE IDEAS PAGE

An election of trust

And a hope it inspires: Of a government that has won the people's trust trusting them back



ABHISHEK LODHA

THE 2019 ELECTION results have been sought to be explained by experts in many ways — TINA, hope, fear etc. My analysis is that if 2014 was the election of hope ("Acche Din Aayenge"), 2019 was the election of trust ("Main bhi Chowkidar"). The prime minister did not make any significant new promises — what he did do was remind Indians of his commitment to the nation and asked them to trust that he would always act according to what he thought was best for our nation. In a different manner, the same story of a good man doing his best for the people was successful in Odisha where Naveen Patnaik was elected for a fifth consecutive term with a three-fourth majority.

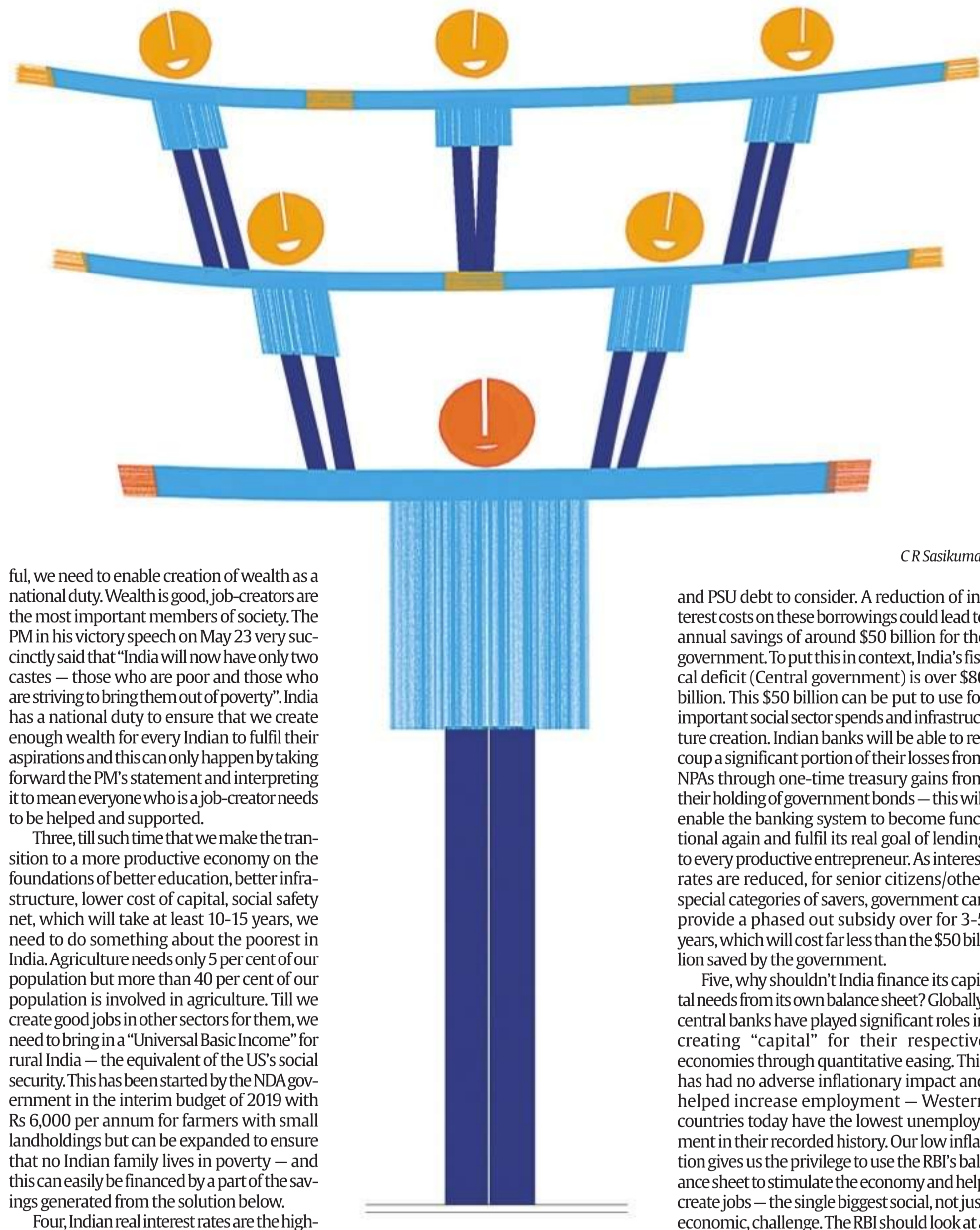
Whereas caste and religion used to be the basis of trusting leaders and voting for them earlier, the basis of trust has now shifted to an individual's non-corruptibility, selflessness and commitment to the betterment of the people. In Modi and Patnaik, India finally has leaders who can be trusted and Indians have reposed their faith in a wholehearted manner. If this trend can persist for a couple of election cycles and the trust of the people can be complemented by trust in the people, the lives of crores of Indians can be significantly improved over the next two decades.

So what do I mean by "trust in the people"? For far too long, Indian administration has been characterised by lack of trust in our people. Our laws and regulations (and their administration) are drafted largely with a view to "stop" the 1 per cent rule-breakers (who, anyway, find their way around these laws). However, due to this non-trusting mindset, our laws and regulations have become so complex, difficult to follow and ever-changing, that virtually every Indian has become a rule-breaker. And this rule-breaking makes us distrustful of each other and of government.

For our nation to progress, we have to break away from the control mindset of the "British Raj" where they wanted Indians to take permission to do everything and instead move to the enabling mindset of a modern nation-state like the US, Australia or Singapore, where citizens are trusted, laws are framed to help them fulfil their aspirations and dreams, and except for a small list of "restricted items", citizens are free to do what they want without administrative interference.

I suggest five solutions which can contribute to moving our nation from a low-income to mid-income country and increase social cohesion and harmony: One, for almost 70 years (1947-2014), India has tried a control and command economy — take permission to do this, to do that. This has not worked. Why don't we try a different approach for 10 years — let people do whatever they want to do. Trust our people and trust markets. Have a few "nos" but everything else is "yes". Don't rule people (no British Raj), but empower and enable them — a great example of how to do this is the LPG subsidy give up scheme — government took the approach of appealing to the people and more than 1.2 crore people gave up their subsidy.

Two, every Indian has the right to be happy and for 90 per cent of the population, if happiness comes from being financially successful,



C R Sasikumar

ful, we need to enable creation of wealth as a national duty. Wealth is good, job-creators are the most important members of society. The PM in his victory speech on May 23 very succinctly said that "India will now have only two castes — those who are poor and those who are striving to bring them out of poverty". India has a national duty to ensure that we create enough wealth for every Indian to fulfil their aspirations and this can only happen by taking forward the PM's statement and interpreting it to mean everyone who is a job-creator needs to be helped and supported.

Three, till such time that we make the transition to a more productive economy on the foundations of better education, better infrastructure, lower cost of capital, social safety net, which will take at least 10-15 years, we need to do something about the poorest in India. Agriculture needs only 5 per cent of our population but more than 40 per cent of our population is involved in agriculture. Till we create good jobs in other sectors for them, we need to bring in a "Universal Basic Income" for rural India — the equivalent of the US's social security. This has been started by the NDA government in the interim budget of 2019 with Rs 6,000 per annum for farmers with small landholdings but can be expanded to ensure that no Indian family lives in poverty — and this can easily be financed by a part of the savings generated from the solution below.

Four, Indian real interest rates are the highest in the world. This is a huge tax on every job-creator, every borrower. How can "Make in India" succeed, how can we compete if Chinese and US manufacturers can borrow at 3-4 per cent and our job-creators have to borrow at 12-14 per cent. Due to the policy measures of the last five years, India has won a significant victory over inflation, with Indian inflation now around the same levels as that in the US and UK. We have not yet given Indians the benefit of the win in the war against inflation. We did not slay inflation just because we dislike it, but because it can enable India to become more prosperous by enabling consumption and investments, with a lower cost of money. We need at least 2 per cent (200 bps) of interest rate cuts over the next 12 months and a long-term glide path to real interest rates of approximately 1.5 per cent (over core inflation, that is, excluding changes in food and fuel prices which are not easily influenced by interest rates).

India's Central government debt is about \$1.2 trillion. Then there is state governments'

For our nation to progress, we have to break away from the control mindset of the 'British Raj' where they wanted Indians to take permission to do everything and instead move to the enabling mindset of a modern democracy like the US, Australia or Singapore, where citizens are trusted, laws and regulations are framed to help citizens fulfil their aspirations and dreams, and except for a small list of 'restricted items', citizens are free to do whatever they want without administrative interference.

The writer is managing director of Lodha Developers

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"An export ban on rare earths is a powerful weapon if used in the China-US trade war. Nevertheless, China will mainly use it for defence."

— GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

Reassurance that isn't

PM Modi has never backed his pious words about minorities with action. Much more than his followers, it's the PM who needs to be watched



APOORVANAND

COMMENTING ON Prime Minister Narendra Modi's victory speech *The Indian Express* wrote: "In his speech in Central Hall in Parliament on Saturday, the first after being elected leader of the BJP-led NDA, Prime Minister Narendra Modi struck a heartening note of magnanimity. Among other things, he said the new government would make efforts to earn the trust of minorities, and of those who disagree (with the BJP-NDA). He urged the newly elected MPs to puncture the 'myth' or illusion of fear among the country's minorities... these are statements of inclusive intent." ("Weight of words," IE, May 27)

The editorial rightly asserted that we need more to be reassured. This implies that such statements should be backed by actions. Yet, the word "magnanimous" was particularly hurtful and cruel. Assurance of inclusion to the minorities is not an act of large-heartedness in a secular democracy. It is not something granted to them by the majority. It pertains to rights that flow from the Constitution — and not the intent of the rulers. The use of the word, "magnanimous" cannot be ascribed to carelessness or a lapse of attention.

One would like to believe that the word was used to convey irony, since it expresses the state of helplessness of those who believe in secular principles in India — we are expected to be thankful or grateful to those being generous to us. Is this not what the minorities have been told all along? Not only by the RSS but even by well-intentioned people who hold that India is secular because of its Hindu majority. It is the catholicity, diversity and openness of Hinduism which has made secularism the most natural state-principle in India.

Returning to the immediate context of the PM's speech, it was only right that the rest of the editorial explained that the feeling of fear and persecution among minorities was not a product of their imagination. While it is right to ask Modi to rein in his leaders, and also mind his tongue, it would have been better if he was reminded of his own words after his first victory in 2014. Even that time, he was magnanimous to the minorities in intent. Was that translated into action?

Should it take a faraway voice to tell us that the leader himself was the source of fear and also the justifier of the persecution of minorities, especially the Muslims? Did he not lead his ministers and members of his party in making the Muslims figures of hate? Did he not make them the other that the Hindus should dread? It was not just the desperation of electioneering which drove him towards it. The past five years bear ample proof that it was he and his party president who instigated the de-

sire to dominate among the Hindus. Who, after all, were to be dominated? It was not only his silence on the hate crimes against Muslims and Christians but his incitement for Hindu mobilisation, which was most threatening to the minorities. This includes the scaremongering in Gujarat about Muslims during the assembly elections in 2017.

The Muslims are thus allowed to vote but not aspire to lead. It is the pleasure of the majority Hindus they should try to earn. This is the message that the first Modi regime has effectively conveyed to Muslims: They need to follow the rules framed by the Hindu majority, that too in the language framed by the BJP and its affiliates. More than physical violence, it is this feeling of being dominated and disciplined by a patron, which is humiliating to the Muslims. It is unacceptable that Hindus — however largehearted — should be the big brothers of Muslims.

Mahatma Gandhi had asserted that Muslims are not the vassals of Hindus. It was this insistence of the Mahatma that led to his murder. We must not forget this foundational principle of the Indian republic. It is this principle which has been repeatedly violated not just under the watch of PM Modi but he himself is a repeat offender in this respect.

Modi has also maligned and criminalised the language of rights — the language which human rights workers tried to use while combating his majoritarian project. He denigrated them as five-star activists and called them the Khan Market gang, while his ministers hounded them by calling them the tukde tukde gang.

One sometimes feels that we are so embarrassed about the prime minister that we try to live in denial. We tend to believe that the leader does have noble intents but is troubled by his unruly followers. We ignore that it is he who follows the lumpens. It is he who fashions and instigates the majoritarian instinct in the Hindus. So, much more than his followers, it is Modi who needs to be watched for his words and actions and held accountable at each step.

Modi is a master of the art of deception. Or, it would be more correct to say that he is both transparent and crude in his deceptive acts. It is actually the media and analysts who are looking for ways to justify him. Or is it the popular mandate that inhibits us in calling him by his name? Do we disrespect the people when we say that the leader they have chosen has been violating the oath he has taken in the name of the Constitution? Sadly, the last stint of Modi proved that his instincts are contrary to the Constitutional values. Therefore, we have no reason to applaud his patronising words now. The minorities have survived the worst phase of their existence in Independent India. The question now is whether the republic itself will survive another five years under the same leadership. So, it would be our duty to keep calling people by their names and not clothe them in words which express our pious wishes.

The writer teaches Hindi at Delhi University

DEAR EDITOR, I DISAGREE

A fortnightly column in which we invite readers to tell us why, when they differ with the editorial positions or news coverage of 'The Indian Express'

Winner's curse

Rajasthan, MP and Chhattisgarh victories made the Congress complacent



PARTHA MUKHOPADHYAY

"THERE IS nothing in the world more powerful than a good story. Nothing can stop it. No enemy can defeat it." These words were spoken on a popular television serial on the last day of polling, eerily enough, to clinch a series-ending coronation. They could just as well have been written for Narendra Modi.

The Congress lost this election on the day in December that it won the elections to the Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh assemblies. Before that, the electorate seemed restive, and the various regional Opposition parties seemed to fancy their chances if they came together. With the weakened Congress as just one of the players, maybe a bit bigger and stronger, but not by much, there were many who could see themselves as contenders for the prime minister's position. The Congress's three-state win changed all that.

But, handed a golden opportunity to define itself, the Congress indicated it had nothing new to offer, not even a fresher and younger leadership. Instead of a reinvigorated young party, which matched its new leader, the party reposed its faith in its old guard, with some indecisive to-ing and fro-ing thrown in for free.

It started bargaining with other parties as if it would win many more seats than them, unwilling to be generous in stitching together a national coalition that traded seats

in one state for another and refusing to be constructively ambiguous as to the top job. Secure (falsely, as it turned out) in their beliefs that their citadels were strong regardless of who was in power in Delhi, and without that lure, the enthusiasm of the regional parties waned. But, by continuing to talk to prospective partners, and almost agreeing to a coalition and then not, the Congress appeared indecisive and amateurish, reinforcing the BJP's constant characterisation of its leader as an inconsequential youth.

Ultimately, the myriad conceptions of secularism proved insufficient to glue the parties together. Indeed, as the old guard in the states promptly set about cutting their intra-party challengers down to size, questions arose about the unity of the Congress itself.

For Modi, on the other hand, these losses brought opportunities and lessons. Two long-standing BJP chief ministers, possible competitors, bit the dust. Complacent party workers were rudely awakened, and the party's performance clearly indicated the geographies and sections that needed more attention. The PM-KISAN support scheme for farmers was an early response.

But, most importantly, Modi realised that he needed a new story. He had promised *vikas*, and one could argue about the extent that voters would think he had delivered, and

whether anyone could be trusted to do better. But, running on the record was not a good enough story.

He needed a story that only he could tell. Fortuitously, the tragic incident at Pulwama demanded a response. Modi would possibly have taken the same decision about Balakot (as may have another prime minister) even without the election — in keeping with his image, as a person with the courage of his convictions, and the determination to act on them, an image from his demonisation decision. Once scripted, more than Modi, it was Amit Shah, who hammered home the story, reportedly even saying: "Don't give vote for development works to [BJP candidate]... vote for him because Narendra Modi made the country's border secure". Concomitantly, he projected the Congress as a loser, linked to Pakistan: "Everywhere there was a celebratory atmosphere but... hopelessness in Pakistan and in the Congress". However, while the rhetoric had a laser-like focus on the border, other channels — social media, LED vans, campaign posters — continued with the sub-text of "development works": Gas cylinders, toilets, houses and new cash transfer schemes.

The BJP effectively transformed any attempt to directly counter such a story into an attack on the integrity of our armed forces — political suicide.

The Congress did not have an alternative story. Despite being the party responsible for cleaving Pakistan into two, 26/11 trumped 16/12, rendering it speechless when a POW's return became a famous victory — presumably clinching evidence of Pakistan's capitulation. It could not script a story where people would believe that the border would be just as secure with them — that they were just as nationalist, and they would deliver, in addition, *sachha vikas*. Indeed, mired in *garibi hatao*, the Congress' economic pitch couldn't move from safety nets to springboards. Its counter to PM-KISAN was targeted to an elusive bottom fifth. Not only could it not weave a common story to leverage the strengths of other parties, many of whom remained mired in caste, it lost the one it had for itself. Besides, it was difficult to square its dynastic leaders — *naamdaars*, as the BJP pejoratively named them — with a story of popular aspiration, especially among the youth.

Modi's story became the only one in the country, and no enemy could defeat it, barring a few regional storytellers. The coronation, as in the serial, was by acclamation. The cost to the Congress of winning the three state elections proved too high.

The writer is senior fellow, Centre for Policy Research

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

HITS AND MISSES

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Eastward course' (IE, May 29). India's invitation to the leaders of BIMSTEC, Kyrgyz Republic and Mauritius is an important diplomatic move. Delhi has combined its neighbourhood first policy with warm relations with central Asia and the island nations of the Indian Ocean Region. A significant player that is missing in the invitee's list is Japan, an important player in the Act East Policy.

Sukhpreet Singh, Gurdaspur

BE HUMBLE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Judging a victory' (IE, May 30). The writer has posed an important question on how the massive mandate for the BJP led NDA should be seen for the treasury benches and the Opposition. It would be morally obtuse for the BJP to think that the mandate offers legitimacy for hatred-driven, communal politics that it has practiced since 2014.

Abhijith Nair, Dombivili

WELL BATTED

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Rahul fills in the blank at No.4' (IE, May 29). It was heartening to watch MS Dhoni and KL

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

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

Rahul hitting tons in Team India's second warm up match of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 against Bangladesh. Dhoni has been the pillar of the Indian Team for years.

Tushar Anand, Patna