

## TELLING NUMBERS

### What Rajya Sabha MPs earned from directorships, professions



**PECUNIARY INTERESTS OF 213 MPs**

Type of pecuniary interest	MPs who have declared interests
Remunerative directorship	24 (11.3%)
Regular remunerated activity	30 (14.1%)
Shareholding of controlling nature	44 (20.7%)
Paid consultancy	2 (0.9%)
Professional engagement	40 (18.8%)

A REPORT by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and New Election Watch has analysed the pecuniary interests declared by 213 sitting members of Rajya Sabha. Seventeen Rajya Sabha MPs have not submitted their declarations. Among the 213 MPs who did submit declarations, 124 (58%) declared NA or "nil" for interests under the five heads under which MPs are required to make declarations. These are remunerative directorship; regular remunerative activity; shareholding of a controlling nature; paid consultancy; and professional engagement.

**Remunerative directorship:** 24 MPs declared that they have some financial interest in this form. The highest amount received for remunerative directorship was declared by D Kupendra Reddy of JD(S) in Karnataka, at Rs 40.68 crore per year, followed by Rajeev Chandrasekhar (BJP, Karnataka) at Rs 7.03 crore and Abdul Wahab (IUMI, Kerala) at Rs 3.34 crore. The maximum number of directorships was declared by Gokulakrishnan (AIADMK, Puducherry) who holds seven of these.

**Regular remunerated activity:** 30 (14.1%) MPs declared that they have a financial interest in this form. The highest amount received from regular remunerated activity was declared by Mahesh Poddar (BJP, Jharkhand) at Rs 3.18 crore per annum, followed by Mary Kom (BJP, nominated) at Rs 2.50 crore per annum, and Swapan Dasgupta (nominated) at Rs 66.60 lakh per year.

**Shareholding of controlling nature:** Forty-four (20.7%) MPs declared such interests. The highest amount was declared by Ravindra Kishore Sinha (BJP, Bihar) at Rs 747 crore, followed by Abhishek Manu Singhvi (Congress, West Bengal) at Rs 386 crore and Kakde Sanjay Dattatraya (Independent, Maharashtra) at Rs 262 crore.

**Paid consultancy:** Only two MPs declared they have financial interests in the form of paid consultancy. K T S

#### REMUNERATIVE DIRECTORSHIP, TOP EARNERS

D Kupendra Reddy	₹ 40,68,00,000/yr
Rajeev Chandrasekhar	₹ 7,03,80,000/yr
Abdul Wahab	₹ 3,34,23,496/yr

#### REGULAR REMUNERATED ACTIVITY INCOME

Mahesh Poddar	₹ 3,18,00,000
Mary Kom	₹ 2,50,00,000
Swapan Dasgupta	₹ 66,60,000

#### SHAREHOLDING OF CONTROLLING NATURE

Ravindra Kishore Sinha	₹ 747,00,72,077
Abhishek Manu Singhvi	₹ 386,13,96,530
Kakde Sanjay Dattatraya	₹ 262,45,79,340

Source: ADR

Tulsi (nominated) declared Rs 27.50 lakh under this head, while Dr Vikas Haribhau Mahatme (BJP, Maharashtra) declared Rs 5.60 lakh.

**Professional engagements:** 40 (18.8%) MPs declared financial interests in the form of professional engagement. Singhvi earned Rs 177 crore from such engagements, followed by P Chidambaram (Congress, Maharashtra) with Rs 33 crore, and Tulsi with Rs 27.67 crore.

**No pecuniary interest:** Among the 124 MPs who declared NA/nil under each of the above heads, 104 (48.8%) own total assets worth more than Rs 1 crore as declared in their election affidavits. The top four are T Subbarami Reddy (Congress, Andhra Pradesh) with assets of Rs 422.44 crore, followed by C M Ramesh (TDP, Andhra Pradesh) with Rs 258.20 crore, the late Arun Jaitley (BJP, Uttar Pradesh) with Rs 111.42 crore, and Ambika Soni (Congress, Punjab) with Rs 105.82 crore.

#### MALLICA JOSHI NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 11

CHIEF MINISTER Arvind Kejriwal said last week that pollution levels in Delhi, primarily the concentration of particulate matter, has reduced by 25% over a period of four years.

Five years ago, in 2014, a global study on air quality trends by the World Health Organisation had declared Delhi the most polluted city in the world. Since then, the Centre, states and courts have taken several steps to arrest pollution in the city.

#### What the data show

Delhi, through its pollution control committee, started monitoring air quality in real time only in 2010. It started out with four stations — in R K Puram, Punjabi Bagh, Anand Vihar, and Mandir Marg. The number of stations was increased to 26 last year.

It was in 2012 that Delhi saw its worst air quality, a senior official of the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) said. "We felt the full force of crop-residue burning that year, especially in October and November. It was the first time that this burning was seriously flagged. We realised this was a big reason for the sudden dip in air quality in Delhi," he said.

But since 2012, the average annual concentration of particulate matter — the primary cause of pollution in the city — has been falling. Gradual in the beginning, the dip has been sharper between 2015 and 2018. (See chart)

Particulate matter, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets in air. Some particles can be seen with the naked eye; others can only be detected under a microscope. In Delhi's air, the primary pollutants are PM2.5 (inhalable particles of diameter 2.5 micrometres and smaller) and PM10 (10 micrometres and smaller).

#### PM2.5

DPCC data from 2012 to 2019 show 2018 saw the lowest average concentration of PM2.5. In 2012, the annual average was 160 micrograms per cubic metre; it came down 20% to 128 micrograms/cubic m in 2018. Despite a tough first three months, owing primarily to adverse weather, air quality improved consistently for the rest of the year.

The most polluted months of the year are November, December and January, with pollution peaking in November, monthly averages between 2012 and 2018 show.

It is in November that the highest volume of crop residue is burnt in Haryana, Punjab and UP. It is also when temperatures fall and humidity rises, aiding the increase in con-

#### EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 11

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi Wednesday launched the National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP), aimed at eradicating foot and mouth disease (FMD) and brucellosis in livestock.

India has the world's largest livestock population of 125-crore plus heads, but cattle productivity is low, and animal diseases are a major concern. The diseases have resulted in some overseas markets being shut to Indian dairy and meat products, and prevented the industry from realising its income potential.

**NADCP:** According to a government re-

lease, the programme aims to vaccinate over 500 million livestock heads, including cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats and pigs, against FMD, and some 36 million female bovine calves annually against brucellosis. The programme has received 100% funding from the Centre, amounting to Rs 12,652 crore for five years until 2024, the release said. The NADCP aims to control these two diseases by 2025, and to eradicate them by 2030.

**FMD:** It is a highly infectious viral disease of cattle, swine, sheep, goats, and other cloven-hooved ruminants. FMD is generally not fatal in adult animals but leaves them severely weakened, and results in a drastically reduced production of milk and can, therefore, be financially ruinous for dairy farmers. Infected

## SIMPLY PUT

# How Delhi cleared the air

Four years after a WHO study declared Delhi the world's most polluted city, CM Arvind Kejriwal has announced that pollution has dropped 25% since. What do data show? How did the city achieve this?

#### OVER THE YEARS, GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT

**MONTHLY CITY AVERAGE\* OF PM2.5 (µg/m³)**

Months	2012	2015	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Jan	228	242	252	208	281	180	265	215
Feb	157	153	163	163	145	124	159	127
Mar	152	135	98	88	96	91	110	86
Apr	115	117	123	90	115	112	94	82
May	150	162	113	118	90	107	93	92
Jun	128	95	107	97	65	70	82	62
Jul	101	58	82	56	42	43	39	46
Aug	59	61	93	61	41	45	39	33
Sep	94	78	65	72	60	65	44	
Oct	217	164	163	139	154	180	142	
Nov	314	287	273	267	301	301	221	
Dec	208	261	244	243	238	240	243	
MIN	59	58	65	56	41	43	39	33
MAX	314	287	273	267	301	301	265	215
AVG	160	151	148	133	136	130	128	93

\*City average is calculated from 2012-2017 for 4 stations & for 2018-2019 for 26 stations

**MONTHLY CITY AVERAGE\* OF PM10 (µg/m³)**

Months	2012	2015	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Jan	352	456	407	327	473	303	427	343
Feb	313	371	355	306	292	294	314	227
Mar	391	362	271	216	186	250	265	193
Apr	257	329	344	267	312	326	286	249
May	397	378	326	343	311	277	272	268
Jun	392	225	337	233	223	217	313	225
Jul	183	116	188	155	121	125	107	149
Aug	119	288	237	171	119	129	124	84
Sep	268	231	187	239	199	149	121	
Oct	484	369	306	331	366	378	321	
Nov	637	629	531	492	575	464	373	
Dec	419	499	402	466	424	407	405	
MIN	119	116	187	155	119	125	107	84
MAX	637	629	531	492	575	464	427	343
AVG	351	354	324	295	300	277	277	217

\*City average from 2012-2017 based on 4 stations & for 2018-2019 on 26 stations. Source: DPCC

centration of pollutants in the air. Locally, the burning of leaves picks up in November.

However, as the chart shows, PM2.5 concentrations have fallen over the years — in November as well as in the 'cleaner' months of July, August and September.

#### PM10

Between 2012 and 2018, the concentration of PM10 reduced by 21% from an average 351 micrograms/cubic m to 277 micrograms/cubic m. PM10 is more prominent in the air in winter, primarily because of open burning and road and construction dust.

Until August this year, Delhi's performance in terms of PM10 concentration has been encouraging. In August, the average concentration fell to double digits for the first time since 2012; in 2013, this figure was as high as 288 micrograms/cubic m.

#### Seasonal variation, weather

Over the past five years, several studies have pointed to the fact that weather and seasons are among the biggest determinants of Delhi's air quality.

"No matter how much we try, air quality in

winter will be worse than in summer. It is difficult to imagine a day in Delhi when air quality is 'good' or 'satisfactory' on the air quality index. That said, the results that our efforts have borne over the past few years show that if we work on fixing what we can, things will improve," another DPCC official said.

Localised weather conditions also have a major role in determining air quality. "On a sunny and windy winter day, air quality can improve several notches within hours. Weather conditions are also the reason why winters are more polluted than summers. Cold, foggy, windless days help in the accumulation of pollutants. Wind blowing from the direction of a major pollution event such as crop burning or dust storms, will pollute the city as well," said a scientist at the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

#### What has worked in Delhi

In 2014, lawyer Vardhaman Kaushik approached the National Green Tribunal (NGT) against pollution levels. His petition became the basis of several NGT orders, upheld by the Supreme Court, including the ban on old diesel and petrol vehicles.

Between 2014 and 2017, the Delhi government, Central Pollution Control Board, and Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority carried out drives, issued orders, and implemented orders passed by NGT to curb air pollution, including the implementation of the odd-even road rationing scheme.

The biggest push came in 2017, when the Centre notified the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), which provided state governments in Delhi and the NCR with a roadmap for action. If the air was severely polluted for more than 48 hours, for example, the entry of trucks would be stopped, and all construction work halted. The GRAP also set roles for each agency, fixing accountability.

Shutting of the two thermal power plants in Delhi, completion of the eastern and western peripheral expressways for vehicles not destined for Delhi, a ban on PET Coke as industrial fuel, and the introduction of BS VI fuel have, experts believe, made a big difference.

There are, however, two things that experts believe have been done completely locally that have made a big difference.

"Open burning has been largely curtailed in the city. Earlier, as soon as autumn arrived, piles of leaves would be set on fire — but stringent fines now have meant the practice has almost disappeared. The second thing is the regulation of construction activity. While not as successful as the ban on open burning, regular enforcement drives have meant that whenever a ban is ordered, it is largely followed," the first DPCC officer said.

## THIS WORD MEANS: NADCP, FMD, BRUCELLOSIS

# In Central programme, focus on animal health

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animals get a fever, sores in their mouth, on their teats, and between their hooves. FMD spreads through excretions and secretions; infected animals also exhale the virus.

According to the World Organisation for Animal Health, the intergovernmental organisation responsible for improving animal health worldwide, FMD is endemic in several parts of Asia, most of Africa, and the Middle East. Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Central and North America, continental Western Europe, and most Latin American countries are FMD-free.

Measures to stop outbreaks and check FMD transmission include controlled introduction of new animals into existing herds, regular cleaning and disinfection of livestock

areas, monitoring and reporting of illness, and use of effective vaccination strategies.

**Brucellosis:** This is a zoonotic disease that, according to the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, is endemic in most parts of the country. Brucellosis causes early abortions in animals, and prevents the addition of new calves to the animal population.

The control of the disease, the World Health Organisation recommends the vaccination of cattle and, in some cases, testing and culling. The government told Parliament in July that the Brucellosis Control Programme component of the NADCP envisages 100% vaccination coverage of female cattle and buffalo calves (4-8 months of age) once in their lifetimes.

# Why Apple launches new iPhones every year, packed in a cycle of hype

#### NANDAGOPAL RAJAN CUPERTINO, SEPTEMBER 11

AT APPLE Park Campus here in California, at the world's most hyped annual tech media event, Apple on Tuesday announced three new iPhones, a new Apple Watch and a new iPad. There were no big surprises — even though the slightly lower pricing of the iPhone 11 base model, and the aggressive monthly subscription rates of new services Arcade and Apple TV+ got some applause.

#### Why does Apple launch new phones every year in September?

Apple is different from other smartphone makers — it has, at least in countries like the United States and Australia, a captive base of users who don't actually put a lot of money down to buy a new iPhone; rather, they pay for it as part of their monthly telephone bill. It is almost like a subscription service — every time they get a new iPhone, their monthly bill goes up by a few dollars. These users — whose numbers are substantial — end up periodically

upgrading to newer devices, thus assuring Apple a certain sales volume every quarter. But to persuade these users to upgrade, Apple must come up with new phones every year, catering to all sorts of budgets and users. So, this year, the iPhone 11 is the budget phone, while the iPhone 11 Pro and iPhone 11 Pro Max are the premium ones.

#### But what explains the huge hype before Apple events?

The iPhone is the original smartphone — Steve Jobs pretty much created this segment when he announced the first iPhone in 2007. Apple has been setting smartphone trends ever since. Over the years, the entire mobile phone industry, and even users, have come to look at the Apple event expecting new features to be introduced.

However, over the past few years, rivals have beaten Apple to at least some cutting-edge features. The ultra wide lens that the new iPhone has got for example, is something that Samsung, OnePlus and some others have had for at least a year. But most of these brands are also trying to preempt what Apple will launch — and often don't provide



Former Apple design head Jony Ive at Steve Jobs Theatre Tuesday. Nandagopal Rajan

the same experience as Apple in terms of syncing the hardware and software.

The hype cycle usually helps Apple trigger a fear of "missing out", at least among its loyal user base — and to get a lot of upgrades going, even if they are not actually based on user needs.

#### So is every new phone really better than the earlier one?

Yes, they are. What is tougher to say, for Apple as for all smartphones though, is exactly how much better. Technology and innovation have peaked in smartphones, and it is much more difficult to offer a new fea-

ture that really changes the user's experience. Apple, for instance, is talking about its better camera experience powered by its more powerful A13 processor — but that's about it this year.

For many users, these so-called "incremental updates" have started becoming less exciting. Fewer customers are upgrading, many are holding on to their phones for longer, thus impacting the volumes of companies like Apple. It remains to be seen, for example, whether "the A13 Bionic chip and its neural engine tied to the new cameras" really do succeed in driving new demand.

Next year though, could be different. Companies will try to leverage the rollout of the 5G network in the biggest economies. 5G is core technology that can be used to offer fundamentally new experiences that go beyond just an upgradation in speeds.

#### How is the global smartphone market doing right now?

Over the past few quarters, it's been flat at best. According to research firm Canalys, shipments for Q2 2019 actually fell 2% year on year. Samsung and Huawei, which hold

the top two spots, grew in single digits; Apple, in the third spot, saw its numbers fall 13%. Apple will be hoping to recover in Q3, which, because of the new launches, is traditionally its best quarter. Chinese startups like Xiaomi, Oppo, and Vivo have been dominating the budget phone markets.

#### How important is India for Apple?

Over the past few quarters, Apple has lost its way in China, its biggest growth market. This is why it will turn focus on to India, where it is already manufacturing iPhones. Buoyed by the success of the iPhone XR after a price cut, Apple has launched its successor, the iPhone 11, at Rs 64,900, much below the Rs 76,900 launch price of the XR. It has also been pushing cashbacks via banking partners, EMI schemes, and other offers that make the phone cheaper.

But even so, an iPhone is still very expensive for the average Indian user. But Apple will win even if it manages to become the dominant player in the luxury segment, which now has very few smartphone makers left.

(Rajan is in Cupertino on Apple's invitation)





## The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

# Doctors as victims

Law to deter assaults on healthcare personnel is needed. We also need to reduce underlying distrust



K SRINATH REDDY

## NITISH VS WHO

The poster wars in Bihar are an early intimation of the 2020 assembly polls, and larger political trends

IN TIMES WHEN a BJP in permanent campaign mode sets the tone, no election is too far away. It is no surprise, then, that the drumbeats of the 2020 assembly polls can already be heard in Bihar. The JD(U) has reacted aggressively to a publicly aired suggestion from the BJP camp that Chief Minister Nitish Kumar should now move to the Centre, leaving Bihar to the care of the Modi-BJP and, to a lesser extent presumably, his own party's second rung. Senior BJP leader and Nitish's deputy Sushil Kumar Modi's tweet in support of "captain" Nitish may not have had the desired calming effect on the controversy, given the curious fact that he tweeted, deleted and then re-tweeted the same remark. And that is not all. The JD(U) has tweaked its Nitish-centric poster campaign after the RJD labelled the earlier one — "Kyun karein vichar, thikke toh hai Nitish Kumar (why should we think again when Nitish Kumar is doing fine)" — as "defeatist". Meanwhile, the RJD poster promoting the idea of a "Tejashwi sarkar" in 2020 has provoked its ally, Congress, to point out that the question of the chief ministerial candidate is still open. The war of words and posters that has begun in Bihar is telling.

It speaks of the unease and discomfort within the two main alliances, the BJP-JD(U) on one side and the RJD-Congress on the other, in a state that was, not too long ago, and till Nitish Kumar switched sides again, being seen as the starting point of the combined Opposition's challenge to the might of the rising BJP. More significantly, in a state where the fundamental bijli-sadak-paani issues are still works-in-progress, and where the turn-around story of the first two Nitish tenures has plateaued, the current political exchange shows how personalities threaten to overtake Bihar's issues and even eclipse them. In a sense, that last bit was foretold. The Modi campaign has set the template for all other parties — they can resist the temptation to mimic its presidential thrust and style at their own peril. It is also true that in a state where parties are weakly institutionalised, politics has long been dominated by personalities anyway. Yet, the promotion of Modi, Nitish and Tejashwi by their respective parties in Bihar today is significant.

The state that has often been a fore-runner of national political trends — be it in terms of the possibilities and then the limits of "social justice", or the balance that "samajik nyay" must strike with development or "vikas" — is again a signpost to the future. No longer can issue-based politics be seen in neat-and-tidy opposition to personality-centric politics, it says. The dividing line between the two is blurring inexorably. As in Bihar, so also elsewhere, the political challenge for all players in the time of Modi may be this: To articulate the issue and to tell the story through the persona of the leader.

## MIS-SPEAKER

Om Birla's remarks on Brahmin superiority were misjudged, and ill behoove his high office

IN INDIA, CASTE can be as mysterious as Schrodinger's cat. Those who have for centuries enjoyed the capital that accrues from being on "top" of an entrenched system of inequality believe it does not exist, either as prejudice or power. But then they believe it does, especially when those pinned down as "lower" castes challenge the hierarchy and ask for their due. It is common, therefore, for reservations to be derided as "casteism". While that is an old, self-serving evasion, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's recent speech is striking for its barefaced endorsement of the logic of the caste system. Appropriately enough, Birla was speaking at a meeting in Rajasthan meant to help Brahmin families choose Brahmin spouses for their sons and daughters — strict endogamy is what has sustained the caste order for centuries. The BJP leader went on to laud Brahmins for traditionally occupying the uchha sthan (apex position) in society, a position, he argued, they deserved by virtue of their birth. This was no innocent hyperbole from a politician constrained by the need to keep his constituents happy. Nor was this a reference to caste within a policy framework that seeks to redress deprivation caused by discrimination. This was a heedless extolling of the inequality which has for aeons hobbled Indian society, morally, politically and economically.

Caste is, of course, a tangible, material reality in India — and hence, inescapably political. Leaders like Lalu Prasad, Mulayam Singh Yadav and Mayawati stand for an older mobilisation around caste identity that sought more power for the bahujan communities. The mammoth 2019 victory of the Narendra Modi-led NDA has been read, in some quarters, as a blunting of that caste politics, and a flattening of the micro-divisions within society by a larger belief system, be it Hindutva or nationalism. Birla's comment, however, reveals an anxiety within the BJP, which professes belief in an amelioration of the inequities of Hindu society while shirking a meaningful or radical anti-caste politics.

But the contradictions of ideology cannot be used to condone Birla's misstep. As someone sworn to uphold the Constitution, which guarantees that the state cannot deny equality of law to any citizen on the basis of caste, religion or birth, he cannot be seen to legitimise the hierarchies that exist in Indian public life, that find enough endorsement in religion and tradition and social practice. Unlike in quantum mechanics, there can be no ambiguity in the politics of the Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament when it comes to his commitment to the letter and spirit of the Constitution.

## IN DIFFERENT WORLDS

Enid Blyton stirred the imagination of the young. Her legacy survives the criticisms

IN ENID BLYTON'S *The Enchanted Wood* (1939), a tree that tears through the skies captivates the story's young protagonists, Jo, Fanny, and Bessie. At the treetop, the kids discover a ladder which takes them through the clouds to a magical land — sometimes welcoming, sometimes not — every time they climb up. The good folks at the Royal Mint of the United Kingdom, it would appear, have ascended a similar ladder. But unfortunately, the Bank's officials seem to have become witness to a landscape where Blyton's blemishes are the only distinguishing features of her literary arc. They have reportedly blocked plans to unveil a 50-pence coin commemorating Blyton. Because it would have led to a backlash due to the author's "racist, sexist and homophobic views".

Blyton built entire worlds for children. From popular mysteries such as *The Famous Five*, *Five Find-Outers*, *Malory Towers* to stand-alone characters like Noddy, her books captured the imagination of children across the world. From "crusty loaves", bacon, "crisp lettuce, dewy and cool" to "jugs of creamy milk", in Blyton's work one can also trace the dietary austerity of a generation in the shadows of World War II. Characters like Moon-Face — with his simple demand of toffee from anyone who wishes to descend the Faraway Tree using the Slippery-Slip (a hole in the floor of his house) — have universal appeal. Georgina's attempts to defy gender tropes, in *Famous Five*, seem ahead of the curve.

The golliwog — an allegedly racist caricature — has drawn criticism. However, while such literary debates are crucial, they cannot be the only prism to look at a writer and her work. Charles Dickens — Blyton's contemporary — was criticised on grounds of racism and anti-semitism. Chilean poet Pablo Neruda remains the literary genius of the love-love despite his now well-known transgressions. Criticisms of Blyton are valid. But they cannot be the only measure of her contribution.

ACTS OF VIOLENCE against doctors and other healthcare providers have been reported from different parts of the country in recent months, leading to outrage in the medical profession and strikes by doctors. The battering to death of a 73-year-old doctor by a frenzied mob, in the hospital of an Assam tea estate, was especially brutal and shocked the nation. Elsewhere, too, incidents of assault on healthcare providers and damage to hospital equipment have been frequently reported in different parts of India. Health professional associations have demanded a new law for their protection, extending beyond the deterrent punishments available in existing laws.

The government of India has responded by drafting a legislation which has been placed for public comment in September. This has a wide ambit, covering a broad range of healthcare providers, from doctors, nurses and paramedics to medical and nursing students to ambulance drivers and helpers and a wide array of settings, from hospitals and single doctor clinics to mobile medical units and ambulances. Administrative, security and sanitation staff employed in clinical establishments are not explicitly listed though they, too, are vulnerable to mob violence either because of a direct confrontation or as bystanders rushing in to protect doctors or nurses under assault. Stiff punishments have been proposed, ranging from six months to 10 years depending on the gravity of the offence. Heavy monetary fines, too, have been proposed, ranging from Rs 50,000 to Rs 10,00,000.

Why do healthcare service personnel (as the bill describes them) require a law beyond the provisions of existing criminal laws that protect all persons or property against assault, arson or vandalism? How are they different from the victims of road rage or a neighbours' quarrel?

There is a strong rationale for making a distinction because when a healthcare provider is assaulted, disabled or even killed, the victims of crime also include other patients who are being cared for by that person or many others who have been affected because the services of that clinical establishment are disrupted by the violence and vandalism or stoppage of work by the aggrieved

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hospital staff or even widespread strikes by doctors. Therefore, the innocent victims of the violence are many. If the death or suffering of one patient sparks violence, the consequence can be the death or suffering of many more patients. The perpetrator of violence bears responsibility for those consequences.

India is not unique in witnessing the sad spectacle of violence against doctors and other healthcare personnel. Several other countries, too, have reported it. Early in this decade, the problem reached alarming proportions in China — 273 assaults per hospital were reported in 2012. Criminal law was amended in 2015 to address this problem which had by then attracted international attention. While extortionist gangs were responsible for some of these attacks, dissatisfaction with medical care was responsible for the majority of the incidents.

While assaults on healthcare personnel or establishments must be deplored and deterred, the multi-factorial causes of this problem must be recognised if we are to reduce the dissatisfaction and distrust that underlies such assaults. The crowded public system is under-resourced, under-staffed and constantly stressed while struggling to cope with the expectations of patients and families. Poor access, uncertain availability and variable quality of care diminish respect and arouse dissatisfaction. The heterogeneous private sector, ranging from the single practitioner to the large corporate hospital, attracts ire for poor quality care or exorbitant costs and exploitative practices. Developing an adequately resourced, widely distributed and well managed healthcare system is essential to reducing the level of public dissatisfaction.

A clear explanation of a patient's condition on admission and periodic updates to anxious relatives build trust and respect. Comforting reports of progress, or consoling words of sympathy in case of setbacks and loss, will be well received if communication channels are maintained between the treatment team and the patient's family or friends. Even if the medical staff are busy, trained medico-social workers or physician assistants can play the role of trust building communicators. All care providers, from doc-

tors and nurses to support staff, must be trained, even as students, to develop and display the attributes of care, concern, courtesy and compassion. Developing effective and empathetic communication skills is as important as acquiring clinical skills.

Quite often, assaults on doctors occur following a patient's death. Whether the death occurred due to a serious health disorder which had a poor outcome despite the best efforts of the treating medical team or there was an element of contributory negligence on the part of one or more members of that team can only be determined by a proper inquiry.

However, wanton violence perpetrated by an anguished and aggrieved relative arises as an instant reaction and does not wait even for an explanation from the treating doctor let alone an inquiry that follows a registered complaint. While effective security measures must be taken to prevent unrestricted intrusions and aggressive reactions, a strong communication link during the period of hospitalisation (even through periodic sms or Whatsapp messages) can create a relationship of trust and avert unpleasant outbursts.

Finally, it must be recognised that uncivilised aggression and mob violence against healthcare personnel will be difficult to curb if the law is seen to be soft or ineffective in curbing or punishing mob violence or lynchings which may be religious, regional, casteist, linguistic or gender based. If violence and aggression appear to get social sanction, healthcare personnel, too, will be among the victims. It is important, therefore, that healthcare providers must speak up against violence of any kind — especially mob violence — and not just when they are the victims.

It is the professional responsibility of doctors to decry any violence as a danger to the physical and mental health of individuals and of society. The 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi is a good time for us all to work together to create a non-violent society where every citizen feels secure.

The writer is president, Public Health Foundation of India, and author of 'Make in India: Reaching a Billion Plus'. Views are personal



SHWETA BANSAL

## A FREE SPIRIT

Ram Jethmalani didn't belong to any one man, party, institution or idea

"MY DEAR, I don't give a damn." When Margaret Mitchell made Rhett Butler say these words in *Gone With the Wind*, she had no idea that a formidable criminal lawyer in India would make this the anthem of his life. That man, born on September 14, 1923, was Ram Jethmalani.

Ram led a full life, an unconventional one marked by acute ascent, immense popularity, paradoxes and controversies. He saw India being born; any event, any person, any high profile case that makes up the collective memory of Indians, in some way featured Ram.

He was a child prodigy. Within three months of entering his first school, Tekchand Pathshala, Ram was promoted to the third standard and not much later, to the fifth standard. This made him the youngest, smallest boy in class. One day, when he was bullied by a burly young man who lifted him by his collar, Ram struck the boy, leaving him confounded. In a moment he turned from the victim to the aggressor, a trait that marked much of his life.

At every stage, Ram created a new normal — fighting his own case for admission at the Bar at age 17, making a case for abolition of religion in his law college magazine, straddling two wives, joyous libertine, crusader during the Emergency, he defended political radicals, mob bosses, accused godmen and alleged smugglers with equal ease and loyalty.

Ram was the force behind changing the definition of Hindutva and legitimising the ideologies of the Shiv Sena and BJP within the

constitutional framework. He was open, unapologetic and irreverent about it. His single minded pursuit of what he believed in, his preternatural sense of right and wrong and his doggedness stirred emotions, provoked moral judgments but never evoked ambivalence.

Ram's achievements are enviable — some celebrated, others understated. That he was a grand master of law, the undisputed champion of cross examination and rules of evidence is universally acknowledged. Perhaps the least recognised is Ram's contribution in setting up the National Law School of India University (NLS), Bangalore, India's first five-year legal programme for students after intermediate. NLS was a culmination of Ram's friendship with R K Hegde, Karnataka's chief minister. He had represented Hegde's son, Bharat, when the latter was accused in a corruption case. Hegde returned the favour by directing the Bangalore University to allocate 14 acres for the law school on the city's outskirts. The team of Ram, Upendra Baxi and Hegde grandfathered the National University Act of 1986, which led to the NLS starting out as a full university. But when the NLS was inaugurated, Ram and his name were missing. The school's foundation stone was inscribed with the names of VR Reddy, the then Bar Council chairman and Professor Madhav Menon.

A few years later, a young Kashmiri boy, who had failed the entrance for NLS, made his way to Ram, who got him an admission on unusual grounds. The boy reciprocated by acing his class. After five years, he secured a seat at

Berkeley but was again struck by the weight of the expenses. This time, too, Ram showed up.

I remember asking him once how he would like to be remembered. His response was: "As a good teacher who could make a difference to the lives of the young." And, why not? Even at 93, he flew every Friday evening after court to Pune to lecture at the Symbiosis College. The man who drank Cognac at home so he wouldn't waste money on expensive liquor in hotels, chartered a plane at his own expense to take a lecture in Chandigarh because, "the students were waiting to hear him".

While his legal credentials are irrefutable, Ram's political legacy is ambiguous. His political career was determined by his personal equations and several of his political actions were on a personal pique. He allowed personal disappointments to move him away from fixed positions, but he had the liver to take the consequences too, he was that sure of his moral radar and intellect. This is what made him invulnerable.

Ram was *sui generis*. I doubt there will be another quite like him. Sometimes the aggressor, sometimes the defender and at other both, Ram didn't belong to any one man, party, institution or idea. The "sinner with a clean conscience" has finally boarded onward from the "departure lounge". Darlings, lets bow to his free spirit.

Bansal, an IFS officer, is author of *Courting Politics which profiles India's top lawyer politicians*. Views expressed are personal

## SEPTEMBER 12, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

**ADVANI ON INDIRA**  
INDIRA GANDHI'S VIEWS on press censorship were an "ominous warning" the Janata leader, L K Advani, said. Commenting on Mrs Gandhi's refusal to rule out press censorship in case she came back to power, Advani, former Information and Broadcasting Minister, said she wanted from the people endorsement of what she did during the Emergency — something the people had refused in 1977. Advani said he was sure democrats would take due note of Mrs Gandhi's statements in Bombay.

**CWC HAILS CHARAN**  
THE CONGRESS WORKING Committee un-

equivocally opted for the leadership of Charan Singh in the alliance of forces opposed to Mrs Gandhi and the Janata party. The alliance will have a common programme, a common manifesto and a common symbol as its bulwark. The working committee finalised, in Bangalore, a 2,000-word resolution to be placed before the AICC tomorrow when it begins a crucial two-day session.

**VAJPAYEE, RAM ON RSS**  
JANATA LEADER JAGJIVAN Ram supported a suggestion by A B Vajpayee that the RSS should change its goal from "Hindu Rashtra" to "Bharatiya Rashtra". He said that originally

the word "Hindu" might have meant all the residents of India. But now, the word Hindu has a "special significance". So, he said, "it has to be clarified".

**RAILWAYMENS' STRIKE**  
THE ALL-INDIA RAILWAYMENS Federation has directed its affiliated unions to prepare for a total strike any day in November, to press their demands for bonus and other long-standing grievances. The organisation's general secretary, J P Chaubey, said more than 90 per cent of the federation's working committee had voted in favour of an indefinite strike if there was no settlement on the AIRF's charter of demands.





# 15 THE IDEAS PAGE

## Consequences of abrogation

With the Constitution of J&K being rendered infructuous, questions may have arisen about the definition of the territory of J&K, and India's claim to POK



HASEEB A DRABU

BY RESCINDING THE Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, the territorial integrity of India has been impaired. For the last 30 years, the ideologically secessionist armed insurgency in Kashmir has been threatening the territorial integrity of India. The Indian state with all its might has been successful in not only containing it but in also getting the international community to by and large endorse its position. Ironically, the solution of the present BJP government to the long-standing problem of Kashmir — abrogating its special status in the Constitution of India which they see as the main cause of separatist sentiment — may have ended up not only compromising the territorial integrity of India, but also rekindled the intrusive interest of the international community in the happenings in Kashmir.

Constitution of India, Clause 3 of Article 1 states, "the territory of India shall comprise of the territories of the states". The First Schedule lists out all the states in the Union and defines their individual territorial limits. In the process, it defines the territory of India. There is no other definition of the territory of India as a whole in the Constitution save as a sum of its parts. As the 15th state in the Union, the territorial boundaries of J&K are defined in the First Schedule as, "The territory which immediately before the commencement of this Constitution was comprised in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir". Unlike all other states whose boundaries are precisely defined, this territorial definition of Jammu and Kashmir is not only ambiguous but also contentious.

There are two parts to this definition: First, the phrase "immediately before the commencement of this Constitution". Which precise date does this refer to? And second, is the term "Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir". This is the only place in the Constitution of India, where the prefix "Indian" has been added to the state of Jammu and Kashmir or for that matter to any other state. In all other references to it in the Constitution, the word used is "State of Jammu and Kashmir". Nowhere does the Constitution of India define what comprises the "Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir".

Even historically, Maharaja Hari Singh signed with India the instrument of accession on October 26, 1947 for the entire state; and not the "Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir". So where did the term emanate from and what does it signify? More importantly, what does it connote in terms of its physical boundaries?

The Constituent Assembly of India used this term in the context of the government of India's reference to the UN on its territorial dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir in January 1948. The Constituent Assembly chose not to pre-empt the UN settlement by including the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir as a part of India. The UN had mediated the cessation of hostilities in 1949 and drew a ceasefire line that left 35 per cent of the total area under control of Pakistan. This became the de facto border, the Line of



CR Sasikumar

Control with Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, under the Simla Agreement in 1972.

Indeed, the Constituent Assembly debates and the correspondence between the main dramatis persona discussed the eventuality of the state deciding to join Pakistan post the promised plebiscite and its implication on the Constitution of India. As such, the territory mentioned in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution means the territory of Jammu and Kashmir under the control of India. Hence, also, the qualification "Indian".

The phrase "immediately before the commencement of this Constitution" can either mean when the Constituent Assembly of India formally adopted the Constitution, that is, November 26, 1949. Or it can be January 26, 1950 when it was promulgated. Taking either date, more than one-third of the state, was under the "illegal" occupation of Pakistan. Did the Constitution of India, then, forego its claim on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, then? The answer is no.

The reason why the territory of J&K has been ambiguously defined in the Constitution of India is because the Constituent Assembly of India did the politically correct thing of leaving it to the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir to discuss, deliberate and define it. The territory of Jammu and Kashmir is defined comprehensively in the now rescinded Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir. The Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, Part II, para 4, states that "The territory of the State shall comprise all the territories which on the fifteenth day of August, 1947, were under the sovereignty or suzerainty of the Ruler of the State". By this definition, the territory of the state of Jammu and Kashmir includes not only the existing state but also the areas occupied by Pakistan (what they call Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan) and those areas were ceded to China in 1963 (Shakhsan tract, now a part of the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region).

This, read with Part II, para (3) of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir — which states, "The State of Jammu and Kashmir is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India" — amplifies the definition of the "Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir" men-

The significance of the territorial definition goes beyond the boundaries of J&K. It is on the basis of this definition of the territory of J&K in the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir that the territorial limits of India got axiomatically defined. Now, with the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order 2019, the Constitution of Jammu & Kashmir has been rendered infructuous. Along with that goes away the constitutionally defined territorial limits of J&K. What this also means is that the Government of India has, constitutionally speaking, given up its claims on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and also the territories that Pakistan illegally ceded to China.

tioned in the Constitution of India. The point is that it was the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir and not the Constitution of India which made the full territory of Jammu and Kashmir an integral part of the Union of India. In other words, the Constitution of India was dependent on the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir in this regard.

The Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir even provided 25 seats in the state legislature for the elected representatives of the "occupied" areas. It was stipulated, under Section 48 (1) of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, that these seats would remain vacant (and reserved) and would not be taken into account for reckoning the total membership of the assembly, till these areas of the state remain under occupation. Significantly, the J&K State Reorganisation Act 2019, had reduced the number of these vacant seats to 24. Is this formalising the Aksai Chin ceding?

The significance of the territorial definition goes beyond the boundaries of J&K. It is on the basis of this definition of the territory of J&K in the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir that the territorial limits of India got axiomatically defined. Now, with the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order 2019, the Constitution of Jammu & Kashmir has been rendered infructuous. Along with that goes away the constitutionally defined territorial limits of J&K. What this also means is that the Government of India has, constitutionally speaking, given up its claims on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and also the territories that Pakistan illegally ceded to China.

Given the fact that the territory of India is an aggregation of the territories of the states, the Constitution Order 2019 has effectively changed the territorial boundary of India. While the Constitution explicitly provides for expansion, "such other territories as may be acquired", there is no provision for Parliament to reduce the territory of India. Yet that is precisely what the Constitution Order 2019 has done. This in itself is a sufficient ground for it to be struck down by the Supreme Court.

The writer is former Finance Minister, Jammu and Kashmir

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

The trade war can never disrupt Chinese people's increasing demand for a better living and the stronger internal impetus to develop. — GLOBAL TIMES CHINA

## Spending issues

The Constitution's Seventh Schedule, which differentiates between spending by the Centre and states, needs a re-look



BIBEK DEBROY

THERE ARE AT least three reasons for a discourse on the central sector (CS) and centrally sponsored schemes (CSSs). The difference between a CS and a CSS is that for the former, all expenditure is borne by the Union government. For a CSS, part of the expenditure is borne by the Union government. States bear the rest. The state contribution is contingent on the type of state — north east and Himalayan states versus the others. The first reason for a discussion is that the present CSS basket has an expiry date of March 31, 2020 which is co-terminus with recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission. Therefore, from April 1, 2020, we will have a new CSS basket. Indeed, we need to plan for that CSS basket in advance, since the 2020-21 Union and state budgets will need to factor in the new CSS basket. Procedurally, a CS is somewhat different from a CSS. One can argue that revamping a CS is the Union government's prerogative, while revamping a CSS, without consultation with states, is not.

Second, the ToR (terms of reference) for the 15th Finance Commission mention a re-examination of CSSs, in a way. Perhaps, one should quote that: "Achievements in implementation of flagship schemes of Government of India, disaster resilient infrastructure, sustainable development goals, and quality of expenditure." For these, and some other areas, "The Commission may consider proposing measurable performance-based incentives for states, at the appropriate level of government." And third, the Union government is taking a look at CSSs. Hence, all three triggers converge.

Note the two earlier committees: The former Planning Commission's 2001 B K Chaturvedi report on restructuring of CSSs and the Niti Aayog's 2015 Sub-Group of Chief Ministers' Report on rationalisation of CSSs. One shouldn't read too much into etymology, but "restructuring" and "rationalisation" are distinct expressions. If a mere rearrangement is done, that's restructuring of sorts.

The Chaturvedi report suggested that nine flagship schemes (MGNREGA, IAY, SSA, NRHM, and so on) should remain as CSSs, while another six schemes (JNNURM, RKVY and so on) should become CSSs. Fifteen is a large enough number of schemes for public expenditure. Ideally, the Chaturvedi Report should have recommended scrapping of all others. But, that would have been too drastic, so, it didn't. So when implemented, all schemes were repackaged and retained. It was restructuring in the sense of rearrangement. The word "rationalisation" suggests more than restructuring. It implies a rationale for the continuation of existing schemes, scrapping of some, and even introduction of fresh ones.

The sub-group of chief ministers talked about implementation and divided schemes into core and optional ones. However, the core of the recommendation was the following: "The Sub-Group recommends that the existing CSS should be re-

structured and their number should be reduced to a maximum of 30 schemes. All these schemes would be 'Umbrella Schemes', with every scheme having a large number of components with a uniform funding pattern."

Thereafter, there are ostensibly 28 CSSs, divided into "core of the core" and "core". But these 28 are umbrella schemes and large umbrellas at that. For purposes of illustration, let me take one scheme, the "Green Revolution" scheme, implemented by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare. A scrutiny of the Union Budget papers will tell you that this umbrella scheme covers "Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National Food Security Mission, Agriculture Marketing, Information, Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Cooperation, Integrated Scheme on Agriculture Census and Statistics, National Agri-Tech Infrastructure, National Mission on Horticulture, National Mission on Oil Seed and Oil Palm, National Project on Agro-Forestry, National Project on Organic Farming, National Project on Soil Health and Fertility, Organic Value Chain Development for North East Region, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, Rain-fed Area Development and Climate Change and Sub-Missions on Agriculture Extension, Agriculture Mechanisation, Plant Protection and Plant Quarantine & Seed and Planting Material." Clearly, the figure of 28 is misleading. Counted properly, the number of CSSs depends partly on how one defines a CSS. But, the number will be close to two hundred. Clearly, this is unsatisfactory.

This issue isn't new. At the 3rd National Development Council (NDC) meeting in November 1954, "He (Shri Hanumanthaiah) also referred to the difficulties of the states in finding resources to meet their share of expenditure on the schemes sponsored by the central government and suggested consultation with the states before directives in this regard were issued." At another meeting in December 1956, it was pointed out that, "a large number of schemes were sponsored by other ministries also e.g. training schemes of the Ministry of Health and certain schemes for industry of the Home Ministry. The State (Madhya Pradesh) did not have money outside the Plan which could be provided to match the funds made available as Central assistance."

In 1967, a sub-committee of the NDC was set up to examine CSSs. Some points are evident. First, given the paucity of resources, there can only be a limited number of CSs and CSSs combined, such as the Chaturvedi figure of 15. Second, there is an optimal level of governance at which public goods are best provided.

The Seventh Schedule was a product of historical evolution and circumstances and contemplated a certain structure of this optimal level of governance. It isn't cast in stone. Why should there be CSSs for items in the State List (such as health)? If the Union government should contribute for health because it is nationally important, why should states not contribute for defence? Third, a CSS restructuring/rationalisation debate requires a relook at the Seventh Schedule. Fourth, this can't be done without consultation with states at an appropriate forum.

The writer is chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the PM. Views are personal



ABHIJIT MUKHOPADHYAY

## Deals that hurt

India could disadvantage itself further vis-a-vis China by joining free trade pacts

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Seize the pact' (IE, September 10). I agree with its assertion that "the government will have to think through its strategy on joining trade pacts". Trade ministers of the participating countries in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) will confer in November, when the leaders of these countries meet for the ASEAN summit. There is pressure on India from the proponents of free trade to join RCEP. However, free trade is not a black and white affair, it never was. Therefore, I would like to take issues with the editorial's main point, "Joining these FTAs (free trade agreements under the RCEP umbrella) will not only gradually facilitate the country's integration with global value chains, but provide greater opportunities for investment".

RCEP is an attempt to integrate ASEAN countries and the bloc's FTA partners — India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand — in a free trade zone. Initially posed as an alternative to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), RCEP has gained a new dimension after the US pulled out of the TPP and subsequently initiated a trade war, largely against China.

China would be looking to compensate for the export loss in the US turf, and RCEP provides the country a viable platform for this purpose. That is why joining the pact will be detrimental to India's interests. Even without an FTA with China, India's trade deficit with the country has risen 13 times in the last decade. China, according to a NITI Aayog pa-

per, accounts for around 50 per cent of India's trade deficit. And the deficit is widening every year. Joining RCEP would tantamount to de facto signing an FTA with China and giving the country market access to India.

The NITI Aayog paper also identified India's major imports from and exports to China. The list reveals a disturbing trend. While China exports finished manufactured goods like electrical machinery, telecom equipment, audio and video recorders, organic chemicals and plastic articles, Indian top exports to China predominantly consist of raw materials like ores, copper, sulphur, salt, mineral fuels, oils and bituminous substances.

Those who advocate joining RCEP on grounds of integration with global value chain — including your editorial — should take note of this composition. Global or local, production value chains are not homogenous string of production process; they are value chains driven by very large multinational companies which produce the final finished goods and reap maximum benefit out of that chain. The composition of Indo-Chinese trade indicates that Chinese companies are those engines of value chain. India languishes at the bottom end of that chain as a raw ma-

terial supplier. Another fallout could be decimation of Indian industries that would be in direct competition with these big Chinese companies.

In recent times, India's import of mobile handsets from China has gone down, but the flip side of it is that imports of mobile components from China has increased manifold. Chinese mobile handset factories operate as assembling centres on Indian soil. Fledgling handset makers like Micromax and Karbonn in the country have been pushed out of the market and Indians do not gain enough employment opportunities. This does not bode well for the economy.

India's experience with FTAs has not been encouraging, except for the FTA with Sri Lanka. Trade gaps with ASEAN, South Korea and Japan have been increasing. The FTAs have resulted in the isolation of Indian companies, as Indian products on whom regular indirect taxes have been levied often face competition with goods imported from these FTA countries with lower or zero tariff rates. In 2017-18, India had a trade deficit of \$104 billion with all RCEP countries.

Much has been showcased about Mode 4 in last year's ministerial meeting of RCEP.

Despite resistance from countries like Singapore, Australia and New Zealand, it was claimed that progress has been made under RCEP negotiations to liberalise member countries' services markets and allow movement of skilled professionals. Though the final outcome needs to be observed, there are other reasons for scepticism. Mode 4, till now, helped India in sending mainly IT professionals at cheaper wage rates to destinations where local labour is costlier. But with sources of such cheap labour abundant in other countries — Malaysia, Vietnam and Philippines, for example — it is doubtful whether India will have any major advantage even if the services markets of Australia, New Zealand and Singapore are sufficiently opened.

Various estimates show that RCEP's share in the world GDP may touch 50 per cent by 2050. The fear that India may be left out if it decides not to join the group is real. But given the economic clout of China and other economies, India may find it very difficult to grab a significant share of the this RCEP cake. The country could, instead, do well to make realistic attempts to seize larger shares of smaller pies in regional trade cooperation — BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), for example.

The writer is senior fellow at the Economy and Growth Programme, Observer Research Foundation

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### A FRIEND INDEED

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Petrol pipeline to Nepal' (IE, September 11). Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepalese counterpart K P Sharma Oli jointly inaugurated the 69-km long cross-border petroleum pipeline in Nepal. This initiative will help enhance the energy security of Nepal, it will substantially cut down transit costs and enhance trade connectivity between India and Nepal. The pipeline will carry two million metric tonne of clean petroleum products at an affordable price to Nepal. The initiative is also significant because the country is often dependent on India for fuel.

Shefali Kohli, Jalandhar

### A GREAT DRAW

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Impassable Gurpreet makes it possible' (IE, September 11). A goal less draw against Asian champions, Qatar, is probably India's biggest achievement in international football in recent years. Qatar is the hosts of the next FIFA World Cup and is ranked 62 in the FIFA rankings, while India is not even in top 100. India's goalkeeper played a very important role in this achievement by thwarting the forwards of Qatar.

Vishesh Goswami via e-mail

### EXEMPLARY LAWYER

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'He held his own' (IE, September 11). Ram Jethmalani was much more than a good

### 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](mailto: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

lawyer. He raised questions when they mattered the most. He was a torch-bearer for the freedom of every citizen, sometimes even criminals. His profound speeches — 'Courting Destiny' for example — and intellectual debates with Subramanian Swamy on Article 370 has taught the current generation a lot. Even though he was always affected by personal tragedies, Jethmalani never failed to speak his mind out for people and their rights.

Prastav Mishra, Jamshedpur