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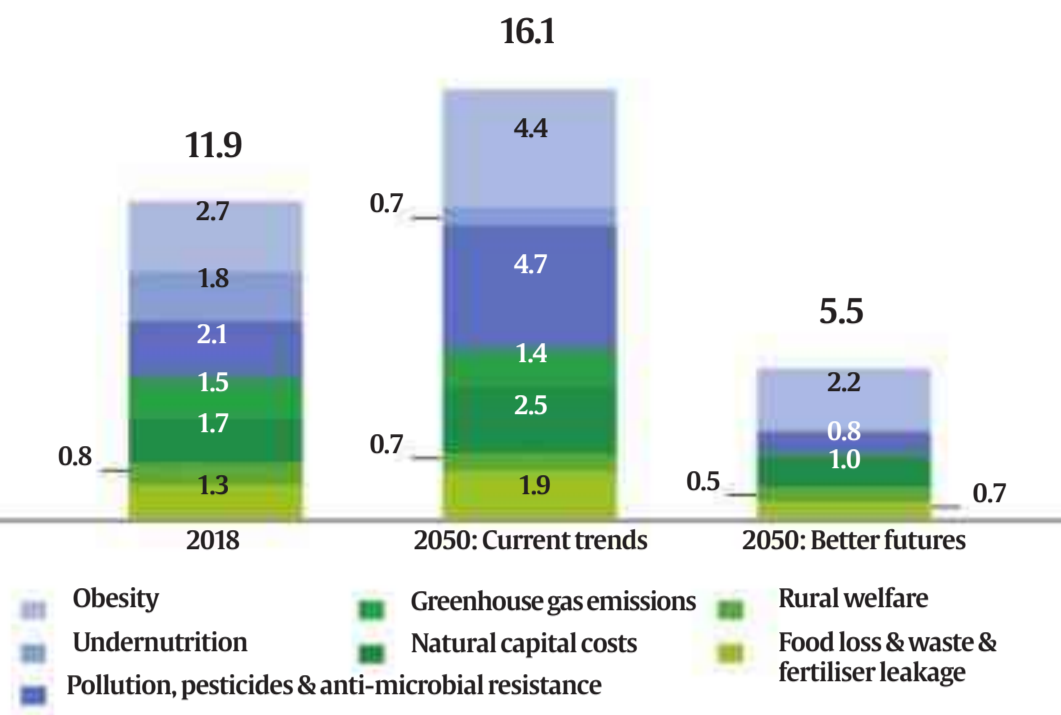
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TELLING NUMBERS

What global food industry costs human health and environment

THE HIDDEN COSTS OF GLOBAL FOOD AND LAND USE SYSTEM (\$ trn)



Source: SYSTEMIQ, Food and Land Use Coalition, 2019

A NEW global study has quantified the damage that the modern food industry does to human health, development and the environment costs. The "hidden cost" to the world is \$12 trillion a year — equivalent to China's GDP — says the study by the Food and Land Use Coalition (FOLU), a global alliance of economists and scientists. The report calls for the world to diversify its food production and consumption. Global over-dependence on a relatively small number of staple foods leaves populations vulnerable to crop failures, with climate change adding to the strain, it said. "A small disruption in supply really can do a lot of damage and leads to huge price increases. That creates suffering and social unrest. And it will highly likely also lead to hunger and instability," the Thomson Reuters Foundation quoted Per Pharo of FOLU as saying. The report proposes a series of solutions, from encouraging more di-

verse diets to improve health and reduce dependency on specific crops, to giving more support to the types of farming that can restore forests, a key tool in fighting climate change. **What it says about India** The report points out that India has 4 per cent of global freshwater resources to support 19 per cent of the world's population. Some 80 per cent of water in India goes to agriculture, primarily from groundwater sources. This is unsustainable, it says. Existing government policies already address critical transitions that the new report recommends, FOLU observes. Among various Indian initiatives, the report mentions the EatRight Movement of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India in 2017, the National Food Security Act of 2013, the National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture, and the Zero Budget Natural Farming programme in Andhra Pradesh.

THIS WORD MEANS

YANK

Proposed new term for changes in force over time, so that scientists can study muscle behaviour better

STUDENTS OF physics define acceleration as the rate of change of velocity (or speed) with respect to time. Expressed mathematically, acceleration is the time derivative of speed or velocity. In turn, the time derivative of acceleration is "jerk". For further time derivatives after jerk, the words are, "snap", "crackle" and "pop" for each successive derivative. Force, another familiar concept of physics, is measured in units of mass times acceleration. Unlike velocity and acceleration, however, time derivatives for force have never been defined. Now, biologists and biomedical engineers are proposing to define a new term, "yank",

for changes in force over time. Their ideas are published in the *Journal of Experimental Biology*. The objective is to quantify something that our muscles and nerves can feel and respond to. Scientists who study sports often use the term "rate of force development", a measure of explosive strength. Also, scientists who study gait and balance in animals and humans often analyse how quickly forces on the body change. "Yank" could be useful in understanding spasticity, a common muscle impairment in multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, stroke and cerebral palsy. *Source: Emory University*

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

What is J&K's Public Safety Act?

The PSA, under which former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah has been detained, allows for detention for two years without trial. How is the stringent Act enforced, and what are the options for appeal?

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M & BASHAARAT MASOOD
NEW DELHI, SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 16

ON MONDAY, it emerged that former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah has been detained under the state's stringent Public Safety Act (PSA), which enables authorities to detain any individual for two years without trial. A look at the provisions of the Act, and the conversation around it:

What is the PSA? The Jammu & Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978 is a preventive detention law, under which a person is taken into custody to prevent him or her from acting in any manner that is prejudicial to "the security of the state or the maintenance of the public order". It is very similar to the National Security Act that is used by other state governments for preventive detention.

By definition, preventive detention is meant to be preventive, not punitive. This broad definition is the most common ground used by a law-enforcement agency when it slaps the PSA on an individual. It comes into force by an administrative order passed either by Divisional Commissioner or the District Magistrate, and not by a detention order by police based on specific allegations or for specific violation of laws.

Why is it considered draconian? The PSA allows for detention of a person without a formal charge and without trial. It can be slapped on a person already in police custody; on someone immediately after being granted bail by a court; or even on a person acquitted by the court. Detention can be up to two years.

Unlike in police custody, a person who is detained under the PSA need not be produced before a magistrate within 24 hours of the detention. The detained person does not have the right to move a bail application before a criminal court, and cannot engage any lawyer to represent him or her before the detaining authority.

The only way this administrative preventive detention order can be challenged is through a *habeas corpus* petition filed by relatives of the detained person. The High Court and the Supreme Court have the jurisdiction



Near Farooq Abdullah's residence on Srinagar's Gupkar Road Monday. Shuaib Masoodi

to hear such petitions and pass a final order seeking quashing of the PSA. However, if the order is quashed, there is no bar on the government passing another detention order under the PSA and detaining the person again.

The District Magistrate who has passed the detention order has protection under the Act, which states that the order is considered "done in good faith". Therefore, there can be no prosecution or any legal proceeding against the official who has passed the order. Also, after an amendment last year by the Governor, persons detained under the PSA in Jammu & Kashmir can now be detained in jails outside the state.

What happens once the PSA is slapped?

Generally, when a person is detained under the PSA, the DM communicates to the person within five days, in writing, the reason for the detention. In exceptional circumstances, the DM can take 10 days to communicate these grounds. This communication is important because it is on the basis of it that the detained person gets an opportunity of making a representation against the order. However, the DM also has the discretion not to disclose all the facts on the basis of which the detention is ordered, if he or she thinks that these facts are against "public interest".

The DM has to place the detention order within four weeks before an advisory board,

consisting of three members including a chairperson who is a former judge of the High Court. The DM also has to place the representation made by the detained person. The detained person too can make a representation before this advisory board.

Within eight weeks from the date of detention, the board submits its report to the government, which will determine if the detention is in public interest. This report is binding on the government.

What constitutional safeguards are guaranteed to a person so detained?

Article 22(a) of the Constitution states that no person who is arrested shall be detained in custody without being informed, as soon as may be, of the grounds for such arrest, nor shall he be denied the right to consult, and to be defended by, a legal practitioner of his choice. Article 22(b) states that every person arrested and detained shall be produced before the nearest magistrate within a period of 24 hours (excluding the time necessary for the journey from the place of arrest to the court) and no such person shall be detained beyond this period without the authority of a magistrate.

However, Article 22(3)(b) allows for preventive detention and restriction on personal liberty for reasons of state security and public order. The Supreme Court has held that in

order to prevent "misuse of this potentially dangerous power, the law of preventive detention has to be strictly construed and meticulous compliance with the procedural safeguards... is mandatory and vital". Therefore, the DM has to show that the detention order follows the procedure established by law; any violation of these procedural safeguards is to be termed violation of constitutional rights.

Over the years, the Supreme Court has held that while detaining a person under the PSA, the DM is under a legal obligation to analyse all the circumstances and material before depriving that person of his or her personal liberty. It has also held that when a person already under police custody is slapped with the PSA, the DM has to record "compelling reasons" for detaining that person. While the DM can detain a person multiple times under the PSA, he or she has to produce fresh facts while passing the subsequent detention order. And all the material on the basis of which the detention order has been passed, the Supreme Court has held, should be provided to the detained person for making an effective representation; and the grounds of detention has to be explained and communicated to the person in the language understood by the detained person. If these are not followed by the DM, it can be made the grounds, before the High Court, for quashing of a detention order.

5 months on, why Israel is voting again today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 16

ISRAELI voters will return to polling booths on Tuesday for a second shot in a little over five months at deciding who will form the country's next government. The last election on April 9 failed to produce one.

Unprecedented election

No single party has ever won a majority in the Knesset, which routinely sees representation of perhaps 10 political factions. Coalition governments are the norm, with the larger parties getting support from the smaller ones in return for concessions for their specific constituencies. Negotiations are always long and tortuous, but this is the first time that a deal could not be cut.

How the country got here

Votes are cast for parties, and seats are allocated by proportional representation — a party must win at least 3.25% of the national vote, equivalent to four seats, to get into the



ELECTION IMAGE: An ultra-Orthodox Jewish man; a Likud banner showing Netanyahu and Trump. Reuters

120-member House. In April, Benjamin 'Bibi' Netanyahu's Likud and the main Opposition Blue and White were tied at 35 seats each.

After results are declared, Israel's President gives the leader who he feels has the best chance of putting together a coalition, 28 days — with a possible extension of 14 days — to form a government. In April, President Reuven Rivlin asked Netanyahu to make an attempt.

The negotiations failed after Avigdor Lieberman, leader of the secular ultranationalist Yisrael Beiteinu party, walked away from the right-wing religious axis led by Likud.

The deal-breaker was ostensibly Netanyahu's refusal to remove the exemption traditionally given to ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) Jews from Israel's mandatory military conscription so they can continue to study the Torah full-time. Critics of Lieberman, however, alleged that his real game was to weaken Netanyahu — his one-time ally turned bitter rival — and ultimately replace the Prime Minister as the country's top politician.

On May 29, with Likud stranded one seat short of the 61 needed for a majority, Netanyahu engineered a vote in the Knesset to dissolve itself and hold fresh elections.

A referendum on Bibi

Like the last time, Tuesday's election will be a virtual referendum on Netanyahu, who in July beat Israel's iconic founder Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion to become the country's longest-serving leader. Netanyahu, 69, who first became PM in 1996 and then

won consecutive terms beginning 2009, 2013, and 2015, faces possible indictment for bribery, fraud, and breach of trust, which could see his long career end in ignominy.

The race is extremely close, and Tuesday's vote, like the one in April, will be a contest between Netanyahu and Benny Gantz, the 60-year-old leader of the centrist Blue and White. Gantz, a former Chief of the Israel Defence Forces, cannot compete with the Prime Minister in terms of experience and international position; yet, he is the strongest anti-Bibi candidate in years.

What can happen here on

All citizens ages 18 and older — about 5.8 million Israelis — are eligible to vote. Palestinians who live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip cannot vote; nor can those in East Jerusalem who do not hold Israeli citizenship. Most polling booths will be open from 7 am to 10 pm. Results will start to come out soon afterward, and the outcome is expected to be clear in about six hours.

However, just like in April, no one expects the elections to throw up an outright winner.

How attack on Saudi oil facility could impact Indian and world economies

UDIT MISRA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 16

ON SATURDAY, the Houthis, a rebel Shia group of Yemen that is backed by Iran, bombed the Abqaiq plant as well as the Khurais oil field in Saudi Arabia. The attack, executed by drones, meant that Saudi Aramco, the state-owned oil company, had to not only suspend the production of almost 6 million barrels per day (about 6 per cent of global oil supply) but also restrict the use of 2 mbd of spare capacity. This is the largest-ever disruption in crude oil production in Saudi Arabia, which supplies 10 per cent of global world supply and is the world's largest crude oil exporter.

Extent of supply shock

As the chart alongside shows, even without the latest disruption, according to International Energy Agency (IEA) — an autonomous Paris-based organisation with 30 member-countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as its members — the second half of the current calendar year

would have seen a decline of 0.8 mbd because of already stagnating supplies. That is why oil prices too were expected to move up. The latest disruption — of an additional 6 mbd — is substantial.

However, as a report from Kotak Institutional Equities Research points out, the world has a large enough oil buffer to tide over the current disruption. For instance, OECD countries have 2.93 billion barrels of commercial petroleum inventories and another 1.55 billion barrels of strategic reserves, which are under government control. As such, it states, "if we assume that Saudi's disrupted oil supplies remain out of the market entirely for the next three months, it can be serviced by 11-12% of OECD inventories".

Extent of the price shock

To the extent that the world has enough inventories to tide over the immediate shortfall, and assuming that this attack is not the start of a long streak of international hostilities between a US-led bloc (including Saudi Arabia) and an Iran-led bloc (including the Houthis), the price shock could be relatively limited.

GLOBAL OIL INVENTORY CHANGE VERSUS CRUDE PRICE, CALENDAR YEAR ENDS, 2009-19



Source: IEA, Kotak Institutional Equities estimates

Even so, crude oil prices have already shot up by over 10 per cent, and the Brent price was \$66.6 per barrel as of Monday evening. Brent futures have jumped 20 per cent. According to most estimates, oil prices are likely to trend around the \$75 per barrel mark in the coming months.

However, prices will keenly reflect not just the immediate disruption but also the likely disruption should the US initiate some kind of military response. In a tweet on Sunday, US President Donald Trump said: "Saudi Arabia oil supply was attacked. There is reason to believe that we know the culprit,

are locked and loaded depending on verification, but are waiting to hear from the Kingdom as to who they believe was the cause of this attack, and under what terms we would proceed!"

Impact on India

India imports 80 per cent of the oil it consumes, which means there are multiple ways in which the country will be impacted by this disruption. The first issue is supply. India is already trying to make up for the loss of supply from Iran after US-imposed sanctions. After Iraq, Saudi Arabia is India's second-largest supplier of crude oil — it accounts for almost 17 per cent of the country's imports. Although Saudi Arabia has assured that there will be no loss of supply, if the process of restoration takes more time than anticipated, India would have to look for alternatives. This may not be easy since the global supply has been fairly volatile because of disruptions in some of the other big suppliers such as Venezuela, Libya and Nigeria.

A hit on prices may then follow. According to Madan Sabnavis of Care Ratings, India is expected to import 1.6 bil-

lion barrels of crude oil in the current financial year. So an increase in oil prices by just one dollar essentially means an increase of \$1.6 billion in the import bill. That's an additional Rs 11,500 crore at the current exchange rate. But supply constraints and rising oil prices would mean that the rupee will weaken further against the dollar — that's because, as the dollar prices of crude oil rise, India would need to buy more dollars for the same amount of oil, thus depreciating the value of the rupee vis-à-vis the dollar.

As such, rising oil prices will worsen the Indian government's fiscal balance. Moreover, higher crude oil prices would also lead to higher domestic oil prices, which, in turn, will further depress the demand for all things, especially those that use oil as the primary input — say, cars. This dip in consumption demand, which is already under strain as the recent growth slowdown has shown, would likely mean lower economic activity and consequently lower revenues for the government.

To the extent that the current crisis is contained, the damage would be limited — but an escalation by President Trump could exacerbate worries.



THE REAL TEST OF ONE'S BELIEF IN HABEAS CORPUS IS NOT WHEN ONE DEMANDS ITS APPLICATION FOR ONE'S FRIENDS BUT ONE'S ENEMIES.— CLEMENT ATLEE

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Spend to grow

Government should explore all avenues to expand capital expenditures



C RANGARAJAN AND D K SRIVASTAVA

FROM A LEVEL of 8.1 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2017-18, quarterly GDP growth fell to 5 per cent in the first quarter of 2019-20, a fall of 3.1 percentage points. The slowdown of the Indian economy is no longer in dispute. Thankfully, the government has come out of denial mode. The critical question is: What should be done to reverse the process? Is the downturn cyclical or structural? Any downturn that happens because of a weakening of demand is cyclical. On the other hand, if there are fundamental weaknesses in the structure of the economy, these need to be removed to sustain high growth. Successful implementation of the structural reforms in 1991 pushed India's potential growth rate to a high level. What we are witnessing in the Indian economy is a combination of the two. Several sectors such as automobiles and housing are facing a sharp weakening of demand. And there has been a significant fall in the savings and investment rate. Within household savings, the proportion of savings in financial assets has sharply declined. Apart from these, a significant growth-stifling factor is the weakness of the banking and non-bank finance sectors due to both cyclical and structural reasons.

The central government and the RBI have responded with a number of policy initiatives. The RBI has reduced the repo rate by 110 basis points since February 2019, reducing it from 6.5 per cent to 5.4 per cent. The central government has also undertaken a number of steps post the 2019-20 budget which include — withdrawal of enhanced surcharge on foreign portfolio investors, a public sector bank consolidation plan, additional depreciation rates for vehicle manufacturers, additional credit support for housing finance companies and recapitalisation of public sector banks. The slowdown appears to be continuing in spite of these measures.

The saving rate has fallen from 34.6 per cent in 2011-12 to 30.5 per cent in 2017-18. The investment rate, which is dependent on the saving rate supplemented by net capital inflows, has also fallen from 39 per cent of GDP in 2011-12 to 32.3 per cent in 2017-18. This persistent downward trend of the saving and investment rates has led to a fall in India's potential growth rate to below 7 per cent. Any additional fall below the potential growth rate may be due to cyclical factors.

The standard response to a recession is to enhance government expenditure. In the present context of a declining investment rate along with declining demand, a good solution will be to enhance government expenditure, especially capital expenditure. On the scope for increased spending, the bonanza from the RBI will go only to meet the shortfall in revenues. Perhaps, a larger disinvestment may help.

The monetary authorities have reduced the policy rate but banks have not followed suit due to structural problems against the background of rising non-performing assets. As one commentator on the central banking system said several decades ago, "The central banking system is equipped with efficient brakes but the accelerator is uncertain." While the RBI can play a supportive role in expanding liquidity, we must understand the basic limitations. Banks must also be careful while expanding credit. Inappropriate lending can land them in trouble later. Recapitalisation of public sector banks does not "infuse" fresh funds. The mechanism adopted only enlarges their freedom for lending. The bank consolidation plan could have been introduced at a more favourable time.

In the present context of a declining investment rate and declining demand, a good solution will be to enhance government expenditure, especially capital expenditure. On the scope for increased spending, the bonanza from the RBI will go only to meet the shortfall in revenues. A larger disinvestment may help.

Other changes in the fiscal sector during recent years may also have had a structural impact. For example, GST has changed the structure of indirect taxes, affecting the balance between goods and services, formal and informal sectors, and central and state tax revenues compared to the pre-GST period. Since its implementation, the compliance cost has risen considerably for the assesses, particularly the small and medium enterprises. The buoyancy of centre's indirect taxes in the post-GST period has been at low levels — 0.5 in 2017-18, 0.2 in 2018-19 and is budgeted to be 0.6 in 2019-20.

The decline in price level in recent years partly because of the new monetary policy framework has affected the nominal GDP growth rate and growth rate of tax revenues. The implicit price deflator has fallen more than 3 percentage points compared to the average of 2012-13 to 2013-14 and 2017-18 to 2018-19. The growth in central tax revenues fell by 3.5 percentage points and that in the states' own tax revenues by 4.7 percentage points during the same periods. These changes have left limited space for augmenting capital expenditure. The Centre's capital expenditure is currently languishing at 1.6

per cent of GDP.

Countercyclical policy is primarily the responsibility of the Centre. Given the revenue trends, it may not be in a position to increase its capital expenditure relative to GDP. Other available options include bringing on board state governments for increasing their capital expenditure relative to their respective gross state domestic products (GSDPs). Second, the Centre may invest through central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) an additional one percentage point of GDP compared to the present levels. Further, through the public-private partnership (PPP) mode, the private sector may be induced to supplement the government's investment in select projects. The amended FRBM Act has a provision for increasing the fiscal deficit by 0.5 per cent of GDP under certain circumstances. The government can make use of this provision.

The present slowdown is happening at a time when industrialised countries are themselves passing through a recession. Boosting export demand in this context becomes difficult. Our share in the world's exports is still small. Despite the recessionary conditions in the industrialised countries, it may still be possible to pitch for a higher growth in exports. The recent announcements on boosting exports is a recognition of this. Allowing the rupee to depreciate steadily may help exporters. The scope of monetary policy, as already explained, is limited. The government should explore all avenues to expand its capital expenditures. Public investment in the present context may crowd in private investment. Perhaps, one redeeming feature of the current situation is that despite floods, agricultural production may pick-up leading to a possible pick-up in rural demand. The government should also address sector-specific problems and these need not be fiscal in nature. A cautious expansion in banking credit can also help. It is also the time to look at structural reforms in the banking sector, governance in general and fiscal reforms relating to direct taxes and GST.

Rangarajan is former Chairman, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council and former Governor, Reserve Bank of India. Srivastava is chief policy advisor EY India and former Director, Madras School of Economics. Views are personal

PUBLIC? SAFETY?

Move to book Farooq Abdullah under PSA shows arbitrariness — and a lack of plan to address the crisis in J&K

THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION to wield the Public Safety Act (PSA) against former Jammu & Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah beggars belief. How the National Conference leader, Lok Sabha member from Srinagar constituency, former Rajya Sabha member and former Union Minister for Renewable Energy turned into a case for a law used against terrorists, that too while he was in detention for five weeks, should be for the Centre to explain. Just two days prior to his August 5 house arrest under preventive sections of the CrPc, Abdullah and his son Omar, also a former chief minister, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his home along with a National Conference delegation. After all this, the application of the PSA on Abdullah, hours before the Supreme Court was due to hear a habeas corpus petition for his production filed by MDMK leader and Rajya Sabha member Vaiko, says more about the government than about a man who was the face of moderate politics in Kashmir, apart from being the standard bearer for India on the Kashmir issue.

Abdullah — and his son Omar — may have many a question to answer when it comes to their record of governance in the state but not the question of fealty to the Indian Constitution. Indeed, 25 years ago, during the height of Pakistan-sponsored militancy in Kashmir, it was Abdullah that the Centre fielded to defend India against allegations of human rights violations in the Valley. He also risked his life and political future by going along with the Centre's push for Assembly elections in 1996, winning the election that saw a good turnout despite a boycott call by the Hurriyat. His six-year term was a period in which militancy gradually decreased to virtual irrelevance by 2002. It is ironic that as India faces a fresh round of international concern and allegations for its arbitrary detentions and communications blockade in the Valley, the same leader who, despite some faux pas, acted as a reliable bridge between Kashmir and the Centre, has now been detained under a law that does not require him to be produced before a court for up to two years. It is astonishing that the Court accepted this without question.

Since August 5, when the government abrogated the state's special status, split it into two Union Territories, picked up hundreds, and imposed a lockdown, all has been justified in the name of keeping the peace. A full 43 days have passed. It is not just odd, it is a matter of increasing concern that the government appears to have made little progress on a plan of engaging with the Kashmiri people other than through saturation security presence, arbitrary arrests, a communication blockade and now using a draconian act against a key political leader.

CLEARING THE AIR

Odd-even policy is no magic bullet to tackle pollution. But it is sure to trigger a conversation about Delhi's environment

ALMOST FOUR YEARS after it was first implemented in Delhi, the odd-even scheme will make a comeback in the city. Last week, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced that the road rationing scheme will be a part of a seven-point programme to combat pollution from November 4 to 15. The scheme, that will be implemented a week after Diwali, when Delhi's air is at its worst — the post-festival pollution combines with the smog from stubble burning in Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, and particulate matter from tailpipes of vehicles. In the last three years, the Delhi government and the agencies responsible for managing the city's environment resorted to knee-jerk reactions, which did very little to improve the city's air quality. The AAP government's decision to have a pollution-management plan in place nearly two months before the acrid smog hits the city is a welcome departure from the past.

The road rationing scheme allows vehicles to ply on alternate days, depending on odd and even number plates. It was introduced in January 2016, as a desperate measure of sorts after the Delhi High Court described the city as a gas chamber and asked the state government to submit a time-bound plan to mend matters. In response, the AAP government implemented the road-rationing scheme for 15 days in 2016 — from January 1 to 15 and then, from April 15 to 30. An ugly squabble between the Delhi government and the National Green Tribunal (NGT) came in the way of its implementation after Diwali in 2017. The NGT contended that any relaxation would come in the way of improving the city's air quality while the government wanted exemptions for two-wheelers. The government had argued then that Delhi's public transport wasn't equipped to handle the fallout of extending road-rationing to two-wheelers. The government has not talked about exemptions as yet. It has nearly two months to iron out glitches and sort out potential differences that could come in the way of the smooth implementation of the plan. More importantly, it needs to ensure that the city's public transport system is able to meet the needs of commuters on days when their vehicles will be off the roads.

In itself, the odd-even scheme is no magic bullet to clean up Delhi's bad air. But the good news is that the AAP government envisages road rationing as a part of a bouquet of pollution-control measures. It has also initiated a welcome conversation on Delhi's annual tryst with bad air well before it engulfs the city.

PAST ITS PRIME

Doordarshan reaches retirement age, and faces competition from the private sector in what was once its core competency

DOORDARSHAN, INDIA'S PIONEER in the TV spectrum, has turned 60. In most of the world's nations, this is a popular retirement age. It is generally agreed that workers attending this milestone should clean out their drawers, accept a watch at a small farewell ceremony, gracefully get out of the way and recede into the sunset of redundancy. The parallel with Indian television is striking. Doordarshan began regular transmission in 1965 as a news service and in the Seventies, it was the most powerful propaganda channel of the government. But no contemporary government could possibly need such a service any more, now that private enterprise has rendered it redundant.

Today, the majority would balk at the idea of starting or ending the day with Pratima Puri or Salma Sultan calmly enumerating the signal deeds of the government of the day. A horde of private channels offer the very same thing, presented with the energy of slam poetry and the unabashedly staged quality of WWF wrestling. The national channels represent only the tip of the iceberg. State capitals also have their own government mouthpieces, exuberantly hammerlocking the opposition parties every day. There are so many eager to inform this nation, permanently afflicted by attention deficit disorder, which perpetually wants to know.

But let us not imagine that Doordarshan is completely redundant. Like Indian Airlines was tasked to service unremunerative routes, Doordarshan brings us glad tidings from the world of kho-kho, and news from farm and field that private channels would sniff at. Besides, Doordarshan's history was made memorable by hugely successful serials in multiple genres, like *Buniyaad*, *Tamas* and *Karamchand*. As the news of the day aspires to the condition of fiction, perhaps the national broadcaster can take pole position again, with productions that lay no claim to the truth, but exuberantly depict hyperreality.



PRAKASH JAVADEKAR

LEVEL 5 LEADERSHIP connotes honesty and integrity, commitment and passion, decision making, accountability. Crucially, such a leader must be a good communicator. Someone who delegates and empowers, and is an inspiring leader. On all these counts, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stands out.

His honesty and integrity are full and final. For him, national interest is the only interest. This helped him gain widespread acceptability during his 12 years as Gujarat CM: The poorest of the poor are convinced about his honesty and integrity. In five years, there has not been a single charge of corruption against his government. His humane side also came to the fore recently when he was seen consoling ISRO scientists after a last-minute snag in Chandrayaan-2. At Sriharikota, the PM delivered one of the best motivational speeches to the scientists and engineers at ISRO.

After assuming office in 2014, Modi bowed before the steps of Parliament. He followed this up by bowing to the Constitution, before declaring that his government is dedicated to the welfare of the poor, SC/STs, downtrodden and hitherto neglected. He went on to coin the slogan "Sabka saath, sabka vikas". And this year, he added "sabka vishwas" to it, which explains his intentions.

He thinks differently and acts differently. To motivate the bureaucracy and get their full

A LEADER PAR EXCELLENCE

For Prime Minister Narendra Modi, national interest is the only interest

Modi has probably been the first Indian politician to realise the potential of social media, and has used it effectively not only to reach out but establish an immediate connect with the youth. He is a communicator par excellence. He speaks directly to the people, creates a bond, and gives them confidence. People respond to his appeals even if they have to forego gas subsidy or travel concessions.

cooperation, he appointed 10 groups of secretaries to prepare a roadmap for the government in 10 different sectors. Every group gave presentations, and after due diligence, Modi asked them to work speedily towards achieving their respective goals. The following year, he asked them to present the progress made.

Probably, Modi is the first prime minister who has written a book — titled *Exam Warriors* — to guide and give confidence to students about how to approach examinations and other challenges in life. He has addressed more than 100 million students and parents in two successive years. In his interactions with students, he even referred to PUB-G — clearly the PM is up to date with the latest happenings. This also helps him establish an immediate connect with students and youngsters. Modi has probably been the first Indian politician to realise the potential of social media, and has used it effectively not only to reach out but establish an immediate connect with the youth.

He is a communicator par excellence. He speaks directly to the people, creates a bond, and gives them confidence. People respond to his appeals even if they have to forego gas subsidy or travel concessions.

GST, demonetisation, the surgical strikes, Balakot air strike, actions against corruption, abrogation of Article 370, banning triple talaq, are examples of his decisive leadership.

Some examples of empowerment of the poorer sections include 10 per cent EBC reservation, Ujjwala gas scheme, Pradhan Mantri Awas, Ujala scheme for LED bulbs, Mudra, Skill India, Ayushman Bharat, Kisan Samman, pension to unorganised sector labour, remunerative prices to farmers, and 95 million toilets.

GST is a great example of his faith in co-operative federalism. Decisions about every word of the GST law, rules and rates were reached unanimously.

PM Modi is creative and innovative. He understands that only research and innovation will help India enter the big league. Therefore, he started Atal Tinkering Labs in nearly 3,000 schools where robotics, 3D printing and other advanced technologies are made available. Students experiment with these gadgets and come up with exciting ideas. These ideas are mapped in olympiads organised for the purpose. For engineering students, for instance, he promoted "Smart India Hackathon". He has also established Atal Incubation Centres in various IITs and NITs.

Finally, he also interacts regularly with start-ups and makes it a point to meet youth with innovative ideas.

The writer is Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, and Environment, Forest and Climate Change

SEPTEMBER 17, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

AFGHAN PREZ RESIGNS
NUR MOHAMMAD TARAKI of Afghanistan resigned as president and party leader in Afghanistan, the state-owned Radio Kabul announced. He has been replaced by Hafizullah Amin, prime minister and first minister of Afghanistan, who is considered a more hard-line communist than Taraki — his government had been preoccupied with combating a spreading Muslim rebellion. Taraki came to power in April, 1978, following a bloody coup which toppled the government of Mohammed Daoud. Taraki, a scholarly poet-politician, was considered a less ardent communist than many members of the pro-Soviet Khalq (people's) Party.

FUTURE RSS GOVT
RSS CHIEF BALASAHEB Deoras said the RSS will gain the popularity needed for forming the government in the country in the next 10 years. "Nobody can have any grudge in case of such an eventuality in the democratic set-up," he told a closed-door question-answer meeting attended by about 100 persons in Bhopal. He said the "present tirade" against the RSS was because of its gaining popularity since the Emergency. He said "dual membership" was a non-issue, and that political parties should not bother with what their members do besides politics. Deoras described the former external affairs minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee's recent observations on the RSS, as

"embarrassing". He said RSS member could not be barred from becoming MPs and MLAs, as desired by Vajpayee.

AKALI DAL SPLIT
AKALI DAL PRESIDENT, Jagdev Singh Talwandi, has suspended the revenue minister, Jiwan Singh Umranangal, and three MLAs — Parkash Singh Majithia, Hari Singh Zira, Kartar Singh Vaid — and Gurbachan Singh from anti-party activities. Talwandi said a meeting of the Dal Working Committee was being called on September 18 to endorse the decision. The action is a sequel to the call given by the pro-Badal delegates for a parallel delegate session on October 10.



15 THE IDEAS PAGE

The reality check

The change in Jammu and Kashmir's status will make little difference vis-a-vis Pakistan, situation on the ground in the Valley. It cannot but feed into the already prevailing sense of alienation



SHARAT SABHARWAL

A COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS for the country of the recent, electorally-rich move of the government on Jammu and Kashmir must await its outcome in the Valley. However, what the move has not done is clear.

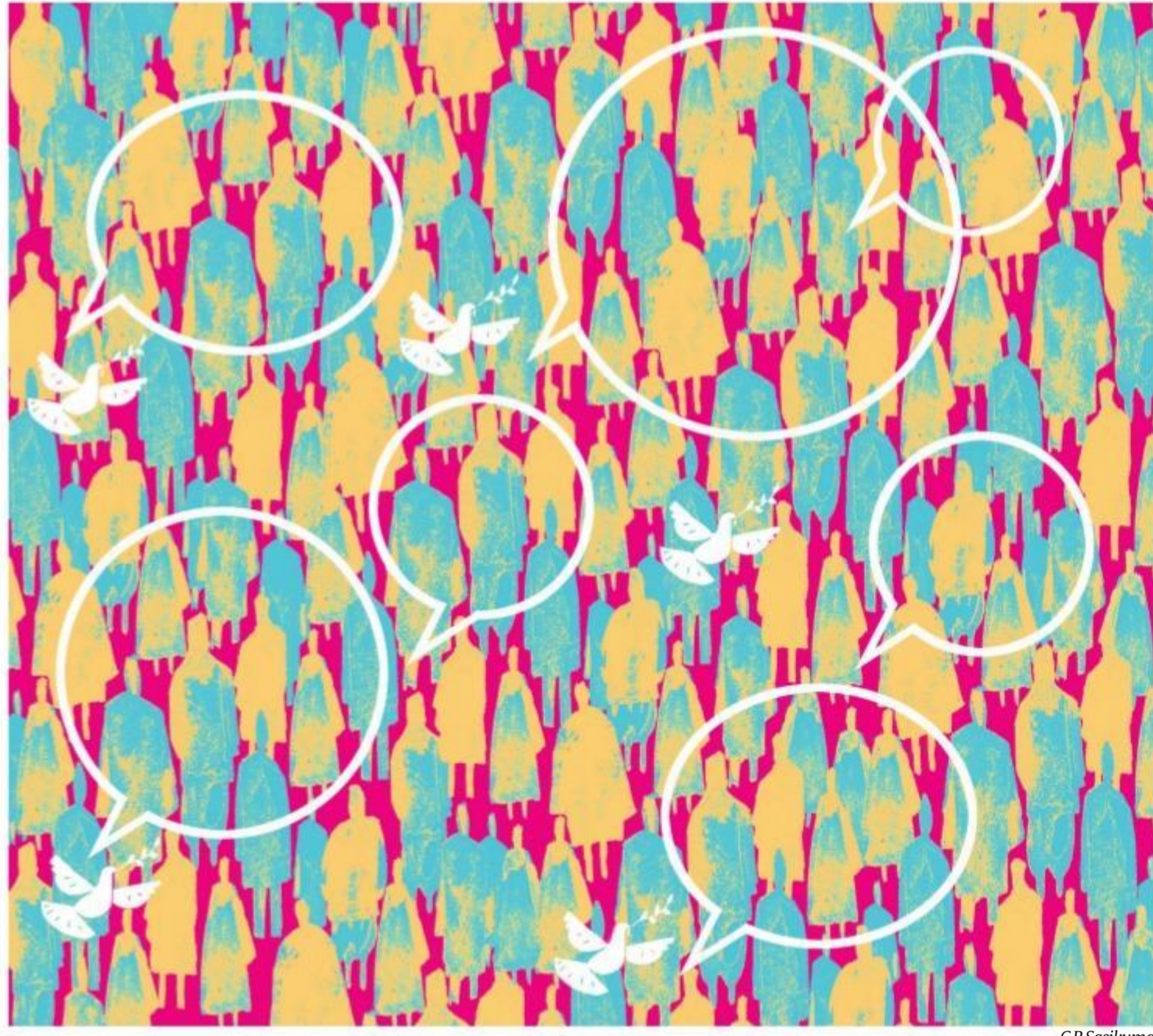
The reaction to it — a sense of satisfaction in India minus the Kashmir Valley ("rest of India"), consternation in the Valley and contrived outrage in Pakistan — is rooted in emotions or expediency.

The satisfaction in the rest of India stems from years of frustration at the failure of our efforts to establish durable peace in Kashmir and the widely-held perception that its special status was a mistake. We can discuss the history of the issue till the cows come home, but what matters is its future. Three principal arguments have figured in our national discourse: It has altered the terms of our engagement with Pakistan (no need to discuss Kashmir as it is firmly integrated with India or we will now discuss only the return of PoK), better central control over a sensitive region and ushering in an era of peace and development in J&K, whose progress was hampered by its special status.

Now the reality. Pakistan's questioning of J&K's accession to India did not originate from its special status and will outlast its withdrawal. We took the issue of Pakistan aggression in J&K to the UN (hindsight tells us that this was a misstep), but the great power politics of the day turned it into one of the future of the territory. In the Simla Agreement, we jettisoned the UN's role, but agreed to hold bilateral negotiations for "a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir". We have not renounced this agreement. Since the late Eighties, when widespread terror and violence broke out in Kashmir, we have talked to Pakistan on this issue essentially for one or more of the following reasons: International pressure, to manage the relationship and reduce violence and the expectation that Pakistan could be moved in a positive direction through dialogue. With our increased clout, the role of international pressure has diminished considerably. J&K's special status figured nowhere in these considerations.

As for discussing only the return of PoK, this has been our national position all along, reiterated in every round of dialogue with Pakistan — the finality of J&K's accession, the only issue for discussion being the vacation of its parts under Pakistan's illegal occupation. The reported discussions for formalising the existing territorial status quo, such as at the time of signing of Simla Agreement, have been without prejudice to the above. The possibility that our government's move was aimed at forcing Pakistan's hand to settle for the existing territorial status quo has been negated by the chorus for the recovery of PoK being our next step. Never mind that Pakistan will not give it up voluntarily and its recovery militarily will pit us against China, besides Pakistan, because of its deep interest in the so-called Gilgit-Baltistan, with its entry to the CPEC.

It is true that the central government will have direct control over law and order in the Union Territory of J&K. However, the gain will



C R Sasikumar

be marginal as J&K's statehood and special status were never serious impediments to operations by security forces against internal turmoil or their deployment for the defence of our external boundaries. Moreover, the instrumentality of Governor's/President's rule was available, when necessary. Arguably, a key asset in a sensitive region is the loyalty of the local populace.

The scrapping of the considerably eroded special status will not make much difference to the life of people in the Valley. However, the abrupt move, together with the break-up and downgrading of the state, cannot but feed into the already prevailing sense of alienation and religious radicalisation, which Pakistan has been exploiting. The underlying assumption that deprived of the hope of any negotiations on the status of J&K, people would buy into the development agenda and emotionally integrate themselves with India is a leap of faith. Peace, a prerequisite for the settlement of citizens from the rest of India in J&K and investment by them, faces serious challenges in the Valley and any turmoil there will not leave the Jammu region untouched. Influencing public opinion requires a massive effort to engage with the people, which has been missing in the last few years. We need agents of change with mass following to carry our message. With the mainstream parties marginalised and actively discredited by the government, who is to play that role? Any opportunists coming forward may prove to be just that. The impact — positive or negative — of the recent move on the situation in the Valley will not be known until well after the lifting of the ongoing restrictions.

Pakistan does not care for Kashmiris and for a long time has had no hope of making any territorial gains against us. However, its security establishment finds Kashmir expedient to sustain the India bogey for its institutional interest of keeping a stranglehold on the country's polity and has been using terrorism to keep the Valley on the boil. These considerations underlying Pakistan's posture had nothing to do with J&K's special status and will not disappear with its withdrawal.

Pakistan does not care for the Kashmiris and for a long time has had no hope of making any territorial gains against us. However, its security establishment finds Kashmir expedient to sustain the India bogey for its institutional interest of keeping a stranglehold on the country's polity and has been using terrorism to keep the Valley on the boil. These considerations underlying Pakistan's posture had nothing to do with J&K's special status and will not disappear with its withdrawal.

The die having been cast, the best we can do is to devote our energies to building not only immediate but durable peace in the Valley, despite heavy odds. This requires engagement with the people and not shock therapies. Otherwise, the recent initiative would risk being remembered for having caused considerable disruption on the ground and placed Kashmir in the international limelight without serving the national interest, with the possible exception of limited dividends in Ladakh.

The writer is a former diplomat. Views are personal

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Despite India's mantra that 'all is well' in... (Kashmir) the realisation is slowly growing that India's military enforcers have unleashed a reign of terror."

—DAWN

Myth of religious solidarity

Reactions of several Muslim countries to India's decision on Kashmir shows that political and economic interest bind nations — not ideologies



RAJA MANDALA

BY C RAJA MOHAN

AS PAKISTAN STRUGGLES to mobilise the international community against India's decision last month to change the status of Jammu and Kashmir, its chattering classes are deeply disappointed at the lack of support from the world's Muslim nations. There has been special criticism of the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, long seen as Pakistan's staunchest supporters in the Muslim world, for not coming out to criticise India's move.

The public debate in Pakistan did not take long to accept, if grudgingly, that the growing economic stakes in India for the UAE and KSA have trumped Pakistan's calls for religious solidarity on the Kashmir question. Pakistani analysts also compare the differing perspectives in the Gulf about Delhi and Islamabad. The UAE and KSA see Delhi as a valuable business partner and Islamabad as a supplicant seeking financial favours whenever Pakistan faces an economic crisis.

Pakistan's own national experience negates the proposition that the world's Muslims constitute a coherent political community. Religion is not nearly enough to bind the people of the same country let alone unite nations.

Although set up as the homeland for South Asian Muslims in 1947, Pakistan lost its eastern wing within 25 years. In the creation of Bangladesh at the end of 1971, the strength of linguistic identity prevailed over the presumed weight of religious affinity. The current political unrest among the Baloch, Pashtun and the Mohajir communities transcends the shared Islamic identity in Pakistan. So does Pakistan's oppression of the Muslim minorities like the Shia and the Ahmadi.

China provides an example — twice over — of the limited importance of religion in shaping partnerships between nations. It is communist China — and not the Muslim world — that has extended unstinting support for Pakistan on Kashmir in the last few weeks. The reasons for it are easy to see. China has a shared interest with Pakistan in balancing India. And Beijing is a party to the disputes in Kashmir.

Islamabad's own willingness to put national interests above Islamic solidarity is seen in its response to Beijing's ill-treatment of Uighur Muslims in China's far Western province of Xinjiang. Pakistan's prime minister Imran Khan who has been roaring like a lion on India's oppression of Kashmir turns a mouse when he is asked about China's repression of Muslims.

If the appeal to religious solidarity has only limited value, why does Pakistan persist with it? For a nation that broke away from India in the name of Islam, the emphasis on religious solidarity is at once a tool of legitimacy and a political mission. After Partition, Pakistan embarked on a massive campaign

to promote Islamic solidarity with the Middle East. Bemused by Pakistan's zeal for Islam, King Farouk of Egypt reportedly remarked in jest that he "did not know Islam was born on August 14, 1947".

All nations have their founding myths and can't let reality come in the way of formal adherence to them. India, of course, is not a stranger to this. If Pakistan abides with the myth of Islamic unity, India has its own — for example, the idea that solidarity with the "global South" against the "hegemonic West" is a fundamental principle of its foreign policy.

It was just a decade and a half ago, during 2005-08, that India came quite close to abandoning its own nuclear interests for the presumed obligation to defend Iran's controversial atomic programme. As the US debate on the historic civil nuclear initiative got entangled with Washington's pressures against Tehran, there was a strong demand in Delhi that India stand up for Iran in the name of non-aligned solidarity. The Manmohan Singh government managed, barely, to resist this temptation. Delhi's decision then was vindicated by Iran's move soon after to accept a nuclear compromise with America on rather harsh terms in 2015.

Pakistan is not alone in viewing the Gulf through the Islamic prism. India did much the same. For far too long, Delhi had over-determined the Islamic factor in assessing the foreign policies of the UAE and Saudi Arabia and branded them as "pro-Pakistan". No Indian Prime Minister visited Saudi Arabia between 1982 and 2010 and the UAE between 1981 and 2015. When India initiated interest-based engagement with these countries, there was a rapid improvement in bilateral relations.

In the 20th century, many transcendental ideologies such as communist internationalism, pan-Asianism, pan-Arabism, pan-Islamism, and Third Worldism swept the world. But none of these could be sustained in a world that continues to be organised around the nation-state. The Comintern, Arab League, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Non-Aligned Movement have all turned out to be dysfunctional. National interest tends to triumph, almost all the time, over proclaimed loyalty to a collective identity.

To be sure, nations will continue to invoke larger identities when it suits their particular interests. Chinese leader Xi Jinping has talked about "Asia for Asians". It is a nice way of asking America to get out of Asia. But many Asian nations are afraid of a rising China and would rather have America stay as a balancing power. Recep Tayyip Erdogan sees himself as not just the leader of Turkey but the entire Muslim world. Few in the region are eager to cede that mantle to Erdogan.

Although Pakistan's Islamic internationalism is a wasting asset, Islamabad will find it hard to stop playing the card. Someday in the future though, Pakistan might yet recognise reconciliation with India will release its energies for a larger role in the Middle East, the Muslim world and beyond.

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



MANECK DAVAR

Breaker of the mould

The irrepressible life of Ram Jethmalani, who bent convention at every stage

ON RAM JETHMALANI'S departure to God's lounge, memories, dating four decades, crowd the mind. The early, heady days in the aftermath of the Emergency, an election fought hard resulting in victory; the failed Janata Party experiment, one more election won after the rebirth of the erstwhile Jana Sangh as the BJP; the loss to Sunil Dutt in the elections after Indira Gandhi's assassination, the only time I witnessed him alone and dejected; and, his son Mahesh's and my foray into legal journalism. And so the years passed by, with one battle after another. He was enriched by myriad experiences, political and legal, till his last few months when he lost the will to live. For a man who conquered life and triumphed over its every aspect, it was tragic to witness him in the winter of his life.

Ram Jethmalani defied and abhorred compartmentalisation. He was not just an eminent counsel practising at all levels of the Indian judiciary, from the magistrate's court to the Supreme Court, he was also an advocate of public causes and a politician of eminence. He wasn't just the country's best criminal lawyer, one you would trust with your life as so many of his clients undoubtedly did, but also a master of constitutional, civil and commercial law. His mastery over the Evidence Act was at par, if not better, than with the best in the world of international law practice. He was possessed of a gargantuan intellect, an elephantine memory, with the innate ability to seize

the moment in court. In that, he stood out amongst his distinguished contemporaries.

I was fortunate to witness a live example of his intellectual capacity. The Bombay High Court was seized of a complex company law matter. Ram had arrived in Delhi on Tuesday morning from Detroit and was on his legs in the Supreme Court for most of the day. In the evening, he was persuaded to appear the next morning in Mumbai. At 11 am, he strode into court and produced a masterly performance over the next three hours without recourse to a single piece of paper, resulting in a positive verdict.

He was, however, no pure practitioner of the law. To him, his proficiency in law and his reputation were stepping stones to a greater calling, that of working for the larger public good defined by his beliefs in the freedom of the individual and institutions, probity in public life and an unending battle against corruption in high places. His 10 questions to the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in this newspaper were legendary. The late prime minister compared him to a barking dog and his riposte was that he was a bulldog defending democratic processes, hence the questions day after day.

His political inclinations, of course, veered to the right. But he was steeped in the finest secular traditions, immersed in the Guru Granth Sahib and Sikhism, which he believed was his creed, as well as Urdu literature, a fine

synthesis of all cultures.

What also epitomised Jethmalani was his fierce courage and scant regard for his personal safety. His finest and defining moment may be his opposition to Indira Gandhi during the Emergency, appearing for political detainees and arguing for civil liberties, in the case of *ADM Jabalpur vs SS Shukla*, wherein the court held that Article 21 could be suspended during an Emergency threatening the very concept of Right to Life. The irrepressible Jethmalani had earlier addressed the local bar at Palakkad in Kerala, tearing into Mrs Gandhi and her dictatorial politics, and an arrest warrant was issued against him. He sought refuge in the US, attacking Mrs Gandhi's oppressive policies from foreign soil. It is now a matter of history that the Emergency was lifted and Jethmalani returned to contest and win the elections against H R Gokhale, the law minister, who was one of the architects of the Emergency.

But the greater test of his indomitable courage and one which was fraught with grave personal danger was his defence of the conspirators in Indira Gandhi's assassination, Kehar Singh and Balbir Singh. So tenaciously did he persevere through a tortuous legal process, that he managed the acquittal of Balbir Singh, with Kehar Singh not being so fortunate. Passions were high, he had to resign from the BJP, but so strong was his belief that every accused required the benefit of a

strong defence, that he sacrificed his fees and time for a cause he believed in. His espousal of the cause did not stop here. He firmly believed that the moderate Harcharan Singh Longowal held the key to a peaceful solution to the Punjab crisis and was instrumental in facilitating the Longowal-Rajiv Gandhi accord.

Jethmalani also defended IPS officer Simaranjit Singh Mann. Miffed at Mann's recalcitrance to follow the path laid down by him, Jethmalani called a press conference in his Harishchandra Mathur lane abode in Delhi, and denounced Mann as a lunatic, an act beyond intrepid in those times.

Jethmalani also possessed an extreme generosity of spirit, also of the intoxicating kind. He had tried to impress upon Morarji Desai the efficacy of his libations — each failed to convert the other. Jethmalani's home, hearth, bar and table were always open to his friends. Often, vehement disagreements would dissolve in the evening over a drink. He harboured no deep resentment against anybody. Towards the end, there was a rapprochement with even Arun Jaitley, due to the mediation of his son Mahesh. They buried their past differences, and ensured that in the twilight of their lives there were no regrets.

God made Jethmalani, then broke the mould.

The writer is chairman and managing director of Spenta Multimedia Pvt Ltd

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BOOST EXPORTS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'No half measures' (IE, September 16). It is essential that the government doesn't tax exports. That would improve exports, revive the economy and encourage investment. The government will also need to initiate the improvement of infrastructure facilities. It should carefully study the experience of European countries with the economic crisis.

Sanjay Chawla, Amritsar

SPARE THE WOMAN

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Births of a nation' (IE, September 16). The author is right in pointing out that women have to largely bear the burden of the shame in the narrative of non-participation in socio-economic activities. However, it should be noted that child-bearing, especially in India, is not the choice of the woman. The prime minister's call should not be seen in the context of some hypothetical nation-building project but used as an opportunity to grant women agency.

Animesh Mohan, Balia

MAKE ROADS SAFE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Let's talk safety' (IE, September 13). The hefty penalties under the Motor Vehicles Act can deter rash driving but the government must set up safe and adequate parking spaces in crowded places. Fines could increase the corruption in the

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

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

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traffic police department and people might hesitate to drive their own vehicles. To avoid such a possibility, many states have decided either not to implement the Act or implement it partially. The government must improve the quality of roads and repair flyovers to reduce traffic congestion. Road safety campaigns must be conducted regularly. The government must motivate the people to observe the traffic rules.

Sauro Dasgupta, Kolkata