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TELLING NUMBERS

In the processing of solid waste, Chhattisgarh, Telangana lead

CHHATTISGARH AND Telangana processed the largest percentage of solid waste they generated in 2018 (until November), according to data provided to Parliament last week. Chhattisgarh generated a total 601,885 MTPA (metric tonne per annum) of waste, and was able to process 84% of it. The corresponding numbers for Telangana were 2,690,415 MTPA and 73%.

The information was provided in Lok Sabha by the Ministry of Environment, Forest And Climate Change in response to an question from Kirit Solanki, the BJP MP from Ahmedabad (West).

Among the larger states, West Bengal and Jammu & Kashmir were those that had processed the smallest percentage of the total waste they generated — 5% and 8% respectively.

Maharashtra generated the largest quantum of solid waste — 8,22,38,050 MTPA — and processed 44% of it. Delhi, Gujarat, and Karnataka generated 38,32,500, 37,02,925, and 36,50,000 MTPA, and processed 55%, 57%, and 32% respectively.

The Ministry's reply said that according to an annual report prepared by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for 2016-17, "it is estimated that the total generation of solid waste is approximately 1,50,000 T/day", of which 90% (1,35,000 metric tonnes/day) was collected. Out of the waste collected, 20% (27,000 MT/day) was processed while the remaining 80% (10,8000MT/day) went to dump sites.

The House was informed that 7.17 million tonnes of hazardous waste was produced during 2016-17, of which 3.68 million tonnes (49.46%) was recycled. It was not possible to estimate the quantity of hazardous waste that ends up in landfills, the Ministry said.

Indian cities are struggling to cope with their solid waste. *File*

TOTAL SOLID WASTE PROCESSED (%) UP TO NOVEMBER, 2018

BEST	
Chhattisgarh	84
Telangana	73
Madhya Pradesh	65
Kerala	60
UP, Gujarat	57
WORST	
West Bengal	5
Jammu & Kashmir	8
Odisha	12
Haryana	17
Andhra Pradesh	29

(Major states only)

THIS WORD MEANS

BHABHA KAVACH

India's lightest bullet-proof jacket

BHABHA KAVACH, billed as "India's lightest bullet-proof jacket", was launched at the International Police Expo 2019 in New Delhi last week *(right)*. The bullet-proof jacket, developed jointly by the Ordnance Factories Board and the public sector metals and metal alloys manufacturer MIDHANI, can withstand bullets from an AK-47 assault rifle (7.62 mm hard steel core bullets), and the 5.56 mm INSAS rifle, according to a press release issued by the Expo.

The Kavach weighs 9.2 kg, a half kilogram less than the weight for a bullet-proof jacket prescribed by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the release said. It quoted a senior Ordnance Factories Board official as saying the jacket "is powered with nano technology from Bhabha Atomic Research Centre", and has a five-year warranty. "A large number of queries are coming from state police departments including Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Gujarat," the official was quoted as saying.

SIMPLY PUT

In Cong crisis, recalling Kamaraj

Kamaraj Plan required top Congress leaders to quit govt and work for the organisation. Nearly six decades on, as the party seeks to manage another crisis and leadership transition, it has a blueprint to consider

AMRITH LAL
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

HISTORY WEIGHS heavy on India's Grand Old Party. Each time the Congress faces a crisis, it searches for solutions in the past. One such solution is the Kamaraj Plan, which was proposed in this month 56 years ago by the then Chief Minister of Madras, Kumaraswami Kamaraj, to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru as a blueprint to re-energise the Congress and the government.

According to Kamaraj's proposal, leaders in government would quit their ministerial offices and take up organisational work, while those in the organisation would join the government. With the Congress decimated in the 2019 general election and rudderless since the resignation of Rahul Gandhi as party chief, the Kamaraj Plan is back in conversation.

Under Indira Gandhi, the Congress moved away from Kamaraj's vision of collective leadership. *Express Archive*

'Who after Nehru?'

In 1963, defeats in three successive by-elections were the immediate provocation for the Congress to worry about its situation. But the unease had set in earlier. The war with China the previous year had wrecked the morale of the leadership. Nehru's standing as a statesman had taken a beating. The Opposition was advancing everywhere: the bypolls had brought three stalwarts, Acharya Kripalani, Rammanohar Lohia and Minoo Masani, to Lok Sabha. After a decade in power, fatigue had set in among Congress functionaries and the cadre. The question, 'Who after Nehru?', was beginning to sound ominous. That's when Kamaraj, then 60, proposed to Nehru that he be allowed to quit office to take up organisational work. Under Kamaraj, the Congress had consolidated its position in Madras, but the leader who had his ear to the ground knew that the DMK was advancing and the Congress organisation might not be able to withstand the mobilisational and ideological challenge posed by the Dravidian Movement.

The proposal came up for discussion in the Congress Working Committee, where a large number of members, among them Chief Ministers and Nehru's Cabinet colleagues, supported it. All Union Ministers and Chief Ministers put in their papers to Nehru, who then accepted the resignations of six Union Ministers — Morarji Desai, S K Patil, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Jagjivan Ram, K L Shrimali and B Gopala Reddy — and the CMs of Madras, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Kashmir. These leaders were to take up organisational posts and rejuvenate the Congress. Since then, the Kamaraj Plan is proposed as a remedy whenever the Congress party threatens to slip into a coma.

Kamaraj, his Plan, and after

Kamaraj was a self-made leader and a person of great integrity. He had built the party organisation in the Tamil-speaking regions of the Madras Presidency during the freedom struggle and, later, run the state government for nine years. A school dropout from a poor Nadar (a backward caste) family, he had risen from the grassroots as a Congress volunteer to head the party unit, and later, the government. Under Kamaraj, Madras became one of the most industrialised states in India. Nehru had immense respect for him.

The AICC resolution endorsed the Kamaraj Plan on August 10, 1963. Political scientist Rajini Kothari wrote in his classic work, *Politics in India*, that "the Plan, on the one hand, gave to Prime Minister Nehru an unprecedented opportunity to carry out a massive reshuffle of officeholders, but on the other hand asserted the principle of equal status of the party organisation with the government".

Later that year, Kamaraj, who had quit as Chief Minister of Madras, was elected Congress president. In his presidential address delivered in Tamil to the Bhubaneswar Congress session in January 1964, Kamaraj emphasised the achievement of the Congress goal of socialism without authoritarianism and class conflict. Nehru, by now ailing, could not attend the AICC session. On May 27, 1964, Nehru passed away.

An astute Kamaraj knew that Nehru was irreplaceable, and the party needed a new leadership model to manage both power and its ambitious leaders. His first task was to ensure a smooth transition in the Prime Minister's Office, which he skillfully managed by rallying the party behind his choice for PM, the non-controversial Lal Bahadur Shastri. His next step was to infuse vigour in the party organisation, and thereby, the government. He sought to steer the party towards a federal system of leadership and won the confidence of powerful state satraps such as Atulya Ghosh, Sanjiva Reddy, Nijalingappa and S K Patil.

Idea of collective leadership

Kamaraj also preferred a collective leadership for the party, and saw himself as a consensus-builder. His biographer and a former editor of *The Indian Express*, V K Narasimhan, wrote in *Kamaraj: A Study*, "As a strict respecter of parliamentary conventions, Kamaraj did not seek interference by the Congress president or the Congress Working Committee in the day-to-day decisions of the Government. What he wanted was full coordination between the Cabinet and the Party organisation with regard to major policies. He felt that policy matters should be thoroughly discussed in the Working Committee before decisions were taken by the Government."

Kamaraj's emphasis on collective leadership helped the Congress navigate a difficult time when it lost Nehru and Shastri in quick succession. Two wars and drought had left the economy in a bad shape. Kamaraj was instrumental in the Congress opting for Indira Gandhi as Shastri's successor instead of a more experienced Morarji Desai.

Abandoning the Plan

Under Indira Gandhi, the Congress moved away from Kamaraj's vision of collective leadership and consensus-building, and moved towards a leader-centric high command. It led to friction between Indira's supporters and the Old Guard or Syndicate, leading to the split in the party in 1969. Kamaraj's influence on the organisation had waned by then — the DMK had defeated the Congress in Madras state in the 1967 Assembly elections, and the Perunthalaivar (great leader) himself lost. It's another debate if the Congress would have lost Madras had Kamaraj stayed on as Chief Minister — but without the guiding hand of Kamaraj, the Congress government in Madras failed to handle the anti-Hindi agitation that rocked the state in 1965 and the food shortages of 1965-66.

The Indira years undid the gains of the Kamaraj Plan and the Congress transformed into a party that revolved around the Nehru-Gandhi family. Rahul Gandhi's suggestion of a non-Nehru-Gandhi leader follows in the spirit of the Kamaraj Plan. But does the Congress have a Kamaraj to steer the transformation?

Forest Rights Act case: What is at stake?

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JULY 22

DISTRICTS with sizeable tribal populations saw several protests and demonstrations on Monday. The protests were organised by the Bhumi Adhikar Andolan. There were two issues that the demonstrators were decrying.

One, the proposed amendments to the Indian Forest Act (IFA), 1927; the concerned amendments to the IFA have been sent to states for consultation. Two, a move to oust forest-dwellers from forest land; a case to this effect concerning the Forest Rights Act (FRA) comes up for its next hearing before the Supreme Court on Wednesday.

What is the FRA case before the Supreme Court?

On February 13 this year, the Supreme Court ordered the eviction of lakhs of tribals and other traditional forest dwellers whose claims under The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (or FRA), 2006, had been rejected following a three-tier process. Later, the SC temporarily put on hold the eviction by an order on February 28, giving state governments time to file affidavits on whether due process was followed before claims were rejected.

On July 24, the Centre and states are expected to file affidavits regarding the implementation of the FRA.

Who are the petitioners, and what is their contention?

The petitioners are Wildlife First, Nature Conservation Society, and Tiger Research and Conservation Trust. They contend that the protection of forests has been severely affected due to bogus claims under the FRA, and that the bogus claimants continue to occupy large areas of forest lands, including inside national parks and sanctuaries, despite their applications being rejected under the appeals process of the FRA.

What are the proposed amendments to the IFA?

The FRA, enacted in 2006, envisions the forest rights committee of a village as the central unit in managing forest resources. The proposed IFA amendments will revert to giving overriding powers to Forest Department officials. The greater policing powers to the Forest Department include the use of firearms, and veto power to override the FRA. Further, if rights under FRA are seen as hampering forest conservation efforts, the state may commute such rights through compensation to the tribals. The changes also propose to open up forest land specifically for commercial exploitation of timber or non-timber forest produce.

Across India, tribal rights activists are of the view that the proposed IFA amendments will divest tribals and other forest-dwelling communities of their rights over forest land and resources.

What are the demands of those holding agitations ahead of the SC hearing?

When the apex court passed its order on February 13, the central government had not represented itself in court. These agitations are primarily targeted at exhorting the Centre and state governments to present a defence of the FRA in court.

Other demands include shelving the proposed IFA amendments, which activists have called more draconian than the original colonial-era law.

National Medical Commission Bill: What changes in medical education

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

ON MONDAY, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan introduced the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill in Lok Sabha. An earlier version of this Bill was introduced in the 16th Lok Sabha, and had passed the scrutiny of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare. However, that Bill lapsed at the end of the term of the last Lok Sabha. Once the NMC Bill is enacted, the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956, will stand repealed. The existing Act provides for the Medical Council of India (MCI), the medical education regulator in India.

Why is the MCI being replaced?

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare examined the functioning of the MCI in its 92nd report (in 2016) and was scathing in its criticism: "The Medical Council of India, when tested on the above touchstone (of producing competent doctors, ensure adherence to quality standards etc) has repeatedly been found short of fulfilling its mandated responsibilities. Quality of medical education is at its lowest ebb; the current model of medical education is not producing the right type of health professionals that meet the basic health needs of the country because medical education and curricula are not integrated with the needs of our health system; many of the products coming out of medical colleges are ill-prepared to serve in poor resource settings like Primary Health Centre and even at the district level; medical graduates lack competence in performing basic health care tasks like conducting normal deliveries; instances of unethical practice continue to grow due to which respect for the profession has dwindled."

The Committee also said it was "shocked to find that compromised individuals have been able to make it to the MCI, but the Ministry is not empowered to remove or sanction a Member of the Council even if he has been proved corrupt. In a day and age when the need for sturdy systems and enhanced transparency based regimes are being increasingly emphasized, such state of affairs indicate that the MCI has not evolved with the times. Such state of affairs are also symptomatic of the rot within and point to a deep systemic malice".

How will the proposed NMC function?

The NMC Bill provides for the constitution of a 25-member NMC selected by a search committee, headed by the Cabinet Secretary, to replace the MCI. The Bill provides for just one medical entrance test across the country, single exit exam (the final MBBS exam, which will work as a licentiate examination), a screening test for foreign medical graduates, and an entrance test for admission in postgraduate programmes.

The Bill proposes to regulate the fees and other charges of 50 per cent of the total seats in private medical colleges and deemed universities. A medical advisory council — which will include one member representing each state and Union Territory (vice-chancellors in both cases), chairman of the University Grants Commission, and the director of the National Accreditation and Assessment Council — will advise and make recommendations to the NMC.

Health Minister Harsh Vardhan in Parliament last week. *PTI*

Four boards — dealing with undergraduate and postgraduate medical education, medical assessment and rating board, and the ethics and medical registration board — will regulate the sector. The structure is in accordance with the recommendations of the Group of Experts headed by Ranjit Roy Chaudhury, set up by the Union Health Ministry to study the norms for the establishment of medical colleges.

The Bill marks a radical change in regulatory philosophy; under the NMC regime, medical colleges will need permission only once — for establishment and recognition. There will be no need for annual renewal, and colleges would be free to increase the number of seats on their own, subject to the present cap of 250. They would also be able start postgraduate courses on their own. Fines for violations, however, are steep — 1.5 times to 10 times the total annual fee charged.

What are the changes in the 2019 Bill?

There are two crucial changes, following the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare (109th report in 2018). One, it has dropped a separate exit examination. Two, it has dropped the provision that allowed practitioners of homoeopathy and Indian systems of medicine to prescribe allopathy medicines after a bridge course.

What is the so-called "bridge" course?

This was one of the most contentious provisions of the Bill with even ruling party

WORDLY WISE

WE RAN AS IF TO MEET THE MOON.
— ROBERT FROST

The Indian EXPRESS
FOUNDED BY RAMNATH GOENKA
BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

ANOTHER GIANT LEAP

With successful launch of Chandrayaan 2, India has taken a significant step towards recognition as a space power

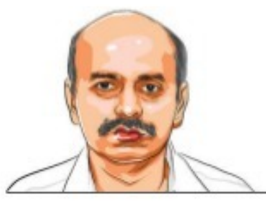
AFTER ABORTING A countdown because of a technical fault on July 15, the Indian Space Research Organisation has put its second lunar mission in earth orbit, using a challenging launch window. That's 11 years after the first moon-shot in 2008, which had sent back data answering one of the oldest questions about our satellite: Does it have water? This mission was originally planned for 2014, but was delayed because the Russian space agency, Roscosmos, a partner in the project, failed to deliver a rover. The setback has actually worked to the advantage of Indian space science. Just as it had developed indigenous cryogenic engines when it was starved of dual-use technologies, the industry has innovated an indigenous rover, Pragyan. On September 6, India expects to become the fourth nation, after the US, Russia and China, to make a soft landing on the lunar surface. Chandrayaan 1 had only crash-landed a probe on the moon, and a soft landing using retro-rockets would be a crucial demonstration of capabilities. A lander must arrive at its destination with its payload (the rover, in this case) and instrumentation intact in order to remain in service for extended periods. The next stage would be a demonstration of the ability to take off again from the lunar surface, necessary for a manned lunar mission.

Equipped with a rover, Chandrayaan 2 revisits many of the mapping projects of its predecessor, and retains an interest in water ice, an important resource in the long term. But the effects of a successful lunar mission will be felt immediately on Earth, as India gains prestige as a space power. India has a cost advantage in the space race, more so than China, the other Asian nation which has developed an ambitious programme taking advantage of the falling costs of reaching space. Chandrayaan 2, which will demonstrate the ability to navigate the lunar surface, is part of a series of achievements. The most publicised is ISRO's ability to send multiple payloads into orbit at the most competitive rates. But the most recent demonstration of power is equally remarkable: In March, an anti-satellite missile was tested live. Again, India was only the fourth nation to demonstrate the capability to deploy arms in space.

But as the Indian space industry booms, it may need to exercise fiscal prudence. Several projects are being talked about, including a manned mission to Earth orbit and the moon, and even a space station. Besides, Mangalyaan has already shown a commitment to planetary science. At some point, initiatives of immediate practical value, like the launch vehicle industry, must vie for funds with prestige projects like a manned lunar mission, and strategic considerations would have to be carefully calibrated.

Moon-bound again

Humanity has neglected the moon for the last five decades. Now, Chandrayaan 2 takes on the challenge



AJEY LELE

INDIA'S SECOND MISSION to the moon was planned for July 15, but got delayed owing to technical problems just one hour before the actual launch. However, ISRO scientists identified the anomaly quickly and now, within a week, the Chandrayaan 2 mission has begun its journey towards the moon. The launch of the mission on July 22, is a successful first step towards realising a larger aim of the mission, which is to ensure that India's lander successfully makes a soft landing on the surface of the moon. Subsequently, from the belly of the lander, the rover would be released for making an assessment of the elemental composition of the moon's surface.

Chandrayaan 2 has been one of the most awaited missions of ISRO. After the success of Chandrayaan 1 in 2008, it was expected that the second mission would get moon-bound shortly. In fact, ISRO did plan the second mission for 2014. However, this was supposed to be a joint mission along with Russia. As per the plans, Russia was to provide the lander and rover system, but they failed to do so owing to the crisis within their space programme.

This resulted in a delay in the programme and now, after a gap of more than a decade, India's second moon mission has begun its journey towards the moon. There is both a negative and a positive angle to this delay. The negative angle is obvious — India's moon agenda has lagged behind significantly. Actually, by this time, India should have progressed towards undertaking its third mission to the moon. The good part is that Russia's non-participation made ISRO design and develop the entire lander-rover system indigenously. In the long run, this would make ISRO more self-sufficient.

After the successful launch of Chandrayaan 2, now the wait is for the soft landing on the moon on September 6. For the next one-and-a-half months, ISRO scientists would be required to ensure that the mission remains in good health. It would be a phase by phase journey, ISRO would be undertaking five to six orbit raising manoeuvres, known as earth orbit burns, to take the craft close to the moon. Subsequently, they would be performing lunar orbit burns and would effectively establish the craft (orbiter) 100 km above the moon surface. This would be followed by the soft landing of the lander. This landing is going to be the most critical part of this mission, which ISRO is calling "15 minutes of terror", since they would need to drastically reduce the velocity of the lander, finally reaching zero.

> The technology edge of the Apollo 11 era has disappeared. Americans are reinventing the wheel to get back to the moon. As the Chinese case indicates, today it is difficult to travel even a few meters on the moon successfully. During the last five decades, the world has witnessed an around 50 per cent success rate for such missions. Very recently, Israel's attempt for soft landing on the moon had resulted in failure.

Chandrayaan 2 would be travelling a distance of approximately 4 lakh km. Finally, after reaching there, they would view and study the moon from a distance of 100 km for one year, at the minimum. But, the lander-rover system on the moon would function only for one moon day (equivalent to 14 Earth days) and during this period the rover could travel a maximum distance of 500 metres on the moon's surface. All this would cost around Rs 1,000 crore. The obvious question would be: Is the effort worth the investments?

Now, compare India's mission with two similar missions in China: Chang'e-3 (2013) and Chang'e-4 (soft landing on January 3 this year). The rover of Change'-4 called Yutu-2 is still functional after six months. For its designed life of three months, Yutu-2 has managed to travel for 163 metres. The first Yutu rover of Chang'e-3 mission, managed to rove about 114 metres before the technical malfunction that left it unable to move. This rover continued to function while stationary until mid-2016. The lander for Chang'e-3 remained operational for more than 2,000 days and could even be operational today.

Officially, the costs towards the Chinese mission are not known, but based on available estimates, they are much more than the ISRO's. In respect of Chandrayaan 2, there is a possibility that the mission could even last for more than the designed life period. Please remember, India's Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) has completed four years in its orbit on September 24, 2018, though the designed mission life was only six months.

Interestingly, during the 1970s, the Soviets had positioned the Lunokhod 1 rover to the lunar surface by the Luna 17 spacecraft. This was the first successful rover to operate beyond earth. It operated for 322 days and is known to have travelled around 10 km and sent thousands of images back. But this was the period when even humans went to the moon.

The 21st century challenges are different. Humanity is paying the price for neglecting the moon for the last five decades. The technology edge of the Apollo 11 era has disappeared. Americans are reinventing the wheel to get back to the moon. As the Chinese case indicates, today it is difficult to travel even a few meters on the moon successfully. During the last five decades, the world has witnessed an around 50 per cent success rate for such missions. Very recently, Israel's attempt for soft landing on the moon had resulted in failure.

In the backdrop of all this, ISRO has planned its mission. It has taken on the challenge upfront. Let us all wish India's lander (Vikram) and rover (Pragyan) happy-landings on September 6, and godspeed.

The writer is senior fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA), New Delhi

GETTING AWAY

After 40 acquittals in 41 Muzaffarnagar riots cases, due process needs to be rescued, revived

IT COULD BE the story of any major case of communal violence in which the minority community bears the brunt. And in which the justice system fails the victims and their families in the aftermath. Though it broke a period of relative calm after Gujarat 2002, the violence that swept Muzaffarnagar in 2013, killing at least 65 persons, may not be unusual in a country inured to outbreaks of barbarity. What happened later, between 2017 and 2019, when Muzaffarnagar courts delivered verdicts in 41 cases linked to the communal violence and a conviction in just one case of murder — all 40 acquittals coming in cases involving attacks on Muslims — may not be unprecedented either. Nor is the fact that the registration of the cases and their collapse spanned two regimes, one "secular" and the other led by the BJP, a surprise, given that parties of all political hues have presided over violence between communities and the absence of justice that followed it. And yet, as an Indian Express investigation — which scrutinised court records and testimonies of complainants and witnesses and conducted interviews of officials in cases of murder, gangrape and rioting in Muzaffarnagar 2013 — showed, every time justice is miscarried, it is miscarried in its own chilling way.

The Express investigation has uncovered cases upon cases where witnesses executed u-turns or turned hostile, crucial evidence such as the murder weapon went missing and court records showed glaring holes in the prosecution, including the failure to ask the obvious questions, or to cross-examine. In the end, no one killed all members of the family that was burnt alive, or the three friends dragged into a field and killed, or the father hacked to death with a sword. Fifty-three men accused of murder in 10 cases walked free. The four cases of gangrape and 26 cases of rioting met a similar lack of closure. In Gujarat 2002, it took the Supreme Court to break the grim pattern of crime and impunity. It intervened in the cases that followed the killings, shone the spotlight on them and monitored them, even airlifted some of them to courts outside Gujarat so that they could be insulated from extraneous attempts to intimidate witnesses and influence verdicts.

In Muzaffarnagar, too, it is clear that justice and due process need to be urgently rescued and revived. Surely, the politically expedient refusal of the Uttar Pradesh government to appeal the acquittals in 40 of the 41 cases cannot be allowed to be the last word. At stake is the people's faith in the New India that their political leaders like to invoke.

DOES INDIA REMEMBER KARGIL?

Critical lessons not learnt from the conflict make the country more vulnerable

C UDAY BHASKAR

JULY 1999 WAS a month of both exhilaration and relief for India and the Vajpayee-led government for the manner in which the brief, but potentially destabilising, Kargil war ended. Pakistan's perfidy, led by the wily and audacious army chief at the time, General Pervez Musharraf, of occupying craggy mountain peaks in the high Himalayas and posing a challenge to India's territorial integrity was foiled by the resolve and raw courage of the Indian military.

But a heavy price was paid. Almost 550 troops made the ultimate sacrifice and as many as 1,400 were injured. This human cost reflects poorly on the higher defence establishment of the day. India lacked critical military inventory but this was compensated by the leadership of the middle and junior ranks.

The roll call of honour — symbolised by the image of the do-or-die young Indian soldier atop a re-captured peak with the tricolour and the jingle "yeh dil mange more" — includes Vikram Batra, Manoj Pandey, Hanif-ud-din and Yogendra Yadav among many others. The extraordinary air effort and the many tactical innovations in the latter phase of the operations contributed in no small measure to the final outcome.

The 20th anniversary of the Kargil war will be remembered across the country in a celebratory manner over three days (July 25-27) and the theme is, "Remember, Rejoice and Renew". While remembering the fallen soldier is commendable, it may be desirable to also "remember" and "reflect" on the larger national omission that plagues India's institutional approach to national security.

The central element of Kargil that merits remembering is that it had caught the Indian higher security establishment by surprise. This is similar to what happened in October 1962, and later in November 2008. In each of these cases, the country paid a heavy price in terms of the lives lost. But it is not evident that the political and military leadership has engaged in rigorous introspection.

> The current paradox is that while the Modi team has triumphed electorally on the plank of national security, it appears that the emotive appeal of the fallen solider and the manner in which it can be exploited for catalysing nationalist sentiment is a higher priority.

Yes, the 1962 debacle was followed by the emphatic military victory of 1971 and the birth of Bangladesh, though it is a different matter that the long-term political and strategic gains that could have been obtained in relation to Pakistan were squandered. At Simla, in 1972, India was oblivious to the imperatives of geography and uncomfortable with the leverage of macro military power. Alas, few national security-related lessons were institutionally internalised.

Kargil was a different story. While the war ended in a positive manner for India, the Vajpayee government constituted an expert committee on July 29, 1999, "To review the events leading up to the Pakistani aggression in the Kargil District of Ladakh in Jammu & Kashmir; and to recommend such measures as are considered necessary to safeguard national security against such armed intrusions."

Led by the late K Subrahmanyam, a doyen of the Indian strategic fraternity, the Kargil committee submitted its report (KCR) in record time — a rare achievement since extensions for such committees is routine. In an even more remarkable development, a sanitised version of the report was placed in the public domain in the form of a book.

The KCR is comprehensive and due credit must be given to its members — Lt Gen K K Hazari, B G Verghese and the tireless member secretary, Satish Chandra — for the report. This was very different from the fate of the much discussed but yet to be made public Henderson-Brooks Report of the 1962 war with China and it may be useful to remember what the KRC said in its conclusion.

Its epilogue " brings out many lessons that the armed forces, intelligence agencies, Parliament, government, media and the nation as a whole have to learn. These should stimulate introspection and reflection, leading to purposeful action. The committee trusts that its recommendations will be widely discussed and acted upon expeditiously so that the sacrifices made will not have been in vain. The best tribute to the dedication of those killed and wounded will be to ensure that 'Kargils' of any description are never repeated."

To its credit, the Vajpayee government set up a Group of Ministers (GoM) to make specific policy recommendations across four domains and individual task forces were constituted that brought together the best Indian talent and experience. It seemed as if Vajpayee would lead India's security reforms in much the same manner that Narasimha Rao had for economic reforms.

Alas, this was not to be and both 9/11 in New York and the terror attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001 pushed the Kargil recommendations to the back-burner. On the 20th anniversary of Kargil, remembrance must be tinged with shame that Parliament has not found it important enough to engage in serious, non-partisan and informed deliberations over how to arrive at "purposeful action".

Critical lessons not learnt from Kargil made the country vulnerable, that was one of the reasons for what happened in Mumbai in November 2008.

The current paradox is that while the Modi team has triumphed electorally on the plank of national security, it appears that the emotive appeal of the fallen solider and the manner in which it can be exploited for catalysing nationalist sentiment is a higher priority. To "remember" national security experiences in a selective manner is a dangerous Barmecide endeavour.

Bhaskar is director, Society for Policy Studies

A CLASS APART

A K Roy was a Marxist trade unionist who recognised the liberating potential of social justice politics

ARUN KUMAR ROY was a Marxist whose understanding of Indian social conditions was so radically different that he had to work outside of the mainstream communist parties. Roy, who passed away in Dhanbad on Sunday aged 90, was a leader of the CITU who broke away from the CPM and founded the Marxist Coordination Committee (MCC) to further the interests of coal workers. He was thrice elected to the Bihar legislative assembly and thrice to the Lok Sabha. In the House, he was an uncompromising spokesperson for the working class while opposing the moves of legislators to extract more perks and privileges from the exchequer. He made headlines in his last term in the Lok Sabha (1989-91), when he opposed a proposal in Parliament to increase the salary and pension for MPs. For most of his life, Roy stayed at the party office and spent his last days in a party worker's home.

Roy did not see class politics as an end in itself. He engaged with identity-centric mobilisations in undivided Bihar and spotted the liberating potential in them. He held that social justice politics could mobilise productive forces and transform social relations. In 1973, he joined hands with Shibu Soren and Binod Bihari Mahato to form the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and launch a movement for a separate state comprising the Adivasi regions of Bihar. The JMM was pitched as an alliance of peasants and workers with the slogan, Jharkhand-Lalkhand, but ambitious leaders and internal contradictions forced its founders to part ways after some years.

Incidentally, Roy was a Bengali migrant from East Bengal who had arrived in Bihar to work after completing his post graduation in Chemistry from Calcutta University. He turned to trade union work full time after he was dismissed from Projects and Development India Limited (PDIL), Sindri, for participation in a workers' strike. The state lost a chemical engineer and the workers got a leader.


INDIAN EXPRESS

Desai remains JPP leader

Charan writes to President on claim

Rivers in UP rising rapidly

JULY 23, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

RAM BACKS OUT

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER Jagjivan Ram has made it clear that he would "not come in the way" of Morarji Desai forming a new government. "Morarji Desai is the leader of the Janata Party and there is nothing to prevent him from forming a Janata government," he told reporters. A relaxed Jagjivan Ram met newsmen at his house after having day-long discussions with MPs and party leaders and attending a brief meeting of the Janata Parliamentary Party executive at Desai's official residence. Earlier, Jagjivan Ram and Desai had telephonic talks. It emerged from Jagjivan Ram's observations that he is re conciled to Desai trying to form the government and his taking the number two position. A section of the party, notably some Jana Sangh and Scheduled Caste members of the Lok Sabha, had challenged Desai's right to continue as leader.

MORARJI'S CLAIM

THE CARETAKER PRIME minister, Morarji Desai, remains leader of the Janata Party in Parliament. This became clear today after Jagjivan Ram gave up his pursuit of the leadership. Having warded off the challenge from within his party, Desai is now to convince the President that he — and not Charan Singh, leader of the Janata (S) — can form a stable government. Desai staked his claim to form another government soon after he resigned from the prime ministership last Sunday. Charan Singh has also written to the President that he has the requisite support and the Congress-Janata (S) alliance can face the Lok Sabha.

CALL CHARAN FIRST

S N MISHRA, Janata (S) leader, said President N Sanjeeva Reddy, "has a duty to call upon Charan Singh to explore the possibility of forming a government at the Centre". Addressing journalists in Delhi, he maintained that "by no stretch of imagination or logic" could Charan Singh be "sidetracked or put behind anyone else" in this matter.

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The US-India relationship must not come at the cost of isolating this country [Pakistan]."
—DAWN

What is to be done about growth

Arvind Subramanian's paper, other micro data, suggest an impending economic slowdown. Policymakers must take notice and act

ECONOMIC GRAFFITI
BY KAUSHIK BASU

Suvajit Dey

ARVIND SUBRAMANIAN'S PAPER, 'India's GDP Mis-estimation', published in June this year, caused a lot of controversy. I was initially sceptical of his argument. But now, having heard him at the India Policy Forum at NCAER, on July 10, where he presented more data on India's slowdown, I am convinced about the significance of his research. The lessons I take away from his papers and new work are not exactly the ones he would emphasise, but the general message is important for India and the nation's policymakers.

What he showed was, if you take 17 major items, like electricity consumption and airline traffic, that correlate well with India's growth and track them, you will see that their growth slows down after 2011-12 and drops substantially below levels consistent with the official GDP growth. This leads him to conclude that India's recent GDP growth is slower, by as much as 2.5 percentage points, from what the official data suggest.

I do not think that India's GDP computation has obvious flaws. What the divergence demonstrated by Subramanian reveals instead is underlying disturbances in the economy. India's economy has many fundamental strengths and is capable of taking on this challenge but it requires skillful policy maneuvers. Before I go into this, let me point to some evidence beyond that in Subramanian's paper, which are signals of an impending slowdown.

To start with a little history, the first time India's GDP growth rate crossed the 9 per cent mark was in 1975, the year of India's Emergency. It is possible that the shock of the Emergency caused this growth spike. Before anyone jumps to the conclusion that authoritarianism is good for growth, let me point out that the following year growth slumped to 1.2 per cent, and by 1979-80 it had dropped to *negative* 5.2 per cent, which is the lowest recorded growth in India since 1947. While it is true that there are some examples of authoritarian regimes leading to high growth (China being the most prominent), there is overwhelming evidence from history of dictatorial control leading to disaster.

India's true transformation occurred after 1993, when growth became stably high and foreign exchange reserves rose exponentially. The economy's most remarkable period was 2003 to 2011, when annual GDP growth was approximately 8.5 per cent. Within this, the most significant stretch was from 2005 to 2008, when India grew by over 9 per cent each year.

The slowdown began in 2012, reversed in 2015, but over the last two years it has slowed again. The last official quarterly growth data, pertaining to the first quarter of 2019, shows GDP growth to be at 5.8 per cent. The examination of micro data suggests a genuine risk of a further slowdown in the short run. It is time for policymakers to sit up.

Subramanian already pointed to the fact that from 2011-12 to 2017-18, India's export growth was zero per cent. Six consecutive years of average zero per cent growth in exports does not augur well. For emerging economies raring to grow, exports are important. During the same period, Vietnam's exports grew over 300 per cent.

Of as much concern, since this is one of the big drivers of growth for developing countries, is the performance of investment rates, the percentage of GDP that consists of expenditure on items like infrastructure, machines and technology. All the Asian super-performers had investment rates over 35 per cent. India crossed the 30 per cent line in 2004. This had never happened before and was quite a landmark for the nation. By 2007-8 India's investment rate had reached 38.1 per cent, putting India in the Asian super-performer league. Unfortunately, it has fallen steadily, and is now back to just above the 30 per cent line.

Turning to other micro data, India's automobile sector is stalling, and the balance sheets of Indian corporations have worsened. Companies' combined borrowings were up 13.2 per cent in FY19 but their net worth did not rise comparably. Another figure is the relationship between home prices and buyer incomes. According to the RBI, house price to income ratio has risen from 56.1 in March 2015 to 61.5 in March this year. This in itself is not a problem, but if home prices make a downward correction, this can cause general demand to stall.

What should the government do to ward off short-run risk and strengthen long-run, sustainable development? For the former, it is time for some Keynesian demand boost. We should be prepared to make a measured increase in fiscal deficit for a year or two. This will boost demand for goods and be a much-needed shot-in-the-arm for India's firms and farms. If the extra expenditure is directed at the poor and the agriculture sector, that will help those who need it most. Another item on which the government can step up expenditure is on building infrastructure. This can simultaneously boost demand and raise investment.

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Turning to more long-run matters, we must continue to cut bureaucratic costs. It is true that important steps have been taken in the last three years, such as the new Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016. There are also improvements in the ease of doing business. However, the latter was done mainly to appease the World Bank by taking steps exactly on indicators that the World Bank tracks. What is needed is to cut the *culture* of permissionism. There is a reason governments allow this to persist. If citizens and businesses do not have to repeatedly turn to the government for permission, this clips the government's power, and most governments have a tendency to resist this.

Finally, the long run belongs to nations that promote higher education, creativity and scientific temper. Among developing nations, India was an outstanding performer on these scores. This advantage has been eroding in recent years. I hope we will have the sagacity to reverse the trend.

[All GDP data cited in this article are from Government of India's Economic Survey 2018-19.]

The writer is C. Marks Professor at Cornell University and former Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, World Bank

The moon and the law

There is valuable real estate for space-faring nations on the lunar surface. But international law is still unclear on ownership in space

RAJA MANDALA
BY C RAJA MOHAN

WHEN CHANDRAYAAN 2 arrives at the moon in a few weeks from now, it will seek to soft-land the lunar module, Vikram with its rover, Pragyan, on a site between two large craters in the south polar region. India is not the only one interested in the moon's south pole. Other countries as well as private corporations are aiming at the same area; for a good reason — the lunar south pole has places where the sun never sets.

These places are called "Peaks of Eternal Light"— points on any celestial body that receive sunlight through the year. There are barely any peaks that have "eternal" or permanent illumination. But there are some which have light for a large part of the year. The moon has these peaks on its polar regions. The peaks in the south polar region are considered more attractive than those in the north.

Near permanent sunlight facilitates the establishment of lunar stations with assured supply of solar energy. Some of these peaks are fortunately located next to areas that are in permanent darkness and hold significant reserves of lunar ice. Many recent surveys, including those by Chandrayaan 1, have identified the presence of water in the polar regions. Having easy access to water is obviously critical to a sustainable human presence on the moon.

Water can also be broken down into hydrogen and oxygen, which in turn can be turned into rocket fuel. With moon's low gravity, space vehicles need a lot less fuel than on earth for take-off. That could make the moon a convenient way-station from which human explorers could travel to other celestial bodies. Mars is already in the sights of many space-faring nations.

Right now, the moon rush on the earth is aimed at the lunar south pole. In January this year, China's Chang'e 4 soft-landed in the Von Karman crater on the dark side of the south polar region. China hopes to build a lunar robotic station near the south pole in little more than a decade.

The US lunar programme, revived by the Trump Administration, now aims to put man back on the moon in the next decade. NASA's focus is on the south pole and if it succeeds, it will be the first manned crew to arrive at the south pole.

NASA, however, has some competition at home from Amazon's Jeff Bezos. In May this year, Bezos unveiled the Blue Moon project that seeks to land men and women on the moon in the next few years. "It's time to go back to the moon and this time stay," Bezos said. Bezos wants to land two tons of cargo on each mission and start building a lunar base at the Shackleton Crater, very close to the lunar south pole. It is named after Ernest Shackleton who explored the earth's south pole in the Antarctic.

As a lunar race unfolds, the world will run, sooner than later, into difficult problems about such mundane issues as property rights. The international law of outer space is now defined by the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. The OST is quite explicit in affirming that outer space and celestial bodies like the moon can't be "appropriated" by any nation through claims of sovereignty, occupation or any other means. It calls the exploration and use of outer space "shall be the province of all mankind".

Like so much in law, one principle often contradicts another. The OST also wants states to show "due regard to the corresponding interests of all other States Parties to the Treaty". The interpretation of these principles is becoming contentious as the world's space-faring nations come to terms three important facts.

The "peaks of eternal light" constitute the most valuable real estate on the moon; they come in small patches and are in short supply. If the principle of respecting "corresponding interests" means "non-interference" in the pre-existing lunar activity of another state, some international lawyers worry, we could end up with up de-facto ownership for those who show up first on the peaks of eternal light.

Quite clearly, this is a recipe for competition and conflict on the moon. To make matters worse, the Outer Space Treaty has no provision for effective dispute resolution. The OST certainly exhorts states to cooperate and extend mutual assistance to each other in outer space. It also calls for consultations when conflicts arise. That inevitably takes us out of the legal and into the political domain.

There is also contention on another question — who owns the resources of the moon? In a law approved in 2015, the US has authorised its citizens to own, transport and sell resources exploited on the moon. Washington argues that this provision does not violate OST's principle of "non-appropriation" of the moon's territory. Tiny Luxembourg has passed a similar law to attract companies interested in space mining. The UAE is expected to follow suit soon.

As India celebrates the successful launch of Chandrayaan 2, Delhi needs to match the extraordinary success of its scientists with sustained diplomatic effort at the highest level. Amidst the growing scale and scope of humanity's lunar adventure, the Foreign Office needs to take up international space cooperation as a strategic priority. It also needs to develop a stronger political voice for India in shaping new rules for the moon and outer space.

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

Living well together

'Live and let live' is a minimal requirement. Beyond it, there is neighbourliness

PRIYA KUMAR

IRENA AKBAR'S article ('Secularism is no spectacle', IE, July 11) responds to the widely divergent — and often hypocritical — media and political responses to the choices made by two young Muslim women, Nusrat Jahan and Zaira Wasim. My response does not seek to comment on the "choices" — saratorial or otherwise — exercised by these two women, rather, it addresses the larger issues raised by the article: The question of religious coexistence — what does it mean to "live well together" — and its entanglement with the concept of secularism in India.

It has become something of a truism to say that secularism in India has been expanded from its traditional concern with emancipation from religion, or the privatisation of religion. Secularism has been called upon to serve different and often contradictory functions in the Indian nation-state, both as an ethical ideal and as a political doctrine guiding the state. Closely aligned with the term nationalism in the years after Partition, the term secularism has since come to connote an ethics of "tolerance" and multi-religious coexistence, as well as the vision of India as a plural nation made up of diverse religions. As a political doctrine underpinning the state, secularism in India has been asked to ensure that individuals are not discriminated against irrespective of their religious allegiances; at the same time, it has also been used to provide state protection and recognition to minority religious communities. Thus, it has been asked to navigate between uniform rights and liberal citizenship on the one hand, and special rights for minority religious groups on the other. As a result, the contemporary secularism discourse is often marked by confusion and by a conceptual slippage between the range of meanings encompassed by the terms secular and secularism.

The notion of secularism as an ethics of multi-religious coexistence underpins Akbar's article. The term is often used interchangeably with the idea of a genuinely "inclusive" India — for example, when she writes, "Does my non-participation in Hindu rituals reflect my disbelief in 'inclusive India', unlike Jahan's belief in 'inclusive India', expressed in her adoption of Hindu symbols/rituals? Do I disrespect Hindusim while Jahan respects it? No. A resounding, unapologetic, and most importantly, secular 'no'."

I want to suggest that secularism as a concept is not capacious enough to take on the burden of multi-religious coexistence that it has been asked to achieve in India (despite the way it has travelled), given its fraught and slippery meanings, which leave it open to misappropriation and misreading. To my mind, the substantive issue raised by Akbar's piece is how might Hindus and Muslims (and by extension other religious communities) "live well together" (whether we call this secularism or by any other name). This, as both philosophy and praxis, deserves attention.

Akbar makes the very important point that as a Muslim, she doesn't expect or demand a Hindu to fast during Ramzan or offer namaz, nor has any Hindu demanded that she participate in Hindu religious practices. This, to her, is a concrete instance of coexistence. "An undrawn threshold exists," she says, "which is respected by both sides, or all sides in a multi-faith society like India". This idea of the threshold is crucial because it asks that we respect the distinctiveness of religious and cultural others, and not seek to subsume them within ourselves. Such restraint is especially called for if we happen to be part of the numerical majority in a liberal democracy. By providing everyday examples of religious coexistence that rest upon a genuine respect for each other's practices — without necessarily participating in them — Akbar seeks to reanimate what a living well together should entail. She underlines that an inclusive India should be "free of the need to adopt each other's religious customs". Hence her impatience with Jahan's performative politics, which she sees as ingratiating.

Akbar ends by saying "you follow your faith, I mine. Let each be." While this injunction to live and let live is undoubtedly important as a minimal requirement, this should not mean that we are not open to the merging of religio-cultural traditions that is inevitable through centuries of actual communal co-existence — neighbourliness (as opposed to living in ghettos), for example. This kind of amalgamation of different religio-cultural traditions has often been celebrated in the work of writers such as Qurratulain Hyder, Intizar Husain and Amitav Ghosh.

In his later work, the philosopher Jacques Derrida provided a compelling reflection on the idea of "living well together". To "live together" well, he says, we must be able to interrogate the cohesiveness of any organism or any social body (family, ethnic group, nation) that has been given to us by blood, birth or belonging. Indeed, Derrida avers, one only lives together well with and as a stranger at home — in all the implications of "home", including the self, the family, the religious or ethnic community and the nation-state. A truly inclusive and accommodative "home" — or nation — would be one where every one lives as a stranger among strangers, where no one claims ownership or asserts prior claim over the nation. This peace or "ethics of living together" is radically different from the profession of "tolerance", which, as political theorist Wendy Brown has pointed out can often designate condescension or the overcoming of an attitude of disdain, contempt or enmity towards religious, ethnic, racial or sexual minorities.

Kumar is associate professor, Department of English at Delhi University and author of Limiting Secularism: The Ethics of Coexistence in Indian Literature and Film

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WATCH THE TALKS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'When Trump meets Imran' (IE, July 22). The meeting between Donald Trump and Imran Khan in Washington DC, the first visit by a Pakistani PM to the US after Trump's victory in 2016, is a momentous event. Due to Trump's strong attitude towards Pakistan, the latter has been forced to take action against terrorists in the country. However, that Pakistan is the feeder of the Taliban requires the US to tread cautiously. India must observe the talks and use it to its advantage.

Sauro Dasgupta, *Kolkata*

DELHI'S BOON

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Delhi's leader' (IE, July 22). For 15 years while she was the Chief Minister of Delhi, Sheila Dikshit transformed the city. She was the moving force behind what is now the landscape of the national capital, from following the Supreme Court order to switch from polluting diesel buses to greener CNG buses to facilitating the construction of the Delhi Metro, which has become the backbone of the city and privatising Delhi's power distribution. She was a great administrator, who any state would have been lucky to have at the helm of government. The Nehru-Gandhis and Congress's dependence on her was evident from the fact that she was asked to fight the last general elections despite not being a part of mainstream politics for some time. The Delhi Congress has a huge vacuum to fill. Sheila Dikshit will be missed deeply by all of us. May she rest in peace.

Bal Govind, *Noida*

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

REPLACE YOGI

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Its Sonbhadra test' (IE, July 22). Priyanka Gandhi Vadra cornered the Uttar Pradesh government over the killing of 10 people from a marginalised community in cold blood in Sonbhadra district, forced it to allow her to meet the kin of the victims and exposed the impunity with which criminals have been operating under the protection of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The UP government has put the governance of the state on the back burner. Perhaps it is time the ruling BJP changed the CM.

S S Paul, *Nadia*