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TELLING NUMBERS

QS rankings: which universities climbed or slipped, and why

9 FROM INDIA IN WORLD TOP 500; 7 ARE IITs

UNIVERSITY	INDIA RANKING			WORLD RANKING		
	2020	2019	Change	2020	2019	Change
IIT Bombay	1	1	—	152	162	▲
IIT Delhi	2	3	▲	182	172	▼
IISc Bangalore	3	2	▼	184	170	▼
IIT Madras	4	4	—	271	264	▼
IIT Kharagpur	5	6	▲	281	295	▲
IIT Kanpur	6	5	▼	291	283	▼
IIT Roorkee	7	7	—	383	381	▼
Univ of Delhi	8	9	▲	474	487	▲
IIT Guwahati	9	8	▼	491	472	▼

EARLIER THIS week, the latest QS World University Rankings placed Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) on top of the global list for the eighth consecutive year, and IIT Bombay at number one in the list of Indian universities for the second consecutive year (*The Indian Express*, June 18). How are universities ranked, and how have Indian ones fared?

Published annually by global higher education consultancy Quacquarelli Symonds, the QS list ranks the world's top 1,000 universities. Besides overall global rankings, it also gives subject rankings in 48 different subjects and five composite faculty areas, as well as for graduate employability and various other aspects.



IISc has world's second best score on research impact, but dropped in overall ranking. *Express Archive*

GLOBAL TOP 10 RANKS

University	2020	2019	Change
MIT	1	1	—
Stanford Univ	2	2	—
Harvard Univ	3	3	—
Oxford	4	5	▲
CalTech	5	4	▼
ETH Zurich	6	7	▲
Cambridge	7	6	▼
UCL	8	10	▲
Imperial College	9	8	▼
Univ of Chicago	10	9	▼

INDIAN UNIVERSITIES RANKED WORLD 501-1000

651-700: Jadavpur University
701-750: Manipal Academy of Higher Education
751-800: Anna University, Jamia Millia Islamia, O P Jindal Global University
801-1000: Aligarh Muslim University, Amrita University, BHU, BITS Pilani, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, University of Calcutta, University of Mumbai, VIT.

3 IISc Bangalore rank this year, down one place. It has been overtaken by IIT Delhi this year. QS attributed IISc's drop to "a weakening performance in the Academic Reputation indicator, which incorporates expert insights of 94,000 academics across the world".

23 Number of Indian universities in world top 1,000. There were 24 in last year's rankings. University of Hyderabad and Amity University drop out, while O P Jindal Global University is a new entrant. Out of the 23, nine are in the top 500, including seven IITs.

12 Average decline in global ranks for Indian universities. QS attributes it to two main criteria: Faculty/Student Ratio and International Student Ratio. In the Faculty/Student Ratio indicator, which measures teaching capacity, only eight out of 23 feature among the top 500.

3718 Average citations impact of research produced by Indian universities, measured as citations per faculty member over 5 years. This marks a 30% improvement from 28.54 but is still behind the global average of 50.31

184 IIT Bombay's world rank for the Citations per Faculty indicator. IIT Bombay faculty's research impact ranks above the global average.

100/100 IISc Bangalore score in Citations per Faculty metric. It is the world's second-best score for research impact, adjusted for faculty size. IISc is the first Indian institution to see its research cited more than 100,000 times in a five-year period. An IISc faculty member produces research that is cited 261 times in a five-year period — 5 times the global average.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

What does ESI rate cut mean?

Govt says reduced contribution rates will bring relief to workers, encourage more to join formal sector, besides making establishments more viable. Unions say employers benefit more, deal was for smaller cut.

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 19

LAST WEEK, the government reduced the rate of contribution for medical care under the ESI (Employees' State Insurance) Act to 4% from 6.5%. The reduced rates will come into effect from July 1. The first revision in ESI rates since 1997, however, has faced criticism from Left-backed trade unions.

How does ESI work?

An autonomous body, ESI Corporation, regulates medical services being provided by the ESI Scheme in the respective states and Union Territories. Funded by contributions made by the employers and the employees, ESI provides for direct cash compensation for sickness, disablement maternity, death, occupational disease or death due to employment injury etc to organised sector employees and their dependents. The ESI Act applies to premises where 10 or more persons are employed. Employees with wages up to Rs 21,000 a month (earlier Rs 15,000 per month) are entitled to the health insurance cover and other benefits under the ESI Act.

How wide is its coverage?

As part of its second-generation reforms ESIC-2.0, the ESI Corporation decided to implement the ESI scheme all over the country. Accordingly, the ESI Scheme is now being fully implemented in 346 districts and 95 district headquarters areas, and partially in 85 districts.

There are 154 ESI hospitals in the country that are being run by ESIC and by the respective state governments.

As part of efforts to expand social security coverage to more people, the government had carried out a special programme to register employers and employees between December 2016 and June 2017, along with extending the coverage of the ESI Scheme to all districts of the country in a phased manner. The efforts resulted in a rise in the number of registered employees (insured persons) and employers. While the number of insured persons increased to 3.6 crore in 2018-19 from 3.1 crore in 2016-17, the total contribution jumped to Rs 22,279 crore in 2018-19 from Rs 13,662 crore in 2016-17.



ESIC Hospital in Mandi. Across the country, 154 such hospitals are being run by the ESIC and the respective state governments. *Express Archive*

WHAT'S CHANGED

Contributor	Earlier	Revised
Employer	4.75%	3.25%
Employee	1.75%	0.75%
Total	6.50%	4.00%

(% calculated on employee wages)

Rs 22,279 crore

ESI contribution in 2018-19, from 3.6 crore workers and their employers.

6 SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

- Medical benefit
- Sickness benefit (categorised as extended and enhanced)
- Maternity benefit
- Disablement benefit (temporary and permanent disablement)
- Dependant's benefit
- Funeral expenses

What does the revision seek to achieve?

The revised contribution of 4% comprises the employers' contribution of 3.25% of the employees' wages (reduced from 4.75%), and the employees' contribution of 0.75% (reduced from 1.75%). The reduction of ESI rates is, as per government estimates, expected to benefit around 3.6 crore employees and 12.85 lakh employers. The government said the reduced rate of contribution will bring about "substantial relief to workers and it will facilitate further enrolment of workers under the ESI scheme and bring more and more workforce into the formal sector".

Also, reduction in the share of employers' contribution will "reduce the financial liability of the establishments leading to improved viability of these establishments". "This shall also lead to enhanced Ease of Doing Business. It is also expected that reduction in the rate of ESI contribution shall lead to improved compliance of law," the government said in a statement.

Why are some trade unions criticising

Morsi years: how Egypt changed, didn't

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 19

FORMER PRESIDENT Mohamed Morsi, who died this week, was a key figure in the constant upheaval that Egypt has gone through since the events leading to the ouster of his predecessor Hosni Mubarak. Having become Egypt's first democratically elected President in the wake of a violent movement against Mubarak's autocratic role, Morsi himself was ousted a year later, amid a movement against perceived attempts to monopolise power and Islamise Egypt.

Educated as an engineer, Morsi, 67, belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood, which won the elections after Mubarak's fall in 2011, followed by Morsi winning the presidential elections in June 2012, which made him the first civilian to hold the office. This was until the military ousted him in July 2013, dissolved Parliament and eventually banned the Brotherhood as a "terrorist group".

His regime

Morsi had promised to head a government "for all Egyptians", but critics com-

plained he failed to deliver. Besides accusing him of allowing Islamists to monopolise politics, critics said he mishandled the economy and failed to deal with the very issues that had led to the uprising that brought him to power: calls for rights and social justice, BBC News explained.

Among the moves that turned public opinion against him, Morsi had issued a decree granting himself far-reaching powers (a move aimed at enabling the Islamists to draft a new Constitution). This and other moves led to clashes between his opponents and supporters, leaving more than 50 people dead, BBC News said.

On the first anniversary of his coming to power, millions of protesters took to the streets across Egypt. On July 3, the army took over, suspending the Constitution and announcing the formation of an interim government. Morsi was arrested by the army, then headed by Abdul Fatah al-Sisi, who is now President.

After his fall

Morsi was initially sentenced to death; the ruling was later overturned. His arrest led to more protests, and an army crackdown



Morsi, then Egyptian President, during a visit to Delhi in March 2013. *AP*

in which almost 1,000 people were killed, according to figures cited by BBC News. Violence involving Islamist insurgents increased, and the Muslim Brotherhood was eventually declared a terrorist group.

Morsi was accused of inciting his supporters to murder a journalist and two opposition protesters during clashes in December 2012, and ordering the torture and unlawful detention of others. Acquitted of murder, he was sentenced to 20 years in jail for ordering the torture and detention of protesters. The death sentence (later overturned) came on subsequent charges. At the first hearing, he reportedly shouted from the dock and rejected the authority of the courts to try him.

When he died — reportedly collapsing in court — he was on trial for espionage. He was buried under heavy security early on Tuesday. All through, he continued to insist he was Egypt's President.

While Morsi was in jail and seen in public only when he appeared in court, Mubarak was released from jail. This, BBC News said, was "a signal to many that Egypt had not particularly moved on since before the elections which brought Morsi, briefly, to power".

Facebook cryptocurrency: what it aims to be, why it has led to concern

SHRUTI DHAPOLA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 19

THERE IS a new cryptocurrency called Libra, courtesy Facebook which announced on Tuesday that it will be rolled out by 2020. While this signals Facebook's plans to expand into the digital currency market, it has also raised privacy concerns.

How cryptocurrency works

It is a virtual currency, which users buy and store in any of several available digital wallets, and use it for transactions on a decentralised network that is not controlled by one bank or a government. Bitcoin is among the best known cryptocurrencies. Cryptocurrency is powered by a technology called blockchain, which functions like an open ledger that gets updated in real time. Each transaction on a blockchain network is preserved, and reversing it is impossible. Because data are encrypted, cryptocurrency

is supposed to be secure and anonymous. From a digital wallet, however, it is possible for stored coins or currency to be stolen.

For Libra, Facebook announced a dedicated wallet app called Calibra, which will be built into WhatsApp and Messenger as well, to let users store and use Libra coins.

Is Libra different?

The values of most cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin, tend to fluctuate against real currencies. The plan is to ensure Libra is stable and give users confidence. Libra will be backed by a reserve of assets designed to "give it intrinsic value" and ensure stability. These assets include securities and fiat currencies (like dollar, pound). Libra's website says the cryptocurrency will be backed by "short-term government securities in currencies from stable and reputable central banks." However, the "value of the one Libra in any local currency may fluctuate", cautions the page.

Libra is planned as a "global currency"

WHAT'S IN STORE



THE CURRENCY

Libra will be a digital currency backed by a reserve of real assets, including bank deposits. Facebook will aim for stability in prices and stresses that privacy concerns will be addressed.

THE WALLET

Calibra will store Libras. It will be available as a standalone app, also within Messenger and WhatsApp.

for use anywhere in the world without transaction fees. It will target those who are unbanked, who are believed to number around 1.7 billion across the world. What remains a question, however, is how and why someone without access to formal banking would jump to cryptocurrency.

India question mark

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs' Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) Authority favours a ban on cryptocurrencies. *The Financial Express* reported in April. IEPF Authority CEO Anurag Agarwal was quoted as saying: "What I am saying is when it comes to investor protection, we have to take a stand against certain things, whether it is a ponzi scheme. And we think that cryptocurrency is a ponzi scheme and it should be banned." Any such ban would hugely restrict the reach of Libra.

The Libra model

Libra will be controlled by the Libra

Association, a non-profit based in Geneva. Facebook will have a leadership role for 2019, but will later become one of many members of the association. Other prominent names backing Libra are Uber, Visa, Lyft, Mastercard, Paypal, and PayU from India. The association has 28 members now and aims at 100 founding members by the first half of 2020.

Calibra is a separate company.

Privacy concerns

Regulators, lawmakers and government officials around the world issued critical statements about the project, various news agencies reported. In the US, the head of House Financial Services Committee, Maxine Waters, said: "With the announcement that it plans to create a cryptocurrency, Facebook is continuing its unchecked expansion and extending its reach into the lives of its users." Waters and Senator Sherrod Brown, who is on the Senate Banking Committee, both called on financial regula-



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

SKIRT TRADE WARS

India should focus, instead, on reviving exports. Integration into global production chains should be given primacy

THE GOVERNMENT HAS announced the imposition of retaliatory tariffs on 28 high value US imports. The move follows Washington's decision to withdraw benefits extended to Indian exporters under the generalised system of preferences (GSP) as well as its reluctance to exempt India from higher tariffs on steel and aluminium imports. The decision to levy tariffs on US agricultural products appears to be strategic — politically, its an important constituency. But, India needs to tread carefully. While failure to react could have been construed as a sign of weakness, there is genuine concern that the move could provoke further action. At a time when export growth has been sluggish, rather than getting dragged into a spat with its largest trading partner, the focus should be to address the bigger problem of India's subdued export performance and the unmistakable rise in protectionist tendencies in the recent past. Efforts to revive export growth, by integrating itself into global production chains, should be given primacy.

The ongoing trade war between the US and China provides India an opportunity to boost its exports. According to reports, a Ministry of Commerce study suggests that of the 774 US tariff lines on which China has imposed extra duties, India has the scope to boost its exports in 151 items. In these 774 items, China's imports from the US stand at an annual \$20.4 billion. But while the opportunity exists, the question is whether India can scale up its production to meet the demand. Can it provide quality products competitively? The worry is that countries like Vietnam and Bangladesh are better placed to take advantage of the ongoing trade war. In fact, these countries have seen a surge in their exports, even as India's exports have remained largely at the same level over the past five years. Slow global growth and trade will only complicate matters as countries will compete aggressively for export market share. The IMF has already lowered its world growth forecast to 3.3 per cent in 2019, from 3.6 per cent last year, and the WTO expects trade volume growth to fall to 2.6 per cent in 2019, from 3 per cent in 2018.

Measures to promote domestic manufacturing are needed to boost exports. But they should be WTO compliant. Simplifying tariff structures and lowering tariffs will help integrate India in global production chains and provide the much-needed impetus to exports and employment. Perhaps the visit by the US secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, later this month could also help clear the air on the India-US trade spat.

CAMPUS CONTROL

UP government ordinance on private universities is misguided, open to misuse

THE UTTAR PRADESH Private Universities Ordinance, 2019, cleared by the cabinet on Tuesday, is ostensibly meant to rationalise the many pieces of legislation that govern 27 private universities in the state. Among the strictures in the proposed law, is an exhortation to universities not to allow or be involved in "anti-national activities". The ordinance will also mandate that universities inculcate notions of "national integration, international goodwill and patriotism". Institutions that fail to live up to this amorphous set of ideals will face legal consequences. The UP government's move is problematic on several counts: It betrays a lack of understanding of what a university space is meant to achieve. It over-estimates the power of pedagogy and higher education in shaping young adults. And it seems to be ignorant of the basic principles of crime and punishment, and where the limits of the law are reached.

If an Indian citizen acts against the state, or conspires to do so, there are a host of laws to deal with the matter. Students, faculty and staff at universities are subject to the same laws as other citizens — there are enough provisions in criminal law that deal with terrorism, conspiracy, and waging war against the state. An ordinance that demands that private proprietors and managers of institutes of learning deal with "anti-national activities" is superfluous. The ordinance also seems to assume that patriotism and other "ethical" behaviours can be imposed in a classroom, or through the threat of punitive action. In a world where information and ideas are limitless and practically free, this is a deeply naïve assumption, and will serve only to penalise institutions for behaviour among their students they have no way of actually controlling.

What the proposed law appears to be aiming at is further political control of the higher education space. "Anti-national" is not clearly defined in any legal lexicon. It is, in fact, a term which has been wielded to great effect to further a political agenda, often by demonising universities and students. The BJP members in-charge in UP need only to look back at how the party's own student leaders were treated during the Emergency. Indira Gandhi, too, had wanted a pledge to the nation and a promise to maintain harmony from students. It is precisely because "anti-national" is so vague and open to the interpretations of whatever political formation holds sway, that it has no place in law.

KEEP THAWING

Government's assurance to IOC on visas to athletes from other countries is enormously welcome

IN ASSURING THE international sports fraternity that India will not discriminate against athletes from any country (read Pakistan), the government dug into the Upanishad and fished out the phrase that has been used in the past to promote tourism. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. "The world is one family", wrote the sports ministry in a letter to International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach, to underline "India's world view". In the last few months, India refused visas to Pakistani athletes to compete in international tournaments held in the country, which forced the IOC to suspend India's hosting rights for global events.

The government guaranteed to the IOC they will hereon grant visas to athletes from all countries "without any prejudice to our principled positions and policies on other political matters." This is a welcome step. The participation of Pakistani teams is always an edgy issue whenever India hosts an international event. In February, when Pakistani shooters weren't granted visas for the World Cup in the aftermath of the Pulwama attacks, the IOC — which saw India as a repeat offender — decided to crack the whip. At least five tournaments scheduled to be held in the country were affected because of the world body's decision. The government's new pragmatic stand will make it easier for India to bid for, and host, international tournaments, including qualifying events for next year's Tokyo Olympics. It will also pave the way for India to bid for big-ticket events like the 2026 Youth Olympics, 2030 Asian Games and 2032 Olympics.

This positive development throws up the more complicated question: Will the government now allow cricket teams from Pakistan to compete in India? Cricket, historically, has been the real indicator of the degree of thaw between the two countries. The BCCI has already sought the Centre's permission to host Pakistan women's team for a bilateral series this year. Since the government insists that international players will be allowed in India "without any prejudice to our principled positions", does it mean that the Pakistan cricketer, too, will be crossing the Wagah border very soon?



BHASKAR CHAKRAVORTI

THE ELECTIONS MADE one thing amply clear: It's NOT the economy, stupid. Neither the lowest quarterly GDP growth in 20 quarters nor the highest unemployment rate in 45 years could put the brakes on Narendra Modi's thunderous return to South Block. And now, with the election in the history books, it would be stupid not to do something about that economy.

Luckily, India has more than its fair share of clever economists with proposals for boosting growth and jobs. We are also lucky to have former CEA, Arvind Subramanian, released from captivity into the wilds of Cambridge, Massachusetts, who is free to tell us that India's much-ballyhoed growth rate was a mirage. There is no dearth of economic advice and insight. So, I will put the economy to the side for a moment. I am intrigued by a question that is related but separate from macro phenomena, such as growth or jobs: How is the ordinary Indian doing in terms of "well-being"? What can Modi 2.0 do with its historic mandate to make a positive difference in the individual experience?

According to Gallup's 2018 World Poll of 150 countries, India scored the lowest in the world in terms of perception of well-being: A shocking 3 per cent of Indians reported (in 2017) that they were "thriving." In comparison, China's response was 21 per cent. In fact, even in India, the response back in 2014 was 14 per cent. Now, you might find it odd, as I did, that, simultaneously, the majority of these respondents felt local economic conditions were getting better and even gave Modi an 80 per cent approval rating.

Election landslides retain their glow for only so long, a morose electorate cannot be a firm basis for governance. So, here is my recommendation to the Modi 2.0 team. Find out what is behind this shockingly low Gallup number and take steps to address the underlying issues. I would also suggest resisting the knee-jerk "all polls are nonsense" response. The infinitely forwarded euphoric messages on your WhatsApp feed and — as we are now discovering — the official GDP figures could be misleading as well. Besides, Gallup has been in this business for a while, so it is a little bit more credible than your crazy uncle, a fundamentalist friend or a political hack.

First, fixing the economy will, no doubt, help, but it is far from sufficient. It is essential to make a change in the non-economic factors that affect a citizen's day-to-day experience. Gallup's methodology may even offer a hint.



BISHAN SINGH BEDI

LAST WEEK, I read a report about the Delhi Police filing a chargesheet in the age-fudging case involving several of Delhi's junior cricketers and their parents in your esteemed paper and simply chuckled to myself. For me, it is always painful to read about any kind of police action against cricketers, but I had my reasons to be amused.

I have always stressed the importance of ethical upbringing of young players and am not too happy with what I have seen at the grass roots. What outraged me the most was that the very people responsible for grooming budding cricketers — parents, coaches and junior cricket administrators — were helping impressionable young minds to bend the rules. They weren't just telling them to lie about their age, they were conveying to them that cheating is fine.

A few years back, as cricket manager of Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA), I had filed a written complaint against some Delhi juniors who didn't look or play like under-14 cricketers. I even remember depositing Rs 5,000. What happened to that complaint is anybody's guess. I had done my deed but with no follow-up, I had almost given up hope. But the culture of age-fudging which

The ordinary Indian is not doing well in terms of 'well-being'. Modi 2.0 can do something about that

It is time to make a radical switch from quick-fix measures, catchy slogans or dangerous grand gestures — yes, I was thinking demonetisation — and embrace the complex systemic nature of the problems to be addressed, which has economics tangled with many other factors. Whether you prefer to believe or dismiss Gallup, your WhatsApp feed or the government's GDP figures, let us agree that the state of well-being of the ordinary Indian is far from ideal. I, for one, consider the 3 per cent number a genuine crisis.

SPINNING ON AGE

Police action against age-fudging in Delhi junior cricket was long overdue

A few years back as cricket manager of Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA), I had filed a written complaint against some Delhi juniors who didn't look or play like under-14 cricketers. I even remember depositing Rs 5,000. What happened to that complaint is anybody's guess.

One of the key factors that contributed to the low "thriving" score was the response to the question: "If you were in trouble, do you have relatives or friends you can count on to help you whenever you need them, or not?" Indians' responses were among the lowest in the world. If you thought that family and friends is what makes Indian society special, you might be wrong. I would recommend conducting some further research into the underlying reasons. Arguably, the government has little leverage in creating social and familial cohesion; much of this has to come from the ground up. However, leaders, especially someone who has achieved iconic status, as Modi has, can help set the tone for a more civil, compassionate and generous society. The track record of Modi 1.0 has been far from exemplary. This is as good a time as any to make a change.

A second major factor that plays a major role in well-being is the state of health. Here, much work remains undone. The broad metrics are damning and it shows in each individual's experience. India spends just 1.4 per cent of GDP on health, one of the lowest in the world, but it is not just spending alone. There are 0.8 doctors for every 1,000 Indians (even the world average is 1.1). Every year more than 60 million Indians are pushed into poverty because of medical expenses. The country also ranks 145th in terms of life expectancy according to the UN Population Prospects, with an average expected life span at only 67.7.

Moreover, addressing the state of healthcare in India cannot just focus on medical interventions. Myriad reasons for the growing healthcare challenges must be addressed. Here, too, much work remains. For example, only 49 per cent of rural households have access to safely managed water, according to UNICEF. According to the Environmental Performance Index, India ranks 180th out of 180 countries on environmental health, 178th on air quality and 145th on water and sanitation. India also tops the charts in terms of an urban sanitation crisis.

The Modi 1.0 record was far from satisfactory in its attention to healthcare. Several schemes were announced, but it took the government as late as the 2018 budget to announce its grand move, the Ayushman Bharat initiative. No doubt, there were other schemes earlier, such as the Swachh Bharat Mission, Ujjwala or Jan Aushadhi that would contribute to the state of public health. The basic issue is that there is plenty

of daylight between splashy announcements and their actual execution. Modi 2.0 must deliver results.

My third proposal for the Modi 2.0 administration would be to adopt a "systems" perspective and recognise that the issues that affect an individual's day-to-day life are inter-connected and solutions must respect this inter-connectivity.

Here is an idea. I know that the ultimate standard in systemic interventions — what might well be the last gasp of the global liberal democratic agenda, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, are very far from the ordinary Indian's day-to-day life. From a policymaking perspective, however, the UN goals serve a very useful purpose, as a systemic framework to set targets and plans, assemble stakeholders, invest, measure progress, recognise the system-wide interactions and iterate. Systematically making progress over the next 5 years on all 17 goals would go a long way in bringing the ordinary Indian's "thriving" number well above the 3 per cent rock-bottom. Here, too, Modi 1.0 has left us with plenty of headroom for improvement. The only goal where India made modest progress was in pursuit of goal 1, of poverty elimination; it is doing a poor job on every other goal. India ranked 112th out of 156 countries, according to an index of progress on the goals, produced by a team directed by Columbia's Jeffrey Sachs.

It is time to make a radical switch from quick-fix measures, catchy slogans or dangerous grand gestures — yes, I was thinking demonetisation — and embrace the complex systemic nature of the problems to be addressed, which has economics tangled with many other factors. Whether you prefer to believe or dismiss Gallup, your WhatsApp feed or the government's GDP figures, let us agree that the state of well-being of the ordinary Indian is far from ideal. I, for one, consider the 3 per cent number a genuine crisis.

The BJP won 175 out of 191 head-to-head contests against the Congress in the last election; a 92 per cent win rate is a coup. If there is any way to tackle a crisis, it is by organising a coup. Modi 2.0 ought not to let either a coup or a crisis go to waste. Now, that would be truly stupid.

The writer is the Dean of Global Business at The Fletcher School at Tufts University, founding Executive Director of Fletcher's Institute for Business in the Global Context and non-resident senior fellow of Brookings India

persisted at the Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) and other northern states continued to make me sick. So imagine my pleasant surprise when this chargesheet emerged.

About four years back, I had heard Rahul Dravid raise the issue of age-fudging during the M A K Pataudi lecture. He was at pains to explain the malaise of overage players competing with genuine juniors. At that lecture, I wholeheartedly applauded David's genuine concern. At the time of that lecture, David had been at the helm of India's junior cricket for some time. Not for a moment am I casting aspersions on David, but I do feel even he must have raised his hands in despair. Any player who has the good of Indian cricket at heart would feel the same about this issue.

Now, please allow me to mention our collective fight against all of DDCA's malpractices over the years. If it wasn't for Kirti Azad's sustained recorded communication with the DDCA and Delhi Police, this mess of age-fudging might have never seen the light of day.

There's no doubt in my mind that in this sordid drama, it isn't the junior players who are the actual culprits. It is the manipulative

parents, dubious coaches, compromised schools and, of course, the ever-conniving top DDCA officials who are the real villains.

It saddens me no end to contemplate the eventuality that the law takes its course and some junior cricketers and their guides/mentors might go behind bars. But I sincerely hope the DDCA officials involved are made accountable. I say this because I know these officials are still running the seedy syndicate and playing with the cricketing careers of young players in Delhi. I say this because of the forgettable phase in Delhi cricket when anybody and everybody in DDCA felt above everything. That wasn't quite cricket and I sincerely hope the then DDCA sports secretary, at whose behest all nefarious activities were taking place, is brought to book. I'd like to compliment the present DDCA president for not coming in the way of the Delhi Police investigation.

Finally, we owe it to Rahul "The Wall" Dravid to clean up the unscrupulous age-fudging phenomenon from Indian cricket. I have no hesitation in saying that the North Zone happens to be the hub of this scam. And I say this with a lot of hurt and shame.

The writer is a former India captain

JUNE 20, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

AIZAWL UNREST

THE POLICE WERE issued orders to shoot at sight anybody indulging in arson, loot or violence in the Mizoram capital, Aizawl. The orders were issued following attempts to loot and set on fire properties of non-Mizos when the curfew was relaxed for three hours at 8 am in the strife-torn capital. The army columns staged a flagmarch through the town's main thoroughfares immediately after the curfew was reimposed. The police resorted to lathicharge in the Bara Bazar area when miscreants tried to ransack some shops belonging to non-Mizos. The Lt-Governor of Mizoram, N P Mathur, appealed to all sections of the public to help the ad-

ministration maintain peace.

SALT II IMPACT

WELCOMING THE SALT II agreement as a "halting step" towards detente and peace, the deputy prime minister and defence minister, Jagjivan Ram, said that the possibility of Pakistan acquiring nuclear military capability had caused "much understandable concern". This needed to be assessed carefully for its impact on India's security environment in military as well as political terms. "There was unmistakable evidence of the involvement of outside powers there. What was even more disturbing from India's point of view was the charge against some of our

neighbouring countries of open involvement in the internal affairs of Afghanistan," he said.

WAGE INCREASE

MORE THAN 2,50,000 workers of the steel industry will get increased wages and additional social welfare benefits under a new wage agreement signed in Delhi. The agreement provided, that the lowest paid worker in the steel plants will receive a wage increase of Rs 67.60 per month. The last wage agreement for steel workers expired in August 1978. The chairman of the steel authority, P L Agarwal, said that there had been no pressure or threats of strikes or demonstrations before the comprehensive agreement was arrived at.



Need to equip judiciary to deal with forces of populism

Non-political appointments, security of tenure and rigorous procedure for removal are among the several measures needed to strengthen the institution, bolster its independence



RANJAN GOGOI

THE WORD “INDEPENDENT” has been variously defined and understood across different societies and cultures. However, in legal systems the word means and implies “not dependent on” or “not controlled by” any outside agency or source. Independence could be said to be the very soul of a functional judiciary. Whatever be the political system of governance, people across nations aspire for a free and independent judicial system to serve them. Every judicial system is required to functionally wield what may be referred to as the “power to judge” or the “power to finally decide” — what is “judged” or “finally decided” is human conduct or decisions or a state of things. It is natural that such “power” would come to be exercised when any such decisions, conduct or state of things, different and divergent from the accepted ones, is questioned, challenged and even sought to be brought in line with the accepted one. It is such “function” and “decision” of the judge that must be “independent” of any extraneous consideration or of any fear or prejudice of the judge himself.

Independence of the judiciary as an institution is different from independence of judges as the fountainheads of justice. Despite such institutional independence being different in its ambit and requirements, from individual independence of judges, we must recognise that both are mutually interdependent and vital for any judicial system to be known as strong and responsive.

A lot has been written and talked about measures which, if properly implemented, go on to secure the independence of judges as well as the judiciary, as an institution. Non-political appointments, security of tenure and rigorous procedure for removal, securing the reputation of and remuneration and immunities for the judges, in-house accountability procedures, and implementation of code of judges’ conduct are some such measures.

Strengthening of institutions works best when they are strengthened from within and not when strength is sought to be infused from an external source. Strength that evolves from inside touches the character and core of the institution; in contrast, an external source could only lend “support” to the institution. Such external support would rarely strengthen the core of the institution. That apart, independence of judiciary is not a one-time pill — it is a “state of affairs” that has to remain constant, in the face of continuous and recurrent waves of onslaught aimed at disturbing such a “state”. It is also an aspiration that the stakeholders and leaders of the judicial organ must constantly seek out and defend.

We must remind ourselves that functionally, the judicial organ does not and can never win over friends — because the judiciary is not meant to be in the business of making or breaking of relationships/bonds/alliances/ nor does the judiciary pander to any constituency. Every court of law may seem like an island, existing in isolation and sovereign within its bounds, yet the judiciary and all its components are bound by common threads that are



CR Sasikumar

difficult for someone who is not a stakeholder to even begin to understand.

Amongst the several steps that would be required to strengthen the independence of judiciary, the foremost would be to develop and nurture leadership at all levels of the institution. Leadership roles bring decisiveness and direction at all levels. For the institution to secure its independence, it is imperative that leaders at all levels of the institution are on the same page and they think, act and speak likewise. Leadership skills at ground levels will also assist in securing the independence of individual judges.

The judiciary also needs to work on securing its independence in financial matters. The control of revenues and on expenditure essentially vests with governments. However, such control is more often than not seen to be exercised as a tool of arm-twisting. There is an apparent lack of understanding globally that, by the dint of their constitutional role, the judicial organs essentially act like buffers and pressure valves, standing between the state agencies and the restive populace, absorbing all the heat and dust thrown up by the cycle of governance, or a lack thereof. This lack of understanding, coupled with the fact that the judiciary does not pander to any constituency, translates into low budgetary support for the judiciary — including for its infrastructure and human resource components. It would not be surprising if data would reflect that nations which support and invest heavily in developing a strong judicial infrastructure, with sufficient financial resources and powers, would be nations with more stable governments and administrations. In this context, it is apposite to clarify that the pitch is not for mere parking of finances by the governments in the hands of the judiciary, but it is for complete autonomy in all financial matters. Absence of the requisite financial autonomy, would be gainsaying financial independence.

Now, a little about India. The Indian Constitution under Article 50 makes it obligatory for the state to undertake steps to separate the executive from the judiciary. The judges’ appointment process as envisaged under Articles 124 and 217 of the Indian Constitution for Supreme Court and High Court respectively envisages judicial oversight. The tenure has been also secured and removal is possible only by if there is proved misbehaviour and incapacity. Their salaries have been prescribed under the constitution itself.

Let me point out how the Indian Supreme Court has dealt with the above issues. If one goes for a more nuanced scrutiny it becomes

FOR THE RECORD

This is an area that requires the judiciary to prepare itself, to strengthen itself about such populist onslaughts on the independence of the institution. The human agency, through which justice is sought to be administered, has to be adequately secured and fortified in ordinary times, so that it is sufficiently equipped to deal with such forces of populism in extraordinary times, lest they overrun the judicial edifice too. This would be our strongest case for strengthening the independence of judiciary.

obvious that except for some outliers, in almost all other cases, the executive in India has historically shown deference to the judiciary in the appointment of judges to the higher judiciary. It must also be clarified that so far as the subordinate judiciary is concerned, the selection process is through competitive exams. For the higher judiciary, to make the decision making participative and democratic, a collegium system has been envisaged. It constitutes of the Chief Justice of India and two and four other senior-most judges of the Supreme Court in cases of appointment of judges to the high courts and Supreme Court respectively.

The collegium is governed primarily by the consideration of merit in recommending the names. However, it is also alive to the issue of a representative judiciary. Therefore, it looks into the issue of regional representation, demographic representation etc. The Supreme Court of late has started posting the decision of the collegium on its website to meet the standards of transparency.

Before I conclude, I seek to draw attention of this esteemed audience to the fact that in some phases in the journey of a nation, when the legislative and executive wings get swept away from their duties and goals under the Constitution by waves of populism, it is for the judiciary to rise and stand up to the populist forces and protect the constitutional ethos from being desecrated by the populists. To some critics and naysayers, this situation presents a case for hoisting the classical counter narrative — unelected judges, acting under the constitutional mandate, get to overturn the acts of the elected majority. However, it is for us to recollect that such situations across the world have heaped tremendous pressure on the judicial organs, and it is no surprise that in some jurisdictions, the judiciary too has succumbed to populist forces. This is an area that requires the judiciary to prepare itself, to strengthen itself against such populist onslaughts on the independence of the institution. The human agency, through which justice is sought to be administered, has to be adequately secured and fortified in ordinary times, so that it is sufficiently equipped to deal with such forces of populism in extraordinary times, lest they overrun the judicial edifice too. This would be our strongest case for strengthening the independence of judiciary.

Ranjan Gogoi is the Chief Justice of India. Edited excerpts from his address to the 14th Conference of Chief Justices of members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation at Sochi, Russia, on June 18

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

Death of Mohamed Morsi shows that the hopes and aspirations inspired by the Arab Spring have been dashed, and that the old, repressive order very much dominates in Egypt. —DAWN

A missing inquiry

The death of S P Mookerjee left some unanswered questions



RAGHVENDRA SINGH

SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE passed away on June 23, 1953. A minister in undivided Bengal and in Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru’s cabinet, Mookerjee was a prominent Opposition leader and founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. He was detained without trial by Sheikh Abdullah’s government after his arrest in Kathua on May 11, 1953.

On June 30, 1953, Nehru wrote to Jogmaya Devi, Mookerjee’s mother, conveying his condolences. On July 4, Devi responded: “My son died in detention, detention without trial. You say, you had visited Kashmir during my son’s detention. You speak of the affection you had for him. But what prevented you, I wonder, from meeting him there personally and satisfying yourself about his health and arrangements?... Ever since his detention there, the first information that I, his mother, received from the Government of Jammu and Kashmir was that my son was no more... and in what cruel cryptic way the message was conveyed.” Further communication between Devi and Nehru makes for a sad reading.

Much later, on November 27, 1953, a resolution was moved in the West Bengal legislative assembly to hold an inquiry into the circumstances of his death while in detention in Kashmir. It argued for holding an inquiry through a commission headed by a Supreme Court judge. Surprisingly, an assembly member from the Congress party, Shankar Prasad Mitra, moved an amendment to this resolution asking for the words “for holding an inquiry”, to be substituted with “for requesting the Government of Jammu and Kashmir to hold an inquiry”. He also sought that the sentence “by appointing a Commission with the Judge of the Supreme Court of India to serve as Chairman of the Commission,” be omitted. Many who actively opposed the amendment wondered why Bidhan Chandra Roy, the Congress chief minister of West Bengal, who thought an inquiry to be necessary, had later declined it. Mookerjee, after all, had been a great friend of the chief minister’s. What had been asked for was an inquiry by a SC judge who could take cognisance of evidence from anywhere, including Kashmir. In this case, the Kashmir government was the accused party. How could it then sit in judgement over this inquiry? But members of the Congress, including Roy, argued in favour of the amendment. The Congress, in effect, sought acceptance of the amendment, and succeeded.

The West Bengal government forwarded the resolution passed in the assembly to the Ministry of States (Kashmir section), Government of India. This letter was received on February 23, 1954. After six months, the matter was eventually processed in the Ministry of States. The following is the observation from the relevant file in the Ministry: “It is for consideration whether we may inform the Government of West Bengal that as the matter primarily

concerns the Government of J&K, the Government of India did not consider it proper to pursue the matter. When the request for an inquiry into the circumstances of Shri Syama Prasad Mukherjee’s death was raised in Parliament, the attitude which we adopted was that this was a matter which concerned the Government of J&K alone. The resolution passed by the West Bengal Legislative Assembly is consistent with this stand since it only asks the Government of India to pass on the request to the Jammu & Kashmir Government. We have now two courses open to us: We may either send the copy of the resolution and proceedings to J&K Government for such action as they may consider necessary; or we may return the proceedings to the West Bengal Government and ask them to address the J&K Government themselves. While the latter course might be strictly correct one, it would have the effect of rebuff to the Government of West Bengal where Dr Mukherjee’s death has agitated the public mind very much. There may therefore, be no harm if we adopt the first alternative. I do not think this is likely to give rise to any misunderstanding with the J&K Government.” K N V Nambisan from the Ministry of States signed this note on September 7, 1954. The first course was agreed upon by both the secretary and the minister. On September 22, 1954, the Ministry of States forward the resolution to the Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir, for such action as considered necessary. Nothing came out of this routine letter sent by the Ministry of States to the Government of J&K.

A notice for a starred question was given in Parliament on August 19, 1954 — the Minister of Home Affairs was asked to clarify whether the Bengal CM had visited Kashmir in June 1954 and made an enquiry about Mookerjee’s death. On July 20, 1954, the Ministry of States had asked the Jammu and Kashmir chief secretary about the reported visit of Roy. On July 19, 1954, the Ministry of States had written to the Lok Sabha secretariat stating that they had no information except what appeared in the newspaper about the stay of Roy in Jammu and Kashmir. The letter further stated that the circumstances relating to the death of Mookerjee, while in detention, was a matter which concerned the Jammu and Kashmir government, not the GoI. On August 5, 1954, Ghulam Ahmad, chief secretary of Jammu and Kashmir wrote to V Narayanan, joint secretary to the GoI (Ministry of States): “Dr B C Roy did come to Kashmir for a holiday and spent about a month here. During his stay he visited various beauty spots in the Valley. He did see the bungalow where the late Dr Mukherjee was putting up during his stay in Kashmir as well as the room in the hospital to which he had been removed prior to his death. Col. Sir Ram Nath Chopra, our Director Health Services, took him to the hospital one day and Dr B C Roy might have made some verbal enquiries on the spot. You will, therefore, see that no official inquiry was held by the Doctor and as such no report could have been submitted by him. The question in the Lok Sabha may, therefore, be replied suitably on the basis of this information.”

The critical matter of enquiry into the death of Mookerjee rested thereafter.

The writer is secretary, ministry of textiles, Government of India

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

STATE OF NEGLECT

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘A failing state’ (IE, June 19). The most unfortunate aspect of the deaths of over 100 children in Bihar has been the silence in political corridors. The Opposition should have helped the victims and held the administration accountable; the government should have acted promptly rather than repeating decade old promises.

Safdar Ali, Kolkata

PM’S OUTREACH

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Not just numbers’ (IE, June 19). Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP have started their new innings in Parliament by reaching out to the Opposition. As the monsoon session began on Monday, the PM emphasised that the Opposition need not be perturbed by their numbers in the house and should participate actively in the Lok Sabha proceedings. This reaching out to the Opposition is welcome.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

WATER MATTERS

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘A new approach’ (IE, June 18). The integration of the ministries that deal with water issues is a welcome measure. The water crisis is real and the government needs to take with it all segments of the society. The problem needs to be resolved on a mission mode.

Puneet Dhawan, Patiala

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

LAW ON PAPER

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Apathy and denial’ (IE, June 18). It is a matter of shame that manual scavengers lose their lives while cleaning sewer in various cities of our country — despite manual scavenging being banned by the law. Apathy towards scavengers is particularly reprehensible at a time when Swachh Bharat is a flagship government programme. If private contractors are flouting rules, they should be debarred from taking up contracts.

Bal Govind, Noida



AKHILESH MISHRA

SHOULD THERE BE economic reforms? Almost instinctively, most people would answer this question in the affirmative. But why are reforms necessary? Leaving aside the ideological and conceptual changes in direction, most of the time, reforms are simply necessary because processes usually do not perform as well in the long term as they do in the short term.

Now, if this is true for the economy, would it not be equally true for other aspects, say the process of holding elections? The renewed pitch for “One Nation One Election” if understood in terms of process improvement, or reforms, makes eminent sense. What are the distortions that have crept in due to the year-round election cycle?

First, the Rajya Sabha has simply stopped reflecting the current will of the people. No, this is not an argument to assert that Rajya Sabha should reflect the reality of the Lok Sabha mandate, although some people have made a plausible case for that as well. But is it anybody’s case that the Rajya Sabha members should not reflect the current will of their respective state’s mandate? Consider the situation that a fixed term (six years) for a Rajya Sabha MP has produced. Eleven Rajya Sabha members were elected from Uttar Pradesh in

June 2016: Seven of them were from the SP, two from the BSP and just one each from the BJP and Congress. These results reflected the reality of the then state assembly of UP. These seats will be up for re-election in June 2022. In between, the people of the state decisively voted in favour of the BJP in March 2017. The UP assembly is due for elections in February-March 2022. This would mean that the assembly elected in 2017 would have had zero say in its entire tenure on these 11 seats.

If the BJP faces this quandary in UP, the Congress does so in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. In the March 2018 Rajya Sabha elections, Rajasthan assembly returned three out of three members for the BJP. These seats would now be due for election only in March 2024. The assembly elected in December 2018, which the BJP lost, and which will again go for election in December 2023, will simply have no say over these seats. These are not just isolated examples but prevalent across the board.

Second, assembly elections two years either side of Parliamentary elections, in states ruled by a different party than that at the Centre, have led to an almost continuous confrontationist attitude, severely compromising federal cooperation and governance delivery.

Take the case of West Bengal. Before the 2019 general elections, Ayushman Bharat was suspended, PM Kisan was not implemented, CBI jurisdiction was impeded. Even a natural calamity could not persuade the chief minister to cooperate with the Centre. The general elections are now over but has the situation returned to normal? No, because the state elections are less than two years away.

Third, although governments are nominally elected for five years, the frequent imposition of the Model Code suspends decision making and implementation every few months. Alternatively, every decision taken is looked through the prism of the next round of elections. This has squeezed out space for ideas that may be vital but have no immediate electoral salience.

Fourth, the competitive nature of electoral democracy inevitably means choosing to make the easiest promise. Think of the Delhi government’s promise of free rides to women in the Delhi metro. Routed in the general elections and fearing similar result six months later, who would want to invest time in arduous efforts to effect real, long-term changes?

Fifth, the ubiquitous nature of social media has meant that almost everybody is now not just an informed political animal but a partic-

ipating political animal. Once you have taken a position on a political issue, then the very nature of the beast will compel you to keep on participating with your political lens, for the next election is around the corner and how can you let your side down? What this does is that it completely eliminates any chance of reconciliation post elections.

By chairing an all-party meeting on the issue so early in his second term, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has put “One Nation, One Election” centrestage. There have been various models proposed for implementing the idea of simultaneous elections. They will surely be debated and a plausible method to reconcile the practicalities be evolved. It took us about a decade to agree to GST. It was a one-time adjustment at the national and state level and we have already started seeing the benefits of this structural change. “One Nation One Election” is also about one-time structural change. First align various cycles and then evolve a structure, by consensus, which can serve us for the decades to come. It is an idea whose time has come.

The writer is CEO, Bluekraft Digital Foundation and was director (content), MyGov