CHATTERBOX

Kashmir's political rivals in war of words

A recent Twitter battle between the two titans of Kashmir on the triple *talaq* Bill was instructive. Omar Abdullah (National Conference) tweeted: "Mehbooba Mufti *ji*, you might want to check how your members voted on this bill before tweeting. I understand they abstained which helped the government with the numbers needed to pass the bill. You can't help the government and then fail to understand need to pass!"

Replying to him, Peoples Democratic Party's Mufti tweeted, "Omar sahab, I suggest you get off your moral high horse since it was your own party that expelled Soz sahab for voting against the BJP in 1999. FYI in Parliament, abstention is essentially a no vote."

Abdullah was quick to retort to Mufti's claims, and wrote, "Madam, is recounting an incident from TWENTY years ago the best you can do to defend PDP duplicity? So you are accepting you instructed your MPs to abstain. And no an abstention is NOT a no vote, a no vote is a no vote. An abstention helped the BJP this time."

Will Sandeep step into Sheila's shoes?

After Sheila Dikshit's death, the hunt has begun for a new chief for the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee as the party is conscious that it cannot delay the appointment. Elections in Delhi are round the corner and the Congress's preparation is non-existent. Sandeep Dikshit, late Sheila Dikshit's son and former Delhi MP is one contender. So are ex-Delhi Congress chiefs Jai Prakash Agarwal and Subhash Chopra. There are chances that Sandeep Dikshit might be considered for the post. It is expected that the "sympathy factor" as well as Sandeep Dikshit's clean image in public may yield dividends.

DID THEY REALLY SAY THAT?

"NRC is not only for Assam; it is a must for the entire country. We cannot allow the country to be turned into a dharamsala that anyone and everyone can illegally enter and stay forever."

BJP leader Shivraj Singh Chouhan on expanding the National Register of Citizens to cover the entire country.

CHECKLIST
ONE-WAY TRAFFIC IN MAHARASHTRA: FROM CONGRESS/NCP TO BJP

- In July, sitting MLAs from the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) Shivendrasinhraje Bhosale (Satara), Vaibhav Pichad (Akole) and Sandeep Naik (Airoli) resigned from their seats months before the Assembly elections and joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). With Naik leaving, the NCP would be wiped out in Navi Mumbai, where the Naiks — Sandeep, along with his heavyweight father Ganesh Naik and former MP brother Sanjeev — are said to enjoy extensive influence. The family feels they were sidelined by the NCP leadership, specifically Ajit Pawar. This region comprises 63 Assembly seats — one-fourth of the Assembly's strength.
- The Congress MLA Kalidas Kolambkar (Naigaon) also handed over his resignation letter separately to Speaker Haribhau Bagade at Maharashtra's Vidhan Bhawan. Kolambkar is a seven-term lawmaker from Mumbai. He now has no mentors left in the Congress after Narayan Rane quit the party two years ago. Kolambkar won the 2014 election by a narrow margin of 800 votes.
- Defector MLAs owe a lot to Shivendrasinhraje Bhosale's cousin, Udayanraje Bhosale, an NCP MP from Satara. Vaibhav Pichad hails from Akole tehsil in Ahmednagar district and is son of the former NCP minister Madhukar Pichad.
- NCP's Mumbai unit chief, Sachin Ahir, recently quit the party to join Shiv Sena. Ahir, a minister in the previous Congress-NCP government in the state, was associated with the Sharad Pawar-led party since its formation in 1999. He represented Shivdi Assembly seat in Mumbai from 1999 to 2009 and was later elected from Worli. In 2014, he lost the Assembly election to Shiv Sena's Sunil Shinde. Jaydutt Kshirsagar, NCP leader and former Maharashtra Minister, joined the Shiv Sena in May.

OPINION
M VENKAIAH NAIDU

'Let the Oppn have its say and the govt have its way'

Elections cannot be completed without peoples' participation. People's participation is not limited to contesting elections and taking part in voting every five years. When I say "peoples' participation", I am referring to the importance of continuously encouraging and enthusing people about elections. It is also equally important to recognise the efforts put in by various agencies, including the security personnel and civil society organisations.

I would also like to emphasise that the time has come to devolve as many functions as possible to the rural and urban local bodies. I also request various state governments to undertake electoral reforms, including amending the state laws concerning local self-governments, in conformity with the Constitution.
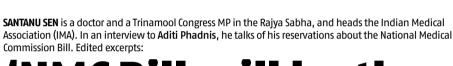
India has embarked upon a great social revolution by providing universal adult franchise in all its elections and reserving seats for SC/STs & minimum 33 per cent for women in the LSGs. This has led to bringing down the walls that were erected in the name of caste and community.

On the occasion of presenting these awards today, as a mark of celebration of our democracy, it is appropriate on my part to share some of my thoughts and concerns about our cherished democracy, functioning of our legislatures and the conduct of MPs and MLAs. I am deeply distressed by the behaviour of some sections in the Rajya Sabha during last two years.

Parliament functions based on the rules of the constituent Houses, conventions, earlier rulings of the Chair and code of conduct for members. As the chairman of Rajya Sabha, it pains me if members chose to disregard them, resulting in pandemonium which in turn erodes the stature of the House of Elders in the eyes of the public. Members of Rajya sabha have a special responsibility cast on them of leading by example being the members of the House of Elders. During this session, some members in their wisdom have preferred to tear official papers and throw them at the Chair on some occasions. Such conduct does not speak well of the functioning of our parliamentary democracy. It is the people of our country who have imbibed the true spirit of democracy by regularly voting in rising numbers and choosing their representatives to Parliament .

After doing so, they expect their representatives to conduct themselves in the best possible manner and strive over the next five years to make a difference to their lives by enabling them fulfill their hopes and aspirations.

However, I am sad to say that the elected representatives often do not match the democratic spirit of our people through their conduct. Democracy is all about — debate, discussion and decision. This can't be replaced by — disorder, disruption and delay, which is nothing but a negation of the spirit of democracy. The basic functions of the Parliament and State Legislatures are... Legislation, that is making laws for socio-economic transformation of our country; deliberation that is raising issues of public importance and ensuring the accountability of the executive of the day. If MPs and MLAs resort to slogan shouting, rushing into the well of the Houses and disruption of the proceedings, they are only compromising on these core functions. This is a great disservice to the Parliamentary democracy.

In every election, people give a certain mandate to the governments. Thereafter, the governments go about delivering on the promises made to the people over the next few years. Respecting such a mandate and allowing the governments to deliver as per the mandate should be an essential principle of functioning of such legislatures.

Opposition parties do have the right and responsibility of seeking the governments to deliver on the promises made by them during the polls. Opposition can and should take the governments to task, if they deviate from what has been offered to the people for which various effective instruments are available.

I want to make it clear that both the ruling and the Opposition parties have shared responsibility of ensuring effective functioning of our legislatures by taking on board concerns of each other. Stalling the functioning of legislatures means subverting democracy and betraying the people. The best way is to let the Opposition have its say and the government have its way. The democracy is all about the 'numbers' of each section of a legislature. Whoever has the highest numbers, run the government and those who have lesser numbers are required to ensure that governments do not stray from the mandate of the people.

The ruling and Opposition parties should not look at each other as enemies or adversaries. Instead, they should function as joint stakeholders in the well-being of the people and socio-economic transformation of the country. Our nation needs both effective and responsible governments and equally effective and responsible Opposition. The country's interests are not well served if either of them is found wanting.

It is the Parliament and State Legislatures that give ample opportunities for both the ruling and the Opposition parties to give out their best. MPs and MLAs should always be guided by these cardinal principles, so that our legislatures can become vibrant instruments of the change that the people wish to happen. I expect the MPs and in particular, the Members of Rajya Sabha to take the lead in the transformation through their exemplary conduct and contribution to effective functioning of the House.

The country has witnessed a couple of days back, a Member of Lok Sabha making some objectionable comments about a women presiding officer who was in the chair. Members of that House have rightly voiced outrage over the comments of that member. It is not in our civilisation to disrespect women. This kind of behaviour and comments demean our parliamentary democracy and should be avoided by accommodation.

We are the largest democracy in the world. We shall be the best in terms of its quality as well. I urge upon both the ruling and Opposition parties in all the legislatures to be guided by such a spirit of mutual respect and accommodation.

Edited excerpts from a speech by Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu after presenting the first Democracy Awards instituted by the State Election Commission, Maharashtra, in Mumbai on July 27

ILLUSTRATION BY BINAY SINHA

SANTANU SEN is a doctor and a Trinamool Congress MP in the Rajya Sabha, and heads the Indian Medical Association (IMA). In an interview to **Aditi Phadnis**, he talks of his reservations about the National Medical Commission Bill. Edited excerpts:

Q&A
SANTANU SEN
President, Indian Medical Association

'NMC Bill will be the mother of quackery'

You made your maiden speech about the National Medical Commission and you slammed the government's proposal to make medical education uniform across India. Now, doctors across the country are on strike in protest. Why?

The National Medical Commission Bill was introduced on December 29, 2017, and it was first placed in Parliament on January 2 last year. Our fight against the NMC Bill is because of the following reasons: First, this Bill is undemocratic. Why? The existing Medical Council of India used to be formed through an election in all the states of the country. It would have elected representatives from the states.

And the purpose of the MCI was...?

... To regulate medical education in the country! To give the licence (to medical colleges), to recognise, to fix curriculum ... medical education used to be regulated by this autonomous body.

But weren't there a lot of problems with the whole process of recognition, de-recognition, licences...? The CBI also conducted an enquiry, after which the government decided to change the way medical education is structured in India...

Yes, your question is the right one. But my point is: There are many issues, many complaints about this government. If there is a complaint about any institution, does it mean you dissolve the institution? Is that the solution?

For the last several months, the Union government was indirectly controlling the MCI through a board of governors. You could say that for the last nine months, it was being governed by the government.

Earlier, it was the MCI to which the government would send all requests for medical colleges: The MCI would conduct rigorous checks and formalities of the institutions and send its recommendation to the government.

Now, in this NMC, there is no provision for election. It is by nomination. And if you see the constitution, there are 25 members and almost all are government persons — hand-picked from the central government, or central government employees...

Does that make them less competent?

Let me tell you...The minister said of the 25 members, 21 were doctors. But who are they? All are central government employees: Director of AIIMS, Director of JIPMER...Will a central government employee ever go against the decision of the government when it comes to giving the licence or recognition?

If there is no autonomy, how can such an important institution function without vested interests driving it?

We believe the NMC is anti-federal. The MCI used to have at least three members from every state in India. But in the NMC proposed by government, there will be six members nominated from states and union territories and five members from the elected state council members. According to this formula, every state will get the opportunity to have its nominee on the council once every 12 years and every state council nominee once in 14 years. There could not have been a worse marginalisation of the states. For instance, if the state of Delhi is represented this year, 2019, the next opportunity will arise in 2031 and 2033.

The Bill is also anti-poor. As of now, even according to the guidelines of the Supreme Court, capitation fees of private medical colleges were governed by a regulatory body. If I run a medical college, my capitation fee cannot be anything I want.

In India there are almost 530 medical colleges, of which 270 are run by the government and 260 are private. The admission fee of 85 per cent seats of private medical colleges is regulated by the government. According to Clause 10(i) of this Bill, not only would 50 per cent of the seats be sold freely but also for the remaining 50 per cent, this Board will only fix the criteria but will not prescribe the capitation fee. So, indirectly, hundred per cent seats of all private medical colleges will be for sale. Do you think after

the National Medical Commission Bill is passed, a meritorious student from a remote rural district of the country can even dream of becoming a doctor? It will indirectly lead to mushrooming of private medical colleges and nothing else.

So right now, isn't it the case that you can charge any amount as capitation fee?

No, that is only for the NRI quota, which is only 15 per cent. Now there is a cap on capitation fee. In this Bill, for the remaining 50 per cent, they will prescribe the guideline for capitation fee, not the capitation fee per se.

So if a meritorious student tries and fails to get one of the 50 per cent seats, he or she will be overlooked by the system. The student who will get admission will be the child of a person who can afford to pay crores of rupees as capitation fee. What kind of doctor will that make him or her?

Moreover, this Bill says that inspecting new medical colleges should be discretionary. What do you mean by discretionary? Today, I open a medical college. It will be absolutely discretionary whether my medical college will be inspected or not. I will collect crores and crores of rupees as capitation fee. My medical college will not be inspected for three-four years. After three years, I might have accumulated crores and crores of rupees. They might shut it down whenever they inspect it: But I would get away. What will happen to the students left in the lurch? What will be the fate of those students?

There are many other aspects of the Bill that we oppose. This Bill is going to be the mother of quackery in India because AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yunani, Siddha, homoeopathy) doctors are going to be treated on a par with trained doctors. And not just these. The Bill allows lab technicians, ECG technicians, X-ray technicians, compounders, ambulance drivers, etc. who are directly or indirectly associated with medical system to get the licence and practise as doctors.

The Bill has now been passed. What is your next step?

Because of the efforts of the IMA, and all the pressure put by us, they have agreed to listen to four of our amendments. State representation has been corrected; On Ayush the minister has replied in his own way — let us see what he does. He has said he will set up a committee to decide who will be given the licence. But until it is made clear by the government, the IMA will continue to agitate.

Speaking up for voiceless: One woof at a time

Shiranee Pereira is quietly but insistently arguing that dogs can and must be replaced by tech and AI in testing drugs. More to the point, drug firms are listening. She is among India's new Gandhians, writes Aditi Phadnis

Every email sent by Shiranee Pereira, who started the Chennai chapter of People For Animals, ends with this Franciscan blessing:

May God bless us with DISCOMFORT: at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that we may live deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with ANGER: at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people and the earth so that we may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless us with TEARS: to shed for those who suffer from pain, hunger and war, so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless us with FOOLISHNESS to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we will do what others say cannot be done.

St Francis of Assisi is considered the patron saint of the animals and his endorsement is crucial for Pereira's charges: Around 1000 animals, including, dogs, cats, horses, donkeys, monkeys and others, at the People for Animals sanctuary on the outskirts of Chennai. The lame, the blind, the mad, the rejected, the abused and the abandoned... they're all welcome here and they will all be cared for with tenderness and single-minded attention.

Pereira is a singular individual. And, without being conscious of it, she has internalised the Gandhian method of reconciliation: That there's no bad in anyone, and if we only rouse the ethical and the just in everyone and make sure no one loses face, everyone would win. Since 1932, the Corporation of Chennai had been eliminating street dogs via electrocution at a designated facility — the Basin Bridge Lethal Chamber. In 1995, Pereira took up the battle with the civic authorities and managed to end this barbaric practice. Acknowledging that street dogs were a problem, she offered a solution: Chennai's first mass animal birth
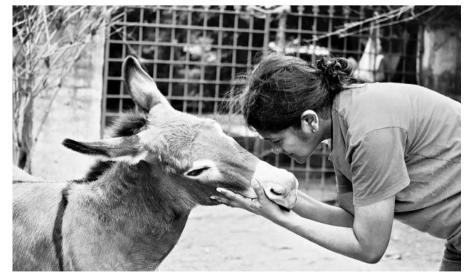
control/immunisation programme for these dogs at the same premises — the lethal chamber. Now, around 10,000 dogs are sterilised and immunised every year. "The programme has been so wonderfully successful that the incidence of human rabies in the city have dropped from 49 persons per annum in 1995 to nill in 2009 as per the records of the Health Department of the Corporation of Chennai. This is turn helped to evoke a state-wide order for the implementation of the animal birth control programme in Tamil Nadu and stop all killing of stray dogs," she said.

She then scaled up her programme several notches. In 2003, she put together the "The Science of Alternatives movement" in India to promote the universal concept of 3Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement) in the use of animals in research and education. India's first-ever Conference on Alternatives to Laboratory Research on animals was held in Delhi that year, under the aegis of Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CPCSEA), Ministry of Environment and Forests. Pereira was an expert consultant with the CPCSEA for several years. Globally, 500 scientists and students were invited. The concept of alternatives to dogs in laboratory research, she said, was so new, shocking and morally provoking for the Indian scientific community that hundreds of the participants walked out of the conference. But the first seed was sown to better laboratory animal welfare in India.

The coup was a chance meeting with IBM and the launch of Project, DONT — Dogs are Not for Testing. DONT is a project that seeks to augment the precision and prediction of drug/chemical toxicity by replacing the dog in testing with the power and potential of machine learning and Artificial/Augmented Intelligence. She realised that she would be

THE OTHER INDIA

treading on the toes of the multi-billion-dollar drug discovery industry, which testing on animals is a mandatory part. But she reckoned that cognitive computing and read-across strategies, using Big Data, could serve as a robust and far more predictive, economical and humane replacement to the use of dogs in toxicity testing. IBM's Watson would be the vehicle for this. She found enthusiastic support from the pharma industry — no one wants to be seen as heartless, after all. This was in 2018 and though the details of the project are confidential, she is certain it will take off.

Pereira is also negotiating a buy-in from the famed racing industry of Tamil Nadu, the Madras Race Club to launch a rehabilitation facility for race horses. These horses, in their prime, earn so much for their owners but are either sold to breeders or abandoned when they are judged too old to work. The racing industry in Tamil Nadu is large and solvent

Pereira reckoned that cognitive computing and read-across strategies, using Big Data, could serve as a robust and far more predictive, economical and humane replacement to the use of animals in toxicity testing

enough to set up a retirement facility for race horses and does not want to be seen as cruel and exploitative. Pereira is merely trying to appeal to the better side of their nature.

Every animal at the PFA shelter in Chennai has a personal connect to Pereira's life. Laxmi, the donkey *(featured in the picture)*, for instance, is a carrot thief, she exclaimed with affection. She records with deep sorrow, the passing of a rescued Labrador, Ms Cherry, who was dumped at the shelter by a cruel breeder. Ms Cherry was used as a breeding machine and was abandoned when she developed a liver ailment. Pereira nursed her back to health and she began following Pereira like a shadow, laughing and chattering with her, but never letting her out of her sight, maybe because she was afraid of being discarded again. Ms Cherry lived for four more years but the liver and kidneys packed up and she could not be saved. This and other stories: At PFA, Red Hills.

Call of the wild

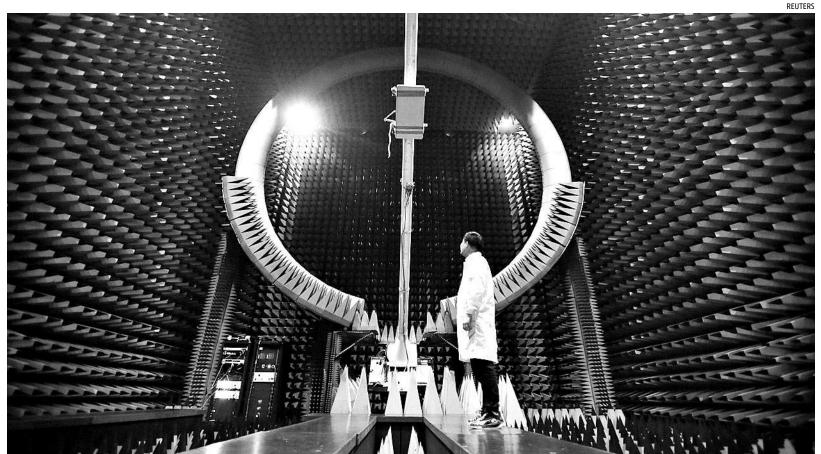### National Park tourism must evolve beyond the tiger

The 33 per cent bump in the tiger population according to the latest census reflects a triumph of India's conservation efforts and its ability to conduct a complex exercise, possibly the world's largest, in counting carnivores. These are remarkable achievements: India not only has the world's largest tiger population but has managed this with the world's second-largest population. Taken together with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled appearance on Discovery TV with Bear Grylls, this is an opportune time to propagate awareness and appreciation of India's ecological bounty among the wider Indian populace. Mr Modi's appearance on Mr Grylls' show may further this aim, though a programme that features man overcoming beasts in the wild may not be the most appropriate way to spread the good word. Many man-animal conflicts — the kind that results in the tragic killing of leopards, tigers, and elephants — are often a result of rank ignorance rather than livelihood encroachments. Few care to acknowledge, for instance, that people are not natural food for tigers; they kill humans only when threatened or lack prey. Leopards, to take another example, are one of the most adaptive of the big cats and tend to encroach on human habitat, especially those that are garbage-ridden when their natural habitat shrinks. This is what is happening in the Borivali National Park, for instance, where real-estate encroachments are impinging on the eco-system for leopards and other lesser mammals. As a result, they stray into newly urbanised areas, often killing unsuspecting humans who cross their path.

At least part of the trouble is the lack of awareness-building in India's zoos and institutions, official and private, involved in wild-life tourism. The appalling behaviour of the Indian public at zoos is one reflection of this. Another is the mono-focus of tourists visiting National Parks. Every National Park promises the visitor a unique view of the tiger and builds up the mystique of the animal (some even invoke *The Jungle Book*, for good measure). In National Parks such as the ones in Ranthambhore, Corbett, or Kanha, this has created something of a circus-like atmosphere where jeeps and guides keep a laser-focus on the whereabouts of the big cats to the exclusion of all else. This is a great pity. For one, this single-minded mission of spotting a tiger in the wild raises unrealistic expectations. Unlike the vast open plains of Serengeti in Africa, where big cats and other animals can be viewed in their hundreds, tigers are an extraordinarily reclusive beast, and are unlikely to willingly reveal themselves even in the thinnest deciduous forests (this is one reason a tiger census is so challenging). Spotting the tiger then becomes a competitive exercise that appears to bring out the worst in the average Indian tourist — noise and litter are their hallmarks. What they miss in this single-minded quest are the multiple bounties embedded in Indian forests — trees, birds, insects, leaves, and flowers. As Pranay Lal's encyclopaedic *Indica* (2016) has revealed, South Asia is home to a record number of species of flora and fauna and unique habitats. If National Park administrations and guides worked towards offering tourists a journey through nature and the environment, Indians would come away with a better appreciation of the *raison d'etre* of conservation.

The next big thing in telecom

With its enhanced speed, ultra-reliable connectivity and guaranteed service quality, 5G will be a key enabler of industry's digital transformation initiatives

REUTERS

An engineer stands under a 5G base station antenna in Huawei's multi-probe spherical near-field testing system at its manufacturing centre in Guangdong, China

SUBRAHMANYAM KANAKADANDI

It is said that when it rains, it pours. That is more or less the story of the development of Indian telecom. After years of constrained data growth, the entry of Reliance Jio and its competitive pricing has ensured rapid deployment and uptake of 4G, enabling India to leapfrog from 2G networks to 4G. But, technology development does not rest easy.

The age of 5G, the latest generation of mobile networks, is around the corner. SK Telecom in South Korea and Verizon in the US have already launched 5G services commercially, while operators in many other western countries are gearing up to launch their own 5G services soon. Our recent study on 5G in industrial operations found that 72 per cent of telecom operators across the globe are planning to launch 5G networks within the next two years.

The Indian telecom industry is also gearing up for 5G adoption. While the specific timelines are yet to be declared, there have been reports that the government is likely to auction 5G spectrum before the end of 2020. Telecom operators and network equipment manufacturers have already started setting up joint initiatives. In India, there are two aspects to 5G adoption — regulatory and financial, and actual market development.

Indian telecom providers are saddled with large quantities of debts. These operators are required to pay huge sums of money to the government for using spectrum. This licensing process, which started with 2G spectrum, has continued until 4G spectrum was auctioned a few years ago. Through this process, operators have amassed a large amount of debt. In fact, owing to operational difficulties, this space has seen mergers and acquisitions too, with the industry now consolidated into three large private players.

Additionally, Indian banks are coming out of a credit and liquidity crunch cycle, which started a few years ago. As banks grapple with high levels of non-performing assets (NPAs), they will be cautious about lending to telecom operators. This situation is likely to change in the next year, as NPAs in the system started to decline in the last quarter of financial year 2018-19. For 5G auctions to succeed, telecom operators will have to work closely with banks. Even after the auctions, banks will need to support the capex requirement for the 5G roll-out.

The government on its part has also set up a committee to explore the feasibility of reducing the cost of spectrum. This committee may recommend moving towards a revenue sharing model with the government, instead of an upfront royalty structure. If this happens, telecom operators will be able to invest in 5G with greater financial ease.

The second aspect telecom operators will need to focus on is actual market development. While 5G's features, such as enhanced speed, ultra-reliable and low-latency connectivity and guaranteed quality of service, promise to transform the digital experience in both the industrial and consumer space, they are of particular interest to a subset of organisations — industrial manufacturers.

Our research found a strong business case for 5G adoption in smart factories or industry 4.0 initiatives. Globally, 75 per cent of industrial companies feel that 5G will be a key enabler of their digital transformation initiatives in the next five years. This is surprisingly higher than the share of executives that feel the same for artificial intelligence or advanced data analytics. Not just that, nearly two out of every three industrial companies are ready to implement 5G in their operations within two years of its availability in their respective markets.

Such a strong level of interest from industrial companies can partly be explained by the fact that nearly half of industrial companies feel that connectivity issues — such as signal reliability and lack of speed — are a significant hindrance for their digital transformation initiatives. Our research also found that industrial companies are ready to pay a premium over their current connectivity costs for 5G features.

The uses of 5G in manufacturing are many. They range from video surveillance of remote production lines to real-time service and breakdown alerts in shop-floor operations, and remote monitoring of shipment conditions (such as temperature and humidity), to virtual testing of parts and packing from suppliers in supply chain operations. In countries such as Germany, large industrial giants are actively considering acquiring regional licences for 5G, so that they are in better control of their destiny when it comes to smart factories. In fact, our research found that a third of industrial companies are considering applying for their own 5G licence, assuming the regulator allows it.

With the focus on manufacturing growing in India, the smart factory and industry 4.0 domains can provide telecom operators a stable revenue stream. In our earlier research on smart factories, we found that 70 per cent of organisations in India either already had an ongoing smart factory initiative, or were planning to have one soon, with big investments flowing in from multinationals such as GE and Bosch. Moreover, in areas such as supply chains, we found that over 50 per cent of organisations in India were already experimenting with or implementing robotics and the Internet of Things (75 per cent). 5G technologies can be a shot in the arm for all such industrial manufacturers.

In order to tap the industry 4.0 opportunity, telecom operators need to evolve from plain service providers to digital transformation partners for industrial companies. This would require understanding business requirements, translating the requirements into solutions, and taking the lead in implementing the solutions. Co-innovation projects with industrial companies and close collaboration with the entire 5G ecosystem can facilitate the journey of telecom operators into trusted digital solution partners.

The writer is Director, Capgemini Invent India

Delivering higher education effectively

RICHARD HEALD

India is on the path to becoming a global 21st century economic and political superpower. To succeed, engineers, data scientists, health care professionals, social workers and a whole range of trained professionals will be necessary on an unprecedented scale.

It is therefore encouraging that the Government of India's Draft National Education Policy represents the largest reform of Indian higher education in decades. This includes allowing for mutual recognition of qualifications, simplification of education regulation, widespread adoption of online courses, integrating vocational training into mainstream education, and greater international collaboration.

The new policy's emphasis on quality, equity, access, learning outcomes, teaching, and research is to be applauded, as is the acknowledgement of the societal-level benefits of education and the decision to set up an Inter University Centre for International Education, specifically to support the internationalisation of universities.

The UK India Business Council (UKIBC) has long supported and advocated these reforms. However, we believe the scale of India's challenge will require further measures.

Indian policy-makers are right to want the best the world has to offer, and allowing foreign universities to offer their own degrees in India is a welcome step. However, limiting participation to the top 200 globally ranked institutions will not significantly mobilise the global expertise, resources, and investment necessary to achieve India's ambitions.

Crucially, universities outside the "top 200" globally frequently offer world-leading education in topics vital for India's development. At the same time, institutions that have an overall ranking in the top 200 could bring individual courses to India that are ranked low.

It is also important to note that international rankings contain biases, systematically underplay the importance of university social responsibility, and reward research over teaching. This makes them a poor proxy for the needs of India's employers, society and the wider economy.

There are also limits on which Indian institutions can form international partnerships, meaning that Indian institutions integral to India's ability to meet its global economic and political super-power ambitions will not be able to benefit from in-depth international expertise. This could prevent many Indian higher education institutions from accessing the very teaching and research resources they need to improve and deliver for students and employers.

We therefore recommend that all institutions within India be permitted

> **India's economy is at a crossroads, and the new education policy could determine the path it takes. It takes significant steps in the right direction, and will help young Indians achieve their full potential**

to forge international partnerships should they demonstrate, to both parties, real added value.

The plan to merge high quality vocational training with mainstream education at the secondary, college, university and post-university level is to be commended. However, given the New Education Policy's ambitious objective to "provide access to vocational education to at least 50 per cent of all learners by 2025", we recommend that the ministry of human resource development and the ministry of skill development and entrepreneurship work much more closely together.

This could be done by considering models such as degree apprenticeships popular in the UK, where students learn and demonstrate strong practical skills in areas such as electrical, mechanical, and aerospace engineering alongside building an understanding of the theory. This would provide employers with graduates that have sophisticated employability skills and has the added advantage of fostering social acceptability for quality vocational training.

Where highly-skilled Indian graduates are emerging from studies in the UK or India, a lack of mutual recognition of degrees is a significant barrier to harnessing their skills. Currently, Indian authorities do not recognise foreign qualifications obtained through articulation and pathway programmes or the one-year Master's programme offered by UK universities, which are recognised widely elsewhere.

Part of the rationale behind this is the "time" element — a UK Masters degree programme is typically only one year while obtaining a Master's degree from an Indian university requires two years. Moving from a "time-based" model to an "outcome-based learning" approach, focusing on credits acquired rather than number of lectures, would end the current situation where Indian employers are missing out on highly educated and highly motivated graduates, and talented young people are missing out on opportunities.

Mutual recognition of qualifications and allowing universities to award dual degrees will be a game-changer for India's higher education system, as it will significantly increase international collaborations and attract more foreign students to come and study in India — one of the key objectives of the new policy.

India's economy is at a crossroads, and the National Education Policy could determine the path it takes. It takes significant steps in the right direction, and with the further measures outlined above, it will help young Indians and, indeed, India, achieve their full potential.

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▶ OTHER VIEWS

To stem slowdown, policies must aim to revive demand

Lower interest rates can only help when economic sentiment is robust

Annual growth in eight core sectors, which account for 40 per cent of India's industrial output, dipped to 0.2 per cent in June. This is the lowest monthly growth in this index since April 2015. Earlier last month, the International Monetary Fund brought down its growth forecast for the Indian economy in the current fiscal year by 30 basis points to 7 per cent. India's Gross Domestic Product growth has been declining continuously starting with the quarter ending June 2018, with the most recent data available for the quarter ending March 2019.

The Indian economy badly needs a policy stimulus to come out of its present deceleration. The Reserve Bank of India has already cut policy rates thrice in 2019. However, these rate cuts do not seem to have worked. Lower interest rates can only help in reviving economic activity when economic sentiment is robust. They will be ineffective if investors do not see future demand that justifies their investment. Such a situation can only be salvaged through policies that focus on reviving demand rather than lowering borrowing costs. A series of policy decisions such as increasing the income tax rate on the super-rich and imposing strict regulations on spending Corporate Social

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Responsibility funds etc are generating fears that the government is being too harsh towards businessmen and top executives in order to meet its revenue targets. It is important that policy interventions do not make matters worse.

Hindustan Times, August 2

Making better drivers of us

Enforcement of new law will be key

The way India drives and behaves on roads is set for a transformative course correction, on paper at least, with Parliament's green signal to a landmark legislation that aims to improve road safety with stringent laws for errant drivers, contractors in case of faulty roads and vehicle makers if they fall short of production standards. The minimum penalty for violation of traffic rules and regulations will now be ₹500, and ₹10,000 is the standard fine for a whole set of offences. The global model of road discipline — strict punishment and huge penalties for traffic-related offences — now awaits the Indian test of enforcement, which has not exactly distinguished itself in the past. If bringing a law results in even an incremental change in the notorious defiance, nothing like it, but the compulsive *jugaad* mindset to dodge the system and make it corruptible calls for a supplementary step: projecting road safety as a national mission, much like Swachh Bharat.

The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2019, has a slew of laudatory proposals like cashless treatment for victims in the golden hour, compulsory insurance coverage for all road users, protection of Good Samaritans, infusion of ₹14,500 crore into safeguarding fatal spots, a National Road Safety Board and technology-driven driving licence. But then there's the regulatory reality check for the best of intentions.

The Tribune, August 2

Refreshing stand

Zomato affirms pluralist principles

A person professing the Hindu religion in Jabalpur and observing Shravan in a ritually sectarian fashion has turned the spotlight on an India divided, earned widespread derision, and shown that the majority online are not bigoted. He declined to accept a Zomato order delivered by a Muslim, and when he took his peeve to Twitter, the company's handle responded: "Food doesn't have a religion. Food is a religion." The company's CEO joined in the conversation, sticking up for diversity and stating that he was not "sorry to lose any business that comes in the way of our values."

As the conversation proceeded, though, it may have become obvious that standing up to bigotry may actually be good for business. While a small minority supported the actions of the peeved customer in Jabalpur, the volume of derision he has earned drowned out their voices. At the same time, Zomato received congratulatory messages from all quarters, including politicians, businessmen and influencers, for defending the idea of a diverse India. India's corporate culture is not celebrated for being led by liberal principles. Against that backdrop, Zomato's moral determination to hold the line stands out in sharp relief. And it has answered one of the oldest questions about capitalism: Does morality matter in business? It does.

The Indian Express, August 2