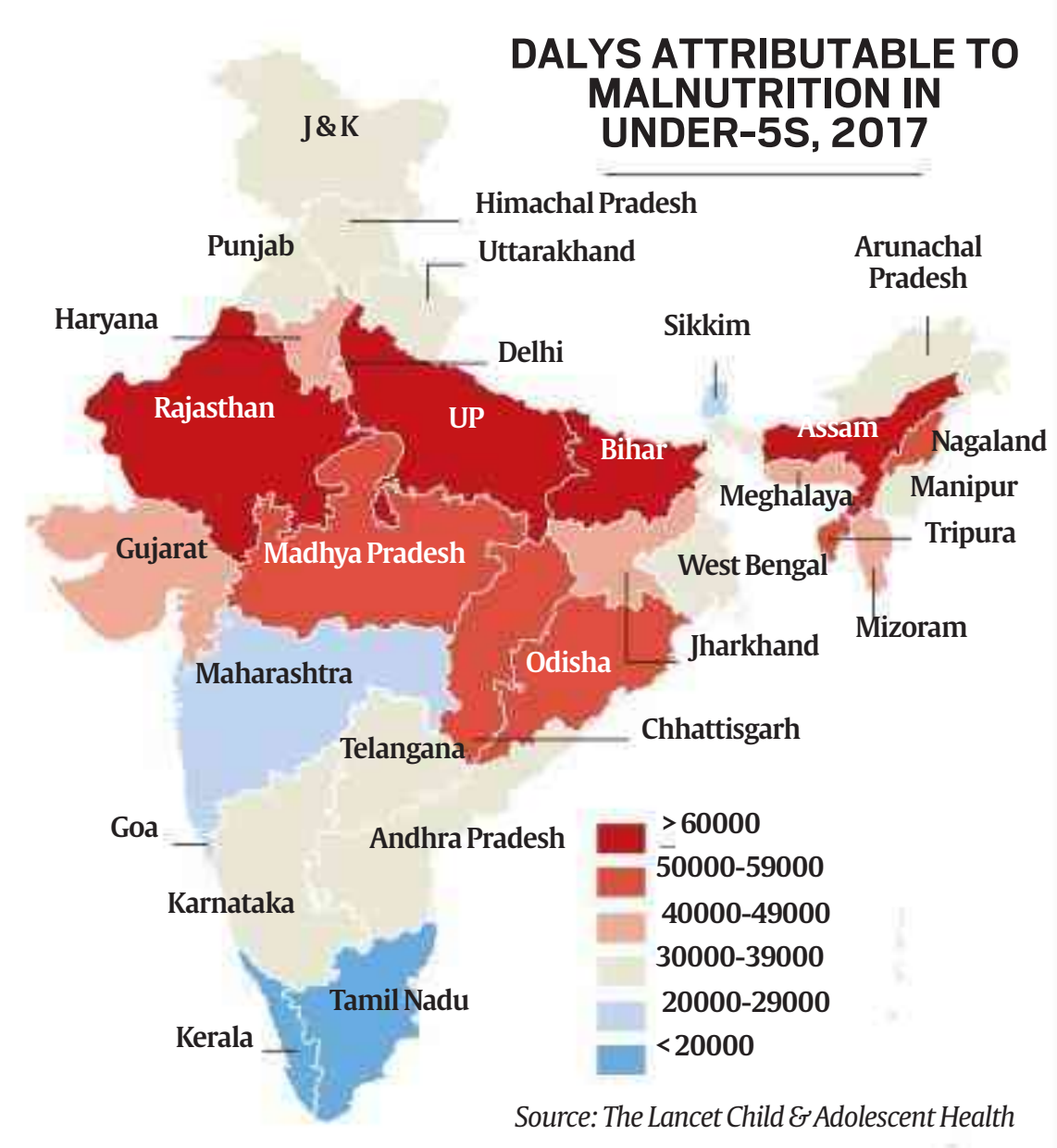


## TELLING NUMBERS

### The burden of malnutrition in under-5 children, state by state



A REPORT published Wednesday in *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health* gives comprehensive estimates of disease burden due to child and maternal malnutrition and the trends of its indicators in every state of India from 1990 to 2017. Key findings include:

The death rate attributable to malnutrition in under-5 children in India has dropped by two-thirds from 1990 to 2017. Malnutrition is, however, still the underlying risk factor for 68% of the deaths in under-five children in India.

The Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALY) rate attributable to malnutrition in children varies 7-fold among the states — a gap between a high of 74,782 in Uttar Pradesh and a low of 11,002 in Kerala. Other states with a high burden are Bihar, Assam and Rajasthan, followed by Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Nagaland and Tripura.

The proportion of under-5 deaths attributable to malnutrition, which is 68.2% across India, ranges between a high of 72.7% in Bihar and a low of 50.8% in Kerala. Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh are states with a high such proportion, while Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu, Mizoram and Goa have the lowest proportions of such deaths.

Among the malnutrition indicators, low birth weight is the largest contributor to child deaths in India, followed by child growth failure which includes stunting, underweight, and wasting.

**50,627**  
DALY (Disability-Adjusted Life Years) rate per lakh population of under-5s in India attributable to malnutrition, 2017

**HIGHEST 4**

Uttar Pradesh	74,782
Bihar	66,673
Assam	63,493
Rajasthan	61,574

**LOWEST 4**

Kerala	11,002
Tamil Nadu	17,275
Sikkim	22,732
Goa	25,764

**68.2%**  
Proportion of total under-5 deaths in India attributable to malnutrition, 2017

**HIGHEST 4**

Bihar	72.7%
Rajasthan	72.2%
Chhattisgarh	71.6%
Uttar Pradesh	68.6%

**LOWEST 4**

Kerala	50.8%
Meghalaya	59.1%
Tamil Nadu	59.8%
Mizoram, Goa	60.1%

**PROPORTION OF TOTAL DEATHS IN UNDER-5 ATTRIBUTABLE TO MALNUTRITION AND ITS COMPONENTS, 2017**

	BOYS	GIRLS	BOTH
Child & maternal malnutrition	69.1%	67.3%	68.2%
Low birth weight & short gestation	49.4%	42.7%	46.1%
Stunting, wasting, underweight	19.1%	23.7%	21.4%
Vitamin A deficiency	4.97%	5.62%	5.29%
Zinc deficiency	0.35%	0.48%	0.42%

## SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

# Why e-cigarettes bother govt

Production and sale have been made a punishable offence. How widespread is their use in India? What are the health concerns around such products, and how do they compare with traditional tobacco?

**PRABHA RAGHAVAN**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 18

ON WEDNESDAY, the Union Cabinet approved an ordinance prohibiting electronic cigarettes in the country. It makes production, manufacture, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage and advertisement of e-cigarettes and other Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) such as vapes, e-hookahs and e-cigs a punishable offence.

First-time offenders may face imprisonment of up to one year, a fine up to Rs 1 lakh, or both. Subsequent offences may lead to up to three years' imprisonment and Rs 5 lakh in fine, while those found storing e-cigarettes and other such ENDS products will face up to six months in prison and up to Rs 55,000 in fines, or both.

**What are e-cigarettes?**  
E-cigarettes are battery-powered devices that heat a solution of nicotine and different flavours to create aerosol, which is then inhaled. These devices belong to a category of vapour-based nicotine products called ENDS. E-cigarettes and other ENDS products may look like their traditional counterparts (regular cigarettes or cigars), but they also come in other shapes and sizes and can resemble daily use products, including pens and USB drives.

Several companies selling ENDS in India have positioned these products as a safer, less harmful alternative to traditional cigarettes or as devices that could help users quit smoking.

**What is the size of the e-cigarettes market in India?**  
India's vapour products market was nascent, but expected to experience rapid growth. It was valued at over \$15 million in 2017, according to analyst reports, and projected to grow nearly 60 per cent a year up to 2022. A recent study by Prescient and Strategic Intelligence showed that India's e-cigarette market was expected to reach \$45.3 million by 2024, growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of 26.4 per cent.

E-cigarettes are the most common type of ENDS, with over 460 different brands and more than 7,700 flavours marketed in India currently. Imports of e-cigarettes, their accessories and other ENDS products grew around 119 per cent from 2016-17 to 2018-19.

**Why does the government want to ban these devices?**  
The Health Ministry and Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation, India's drug



regulatory authority, had attempted in the past to ban the import and sale of these products citing public health concerns. Before the ordinance was announced, the government had been facing hurdles in the form of court cases against the move, as ENDS were not declared as 'drugs' in the country's drug regulations.

Health Ministry sources earlier told *The Indian Express* these products have neither been assessed for safety in the national population, nor been approved under provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. Yet, they have been widely available to consumers, one of them had said. Though some smokers have claimed to have cut down smoking while using ENDS, the total nicotine consumption seemed to remain "unchanged", according to the government.

In May 2019, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) released a white paper stating that the uses of ENDS, or e-cigarettes, have "documented adverse effects" which include DNA damage; carcinogenesis (initiation of cancer formation); cellular, molecular and immunological toxicity; respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological disorders. It also impacts foetal development and pregnancy, according to ICMR, which had recommended a "complete prohibition" of these products.

**Who gains?**  
The government feels its decision will help "protect the population, especially youth and children, from the risk of addiction through e-cigarettes". It says enforcement of the ordinance will complement its efforts to reduce tobacco use and, therefore, help in reducing the economic and disease

burden associated with it.

Apart from this, traditional tobacco firms, too, could potentially gain from the ban. Share prices of some tobacco firms listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange like ITC, VST Industries, Golden Tobacco and even Godfrey Phillips India, which has its own portfolio of e-cigarettes for the Indian market, rose as much as 9 per cent intra-day on Wednesday. A closer look at the shareholding pattern of these companies shows that the central government, too, has the potential to benefit financially from this move, with central and state-owned firms making notional gains of nearly Rs 1,000 crore on Wednesday.

**Does this mean traditional tobacco products are safer?**

Traditional tobacco products like cigarettes and chewing tobacco are already known to be harmful. According to the CDC in the US, cigarette smoking harms "nearly every organ of the body, causes many diseases, and reduces the health of smokers in general".

A study published in *The Lancet* found tobacco use was the "leading" risk factor for cancers in India in 2016. ICMR estimates that India is likely to face over 17 lakh new cancer cases and over eight lakh deaths by 2020. In 2018, India had nearly 27 crore tobacco users and a "substantial" number of people exposed to second-hand smoke, putting them at an increased risk for cardiovascular diseases, according to a fact sheet by the World Health Organization. Tobacco kills over 1 million people each year, contributing to 9.5 per cent of all deaths, it said.

## ELSEWHERE

**US:** Has the highest population of smokeless tobacco and vape-product users. Reports of over 400 hospitalisations and six deaths related to use of e-cigarette and vape uses. Plans to ban all e-cigarette flavours, except for tobacco.

**UK:** Says British vapers are safe, as the issues in the US are due to use of "illicit", street-bought or home-made vaping fluid. Sales of ENDS products like vapes are legal. Introduced regulations for e-cigarette firms in 2016.

**CHINA:** Hoses a third of the world's smokers. Has reportedly seen an increasing population of vapers, especially young people. Announced in July 2019 that it plans to regulate e-cigarettes to strengthen supervision of these products.

**FRANCE:** Allows sale of e-cigarettes as either medicines or consumer products, but those making health claims related to these products need marketing authorisation under standard drug licencing process. Those selling as consumer products are regulated by the country's May 2016 decree on vapour products containing nicotine.

**GERMANY:** Classifies nicotine-containing e-cigarettes as tobacco-related products and regulates it under country's 2016 law on Implementation of the Tobacco Products Directive and Related Products.

**JAPAN:** Non-nicotine e-cigarettes currently not regulated, but nicotine-containing e-cigarettes are classified as medicinal products and regulated under Japan's pharmaceutical affairs law.

Source: Johns Hopkins Institute for Global Tobacco Control, *The Guardian*, *The Jakarta Post*, CGTN

# In top UK court, powers of Parliament, PM

**YASHEE**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 18

SOMETIME SOON, possibly as early as Thursday evening, the Supreme Court of the UK will deliver judgment on the legality of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's suspension of Parliament just before the country is scheduled to leave the EU, with or without a Brexit deal.

Their verdict might also include answers to the question whether the PM "lied" to the Queen about his reasons for shutting down Parliament and, if he did, whether Britain's courts could do anything about it.

The hearings began on Tuesday and will go on until Thursday.

**An unusual prorogation**

Britain's Parliament has been suspended — or prorogued — since September 9, and MPs will return only on October 14. Prorogation is a routine process that happens every year for a few days, mostly in April-May. All legislative business stops, even though MPs continue to hold their seats. Parliament reassembles with the Queen's Speech, which lists the govern-

ment's agenda for the coming year.

The power of prorogation lies with the Queen, which she exercises, crucially, on the advice of only the PM. MPs do not have a say in the matter. The current prorogation is controversial because of two reasons.

One, instead of the usual few days, this one is 33 calendar days (and 24 working days) long — the longest prorogation since 1930-31. Data on the UK Parliament website show that from 1930-2017, the mean average break was about five calendar days; the median average was about four calendar days. For the period 1999-2017, these numbers were about 8 calendar days and five calendar days respectively.

Two, the timing. Britain is in the middle of a frantic, chaotic Brexit that has split the country like never before — and a suspended Parliament means MPs have very little time to influence the government's actions before the October 31 deadline to leave.

A "no deal Brexit" is unacceptable to a large number of MPs who want the deadline extended if a deal isn't reached by then; Johnson however, is adamant that he would rather be "dead in a ditch" than ask the EU for an extension.

**The legal challenge**

Johnson's critics allege that while he told the Queen, and the public at large, that the prorogation was routine, his real motive was to "prevent lawmakers from interfering" with the way he wants to go about Britain's EU exit.

The government announced its intention to prorogue Parliament on August 28, and activist-businesswoman Gina Miller, supported by others including former PM Sir John Major, went to court against the "unlawful abuse of power". On September 6, the high court in London dismissed the case, ruling that prorogation was a political matter in which it could not interfere.

However, on September 11, a Scottish appeal court in Edinburgh, ruling on a challenge by 75 MPs and peers from multiple parties, said that the power to prorogue must be used only for "proper purposes". The judges said Parliament had been prorogued "in a clandestine manner" for the "improper purpose" of stymieing "any further legislation regarding Brexit", and was "null and of no effect".

Appeals against both rulings are now before the Supreme Court. On Wednesday, the government lawyer submitted that the PM's

decision to send MPs home lay in "the territory of political judgment, not legal standards".

**The larger questions**

The historic hearing calls upon the Supreme Court to decide on the extent of the executive's powers vis-à-vis the legislature, even as the executive insists that an intervention would violate the "fundamental constitutional principle" of the separation of powers between and judiciary and the government.

Also, what the Scottish court described as the PM's "egregious" overreach has pulled Buckingham Palace into the Brexit mess that it had been carefully avoiding. Having her order suspending Parliament declared illegal by a court is uncomfortable and damaging for the Queen. Asked whether he had lied to her about the reason for the prorogation, the PM has said that he "absolutely" had not. But even if he had, and even if the Queen had been sceptical, she would have found it impossible to reject his advice, most commentators agree.

The Supreme Court ruling could end up deciding Johnson's political fate. It will also have a lasting impact on the working of British institutions, and the balance of power among them.

# Giving birth at 74: issues in debate around setting an age limit for IVF

**TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA**  
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 18

A 74-YEAR-OLD WOMAN from Andhra Pradesh was recently recorded as the oldest in the world to give birth to twins through in-vitro fertilisation or IVF. While her doctor has said both babies and mother are stable, the medical community has expressed ethical and medical concerns over conception at such an advanced age.

**Birth of the twins**

Erramatti Mangayamma, 74, visited Ahalya Nursing Home in 2018 after 57 years of marriage and multiple failed attempts to conceive. IVF expert Dr S Umashankar fertilised her husband E Raja Rao's sperm with a donor's eggs and placed them in her uterus. On September 5, she delivered twins through a caesarean procedure.

In 2016, Dajinder Kaur, 70, had delivered

a boy through IVF in Haryana. At the same Haryana clinic, a 66-year-old woman had delivered triplets in 2010.

**Why this is a concern**

The average life expectancy of an Indian woman is 70 and of a man 69, and the medical community has expressed concerns over future of children born to such an elderly couple. The very day after the delivery, the twins' father, 80, suffered a stroke.

"Medical technology has reached a stage where we can get even a 90-year-old pregnant. But we refuse; there are complications that can risk human life," IVF expert Nandita Palshetkar said.

Pregnancy in old age poses multiple risks — hypertension, diabetes, convulsions, bleeding, and cardiac complications to name a few. Dr Ashok Anand, head of the gynaecology department in Mumbai's JJ Hospital, said the womb of an older woman has to be prepared by injecting hormones



for the foetus to grow for nine months. Also, a woman of that age cannot breastfeed.

**Can a doctor face action?**

The Indian Society for Assisted Reproduction (ISAR) issued a notice to Dr Umashankar after he delivered Mangayamma's twins. In response, he deregistered himself from ISA. "Internationally this preg-

nancy is being condemned. Everything could have gone wrong. It sets a wrong precedent," Dr Jaideep Malhotra, president of ISAR, said.

Several experts have demanded punitive action, saying the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) should deregister his Andhra Pradesh centre. But with no law in place — a Bill is pending — the assisted reproductive technology (ART) industry continues to operate in a grey zone.

In 2005, when ICMR drafted guidelines for ART, it had not set an age limit keeping in mind that reproductive rights were a fundamental right for a woman.

"We amended the guidelines after an elderly woman in Haryana gave birth through IVF. Since the Bill on ART has not been passed yet, legal action against such clinics is impossible. We expect ART clinics to self-regulate," said R S Sharma, scientist at ICMR. He said ICMR is considering issuing a notice to the clinic for indulging in an unethical practice.

**In the absence of a law**

Globally, an estimated 15% of couples are infertile. The Assisted Reproductive Technologies (Regulation) Bill, 2010, states that in the Indian social context, children are "old-age insurance". The Bill proposes the upper age limit at 45 for women and 50 for men to undergo the IVF procedure. As of now, several centres rely on ICMR's 2017 guidelines that recommend the same age limits. Even for adoption, the total age of the couple must not exceed 110 years.

With increasing life expectancy, doctors are in talks with the government to increase the IVF age limit to 50-52 years for women. Until then, several experts self-regulate, some counsel senior citizens to drop the idea, and others refuse them IVF treatment.

**The counter-view**

Societal pressure to have children, the fear of living without support in old age, and the loss of an only child often encourage

couples. "A lot of couples tell us they want an heir to pass their life's earnings to," said Meerut-based IVF expert Sunil Jindal, who conducted IVF for a 52-year-old woman who had lost her son.

Some doctors argue that childbirth is a personal decision and each individual has the right to make that choice after counselling.

Still, a doctor has to conduct tests for the heart, bone structure, diabetes, blood pressure to judge the feasibility of pregnancy. At JJ Hospital, a 60-year-old woman was recently found medically fit to conceive.

**Laws in other countries**

Most countries that have a law range the upper limit for IVF between 40 and 50 years. In the US, the upper limit for IVF is 50, and for ovum donation, 45. In Australia, guidelines prohibit IVF beyond menopause (52 years). In the UK, 42 is the age limit for women to seek free insurance under National Health Service. In Canada, the age limit is 43.





## The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## THE ELEPHANT TRAP

BSP's loss of legislators in Rajasthan is a sign of its failure to emerge as a pan-Indian party with stakes in government

**T**HE DECISION OF all six members of the BSP legislature party in Rajasthan to join the Congress has Mayawati hopping mad at the latter. The BSP supremo has described the development "a betrayal of the BSP movement, at a time when the BSP was giving unconditional support to the Congress government from outside". She has gone on to describe the Congress as a party that is "against SCs, STs, OBCs and has never been sincere and honest about the right to reservation of these classes" and always "opposed to B R Ambedkar and his humanitarian ideology". Outlined in her terse and hurt response is a potted history of the tense relationship the Ambedkarite movement has had with the Congress and the contradictions that define the BSP's movement character and its electoral compulsions.

This is not the first time the BSP has lost sitting legislators to other parties — BSP MLAs in Rajasthan had crossed over to the Congress in 2009 and helped the latter gain simple majority in the House. The situation is similar this time — the Congress will cross the half-way mark with the entry of BSP legislators. The BSP's inability to hold on to its legislators outside UP may have to do with the party's own leadership structure and not just the purchasing power of its rivals. Many BSP MLAs win elections on the strength of the party also being a socio-political movement. However, these legislators rarely get to partake of the fruits of office since the BSP is averse to coalitions — the central leadership is wary of allowing its state leaders to join government and build influence. Parties born out of the Ambedkarite movement have historically competed with the Congress for Dalit votes and the BSP too sees the party as a political rival and refuses to align with it. The centralisation of power in Mayawati and her failure to build broader social alliances outside UP has stymied the party's growth. Besides, the BJP too has been on an aggressive outreach for the Dalit vote. Surely, Mayawati needs to reflect why her party is on the decline even when the Dalit community across the country is getting radicalised.

The BSP's plight also reflects a crisis that most smaller parties in the country seem to be confronting, especially since 2014. The BJP under Narendra Modi and Amit Shah has established itself as the dominant pole of Indian politics. The Congress has held on as the opposite pole in some states. The multi-polar character of the polity, that emerged in the 1980s, seems to be unravelling in most parts of the country and the emerging scenario is forcing local leaders to align with parties in pole position to stay afloat. The BSP may need to rethink its electoral strategy and go for tactical alliances if it wants to survive the present phase.

## JUST NOT CRICKET

BCCI should crack down on corruption at all levels urgently lest the game loses its credibility in the eyes of fans

**I**RONY IS SQUATTING on Indian cricket's central square. As the Supreme Court mandated Committee of Administrators, that came into existence because of the 2013 IPL spot-fixing crisis, was readying to hold BCCI elections and take the exit door, the stink of another corruption controversy has hit the air. The latest shenanigans, first reported by this newspaper, revealed that fixers and bookmakers haven't just survived the checks and balances put in place by several probe panels post-2013, but they have continued to thrive. Investigation by BCCI's Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) shows the deep infiltration of the shady sharks in the Tamil Nadu Premier League (TNPL), a T20 tournament featuring top international cricketers. Grievously, it also divulged how fixers with links to seedy betting syndicate had evolved — they no longer hunt and hire players, they now take control of teams and have plans in place to compromise and manipulate the entire league. With most T20 state leagues attracting the cream of grass roots talent, the proximity of the unscrupulous and impressionable was worryingly unhealthy for the country's most popular game.

As has been with most cricket corruption cases in the past, the administrators haven't come out shining in dealing with the muck. Predictably, their first reaction has been to draw the curtains, shut the windows, bolt the door; thus suffocating transparency. It was only after the media reports about the ACU findings surfaced, the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) revealed that an internal probe panel was already in place to investigate the scandal. Keeping the most important stake-holders, the fans, informed about the modern game's ugly truth has never suited the Indian cricket administrators. Over the years, one of the biggest reasons for the establishment to continue to remain silent over the corruption issue was the hypocritical concern that if big names are revealed, the faithfuls would turn their back and the game would tumble. Historically, they are paranoid that the golden goose would be cooked forever. The rationale doesn't hold up to close scrutiny. It's naive to suggest that fans would continue to support a game that they suspect is filled with crooked elements rather than have it all cleaned.

The CoA too hasn't been pro-active in this moment of crisis. The nation of a billion fans — those who fill stands around the world and keep the imperial-era game survive — deserve better. The cricket administrators need to understand that the seed of doubt about a cricket game controlled by fixers — even an inconsequential TNCA match at a cricket outpost — is a big blow to the sport's overall credibility.

## THE GREAT ESCAPE

Lakshmi's story features abiding love, flight across a great river and a manhunt. Someday, the movie will be made

**H**OW DO YOU hide an elephant? You put it in a room full of people who would refuse to see it. Everyone knows that already. But what if you are in the great open spaces? You hide it in plain sight. Lakshmi, Delhi's last elephant, had been hidden by her mahout for two months in the floodplain of the Yamuna river. She has now been rescued, and the hunt is on for her mahout Yusuf Ali and his sons, who had ridden Lakshmi across the river to escape police and forest officials out to liberate her. Her story has the makings of a movie set in the badlands.

The Yamuna plain near the Income Tax Office was once home to several elephants, who were hired for the weddings and festivals of the rich and infamous of the capital. But following a court order which found Delhi insalubrious for elephants, they were relocated to more suitable habitats in other states, and liberated from the drudgery of work. Lakshmi was the last to go, and she went in style, taking her human family with her across the water, and leaving the police no trail they could pick up.

Where does an animal hide most successfully? In its natural habitat. Moths hide best on tree bark, leopards in lantana. The Yamuna floodplain, with its tall grass, is an elephant's natural habitat, where Lakshmi stayed invisible for two months, in the heart of one of the world's most crowded cities. The logistical exercise of keeping her fed must have been a staggering challenge, though. The mahout must be admired for managing that, though sadly, his arrest for impeding justice is imminent. Elephants must obviously be returned to the wild, but our lives have been intertwined with theirs for millennia, and sometimes, parting could be difficult.

# Grass roots reformer

B N Yugandhar played a pioneering role in turning the attention of administration to local level institutions



YOGINDER K ALAGH

**B N YUGANDHAR**, who passed away last week, was perhaps one of the few remaining "nationalist" policy reformers. He was part of a gang that constantly searched for and pushed an Indian agenda for globalisation and domestic reform. These reformers set the agenda in the Eighties — the decade which saw a remarkable spurt in growth in the last century. This was falsely labelled as unsustainable by a successor regime. At any rate, the strategy lost out to the Washington Consensus reformers in the last two decades (Manmohan Singh and the current set of policy makers). So, Yugandhar, and others of his ilk, turned their attention towards strengthening local and community institutions.

In the late Seventies, Yugandhar was private secretary to P N Haksar. We were in the Planning Commission, Haksar's three musketeers — me, Nitin Desai and Vijay Kelkar; at times, YV Reddy, then in the finance ministry, and Arjun Sengupta, then in the commerce ministry, would join us and we would have *adda* in my office during lunch or in Yugandhar's office over Yojana Bhavan's famous coffee. Yugandhar would regale us with Hyderabad stories — still relevant given the goings on in Andhra politics. In the morning, a score or more MLAs would be cursing some "rebel" but by evening the rebel leader was a hero.

Then there was one Reddy, a minister with leftist leanings, who went to a North Bihar district accompanied by Yugandhar and the collector took them to meet some "bonded labourers". The minister told them that the "sarkar" had decided they were free (the 20 Point Programme). But they said, "Their sarkar (the local zamindar) had not heard of such freedom".

Yugandhar then went to Mussoorie for his first stint at the Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy of Administration (LBSAA). We would often help him in "basic needs" planning. His next posting was at ESCAP at

Bangkok; he would call us there, ostensibly to discuss Indian planning, but Yugandhar's agenda was to acquaint Indian policy-makers with the rural reforms in Korea and East Asia.

After returning home, Yugandhar started his major programme of producing a manual on district planning. His deputy there knew me since as a collector, he had accompanied me during a trip from Bangalore to Mangalore. We would sometimes go to a village and he would show me a local project, say, a tank being desilted by local people — in that part of the country, even the sculptures around the tank were beautiful. But they never took any official help in all this. I would acquaint Yugandhar's deputy with the Central scheme that could help him in his endeavours. He wrote a training paper on bottom-up planning — this talked of the district collector and planners joining hands with the local leadership. Yugandhar asked his deputy to draft a training manual based on that paper.

He came back to Delhi as secretary, rural development with additional charge of panchayat raj. Yugandhar was instrumental in integrating the small farmer and landless labourers' project into the district plan and insisted on the finance ministry giving it a free fund, albeit of a limited nature for local priority projects. His aim was to make local planning an operating system with some resources of its own. In his stint at the PMO, Yugandhar supported all this.

He was constantly innovating and yet never lost his sense of humour on the frailties of his compatriots. Yugandhar was instrumental in telling the PM to send me to mediate one of the Cauvery disputes. Apart from resolving the immediate problem, I also suggested that the riparian states use a formula devised to resolve the conflict over the Mekong basin as a dispute resolution mechanism. In one of these visits, the chief minister, who had a royal lineage, gifted me a watch. I handed it over to the

PMO. Two weeks later, my wife said, "Yugandhar wants to have breakfast with us". He came and told her he wanted to gift her that watch, because as per rules if you pay 25 per cent, you can keep the gift. Yugandhar got the watch valued. But it was worth lakhs. So, there was no question of keeping it. Both of us never forgave that politician for trying to bribe me and would fondly recollect that story while talking about the venal practices in our political system.

After retirement, Yugandhar made a major contribution to the orientation of the Indian administrative system, through, what is called the Bopal Declaration. At Bopal, near Ahmedabad, scholar and ex-bureaucrat Anil Shah had set up an NGO, Development Support Centre, to train local leaders. DSC got some of us together and along with Yugandhar, we framed a set of eight guidelines for government institutions to support community organisations engaged in sustainable development at the local level. This included annual elections, training local leaders, providing technical support, setting up procedures for financial probity, including auditing accounts, and instituting mechanisms to involve the landless poor.

Yugandhar was busy as long as his legs and lungs, devastated by cigarette smoking, would allow. He would travel to Anand to help IRMA to develop its State of Panchayati Raj reports. He would stand by the youngsters who would go to villages and report on misappropriation of funds meant for the poor and exploitation of landless labourers and Dalits and Adivasis. He admonished bureaucrats of a later generation, who would paper over such reports.

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The writer, a former Union minister, is an economist



NARAYANI GUPTA

"THIS WILL BE the finest ruin of them all."

That was Georges Clemenceau, French prime minister, in 1920. Weary from the War and the long drawn-out peace settlement, he was on a visit to India to shoot tigers, and was shown the Indian Viceroy's House and the secretariats, on which construction had been resumed after a gap of many years. A century later, plans are afoot to fulfill his prophecy.

Twenty first-century India will be written about as "The Age of Replacement". First road-names, then institutions, then actual buildings. The Hall of Nations was the beginning.

The present proposal follows the reinvention of the Mughals' Chandni Chowk. But compare the two situations. Chandni Chowk is three-and-a-half centuries old. Its width has narrowed, the central canal has been buried, trees cut, and pedestrians and animal-powered transport have been edged out by motorised vehicles. The plan now being carried through means that pedestrians will be able to walk with confidence and sense of security. If the plans for Rajpath come to pass, the pedestrians will lose their space. Ice-cream at India Gate? More likely security guards and concertina wire. Boating in the water-channels? Try Purana Qila instead. Jamun trees with purple carpets — oh wait, they say they won't cut the trees. Or will they do what the Ministry of Environment and Forests did in Jor Bagh, where full-grown trees were axed by night? The micro-climate that Lutyens created

## THE AGE OF REPLACEMENT

The proposed reinvention of Delhi, ironically, bears affinity to colonial thinking

for an arid area, with stretches of water, sculpted fountains and carefully-chosen evergreen jamuns, will be a thing of the past as much as the trees and the canal in Chandni Chowk. That was done by a jittery colonial regime after an attempt to assassinate Viceroy Hardinge in Chandni Chowk, this is planned by a regime comfortably in power.

The British were moving their officials (the need for a parliament did not come up till 1919) to a peaceful island, cocooned against organised protests by lawn and forest (equally in Shimla in summer and New Delhi in winter). Independent India gradually moved back to that aloofness, by shifting demonstrations away from the Boat Club, and by making the beautiful open spaces of the Secretariat buildings out of bounds. The Secretariat complex is a striking skyline, but sauntering is discouraged. The people's space is the long stretch of green below, the water-channels, and India Gate.

Not only the Secretariat complex but the people's space is now under threat. The decision is to build anew by destroying what there is: "A new Master Plan is to be drawn up for the entire Central Vista area that represents the values and aspirations of a New India — good governance, efficiency, transparency, accountability and equity and is rooted in the Indian culture and social milieu." I wonder how new buildings will ensure virtues which should have been inculcated in the young civil servants and Mussoorie. "Efficiency, accountability and

equity" are obviously attained more effectively by building gigantic convention centres and offices (and statues) than by providing ration-cards for the poor, and working to end the unremitting deaths of children from malnutrition (after all, they are not yet voters, not yet the "New India" with "values and aspirations").

Someone has obviously gone back to the brief given in 1912. The Ministry's statement says: "We are looking at firms, national or international, based in India so that they understand architectural styles prevalent in India". The ghost of Lutyens will smile, recalling 1912, when the Viceroy sent him on a tour to understand the styles of architecture which had been prevalent in India! "Had been", because there were no individual Indian architects then. That explained Baker's *chhatris* and Lutyens' Sanchi-like dome. Taken together with that anxious reference to "Indian Culture" (I cannot get my head round the reference to the "social milieu"), I expect we are looking for an Indo-Saracenic-Modernist-Brutalist-Burj Dubai concoction.

This kind of once-in-a-century project should be discussed at the national level, not by tendering. We were caught napping when the cactus-forest of New Kidwai Nagar sprouted, and Pragati Maidan died. Now we are about to see a New Sachivalaya. Could Dilliwalas please wake up and be alert to what is happening to their city?

The writer is a historian of Delhi



## SEPTEMBER 19, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

### TARAKI KILLED

THE FORMER AFGHAN president, Nur Mohammed Taraki, died in a Kabul hospital of bullet wounds sustained in a gun battle in the presidential palace last Friday, Radio Pakistan said, quoting reports from Kabul. According to these reports, some 50 to 60 persons were killed in the gun battle. It was stated to have taken place at a meeting of the Afghan Revolutionary Council. Taraki, 62, became president in April last year after ousting the Daoud government. Radio Pakistan reported that portraits of Taraki, which once adorned nearly every shop and office in the Afghan capital, have disappeared from public places, according to AP.

### NO ELECTION DELAY

PRIME MINISTER CHARAN Singh scotched rumours of a postponement of the December elections and said that left to himself, he would have had the poll in November this year. In an informal chat with newsmen, he said that according to the programme visualised by the Election Commission, the Lok Sabha poll would be held either in the latter half of December or in the first week of January 1980. Singh said, "Politicians who are spreading these rumours are evidently reluctant to face the people. Or, they are planning to create some confusion in the country to make the holding of a poll impossible."

### AUCTIONING JEWELS'

AN APPLICATION URGING that 37 pieces of the Nizam jewellery, due to be auctioned on September 20 should not be allowed to be taken out of the country will come up before the Supreme Court. The application has been filed by former Member of Parliament, Kanwar Lal Gupta. The matter was listed after N M Ghatate, counsel for Gupta, mentioned it before Chief Justice YV Chandrachud and Justice N L Untawala. The 37 pieces of jewellery are to be auctioned on September 23 following an order of the Supreme Court on a petition arising out of claims by two rival bidders for the jewellery.



# 15 THE IDEAS PAGE

## A frozen map, a diplomatic opening

New Delhi's unilateral actions over the status of Jammu and Kashmir provide an opportunity to revisit the four-point plan for Kashmir. The first step must be to lift restrictions in Valley



NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN

OVER THE FIVE weeks since August 5, the day the government revoked the special status of Jammu & Kashmir, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has talked up the threat of nuclear war in South Asia. It may be his way of getting the world to condemn the big changes that India has wrought in the relations between Delhi and J&K, but it is war talk nevertheless.

As well, several times since August 5, there is a growing clamour in India that the government's next mission must be to wrest back Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. *PokBanagIndia* is a trending hashtag. The country's most powerful have encouraged the clamour. Most recently, it was External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar who said that India expects to have control over parts of J&K that are on the other side of the LoC.

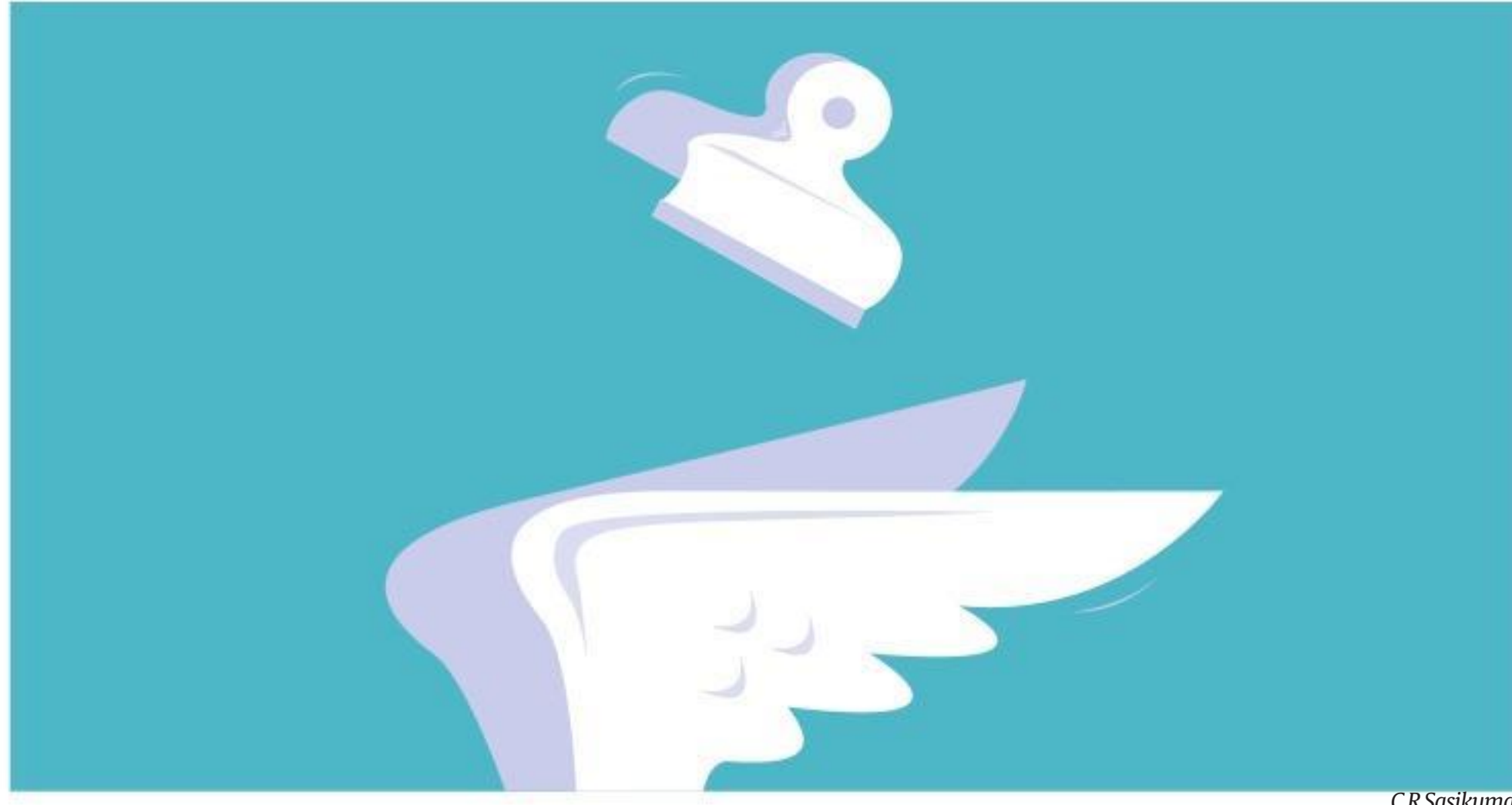
What lies across? *PoK* is an area of 13,297 sq km, which was under the control of the Pakistani forces when the ceasefire line came into effect on January 1, 1949. That was after a 14-month period of hostilities between India and Pakistan, which began with an invasion of Kashmir by Pashtun tribesmen and later, the Pakistan army to seize Kashmir. It has a population of over 40 lakh, according to the 2017 census, and is divided into 10 districts. In 1963, through an agreement, Pakistan ceded to China over 5,000 sq km of J&K land under its control, in the Shaksgam area, in northern Kashmir, beyond the Karakoram.

Then there is Gilgit Baltistan. The British sold it along with the rest of Kashmir to the Dogra ruler of Jammu, Gulab Singh, after defeating the Sikh army in 1846, but controlled the area through a lease from the Maharajah. The last renewal of the lease was in 1935. In 1947, a British army officer of the rank of a colonel imprisoned Maharaja Hari Singh's Governor in the region and handed over the area for accession to Pakistan. Spread over 72,871 sq km, it is five-and-a-half times the size of *PoK*, and with just under 20 lakh people, sparsely populated.

Though both *PoK* and G-B are ruled directly from Islamabad, officially they are not listed as the territory of Pakistan, which has just four provinces. *PoK* and G-B are "autonomous territories". Pakistan has kept this fiction going, as incorporating them into its own map would affect its international position in the UN and elsewhere that the entire J&K is "disputed". For India, on the other hand, as per a resolution passed by Parliament in 1994, *PoK* and GB are a part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, which is an integral part of India by virtue of its accession to it in 1947.

But forget Pakistan, think objectively and ask yourself — is there a snowball's chance in hell that India is going to get back any land ceded to China by Pakistan? It is as unlikely as India rolling back its decision on the withdrawal of special status to J&K, under pressure from Kashmiris, or Imran Khan's fulminations or even the whole world.

So does that mean India and Pakistan are destined for a forever hostility fuelled by ex-



CR Sasikumar

pedient statements of politicians and the certitudes of TV studio types?

It is not inevitable, nor desirable, but first, it will need us to confront our own rhetoric. Despite the periodically renewed commitments to Kashmir as the "jugular vein" in Pakistan and "atoot ang" in India, the ruling elites on both sides know, and have known at least for the four decades since the Simla Agreement, that there isn't going to be a hand over of territory by any party, China included, to the other. If it does, it means hostility in the region for ever. Moreover, do we really want to add 60 lakh more disaffected people to the Union? We want colonies? Despite what Indians are being led to believe nightly by so-called experts, most people of GB in fact want to become fully part of Pakistan ASAP, and *PoK* has no desire at all to become part of India. August 5, though, has provided an improbable opening for finding peace.

Much has been written on how the revocation of special status to J&K has solidified India's hold over the part of J&K on its side of the LoC. And that in doing so, it may have, even if unwittingly, taken a step towards joining the dotted lines of the LoC. What if Pakistan were to just go ahead and do the same — make GB and *PoK* its fifth and sixth provinces? Sure, it would undermine its international position on Kashmir, but no one is listening to Pakistan anyway. It might also elicit hysteria in India, much like the Indian actions have provoked in Pakistan.

But eventually and desirably, the two sides may simply move on, because that is what the leadership on both sides have secretly desired all this time without having the courage to say it out loud. Having an international boundary, instead of an LoC, between the two countries would make war, or even the thought of it, that much more difficult. There was a missed opportunity in 1972. It could have all been wrapped up when India and Pakistan arrived at the Simla Agreement. Perhaps the time has finally come.

But that still leaves out the Kashmiris. Should two nations, especially one that calls itself the world's biggest democracy, agree to the divvying up of a territory without thought to the people who live there? The people of Kashmir have long demanded a seat at the table with India and Pakistan, for a say in the

shaping of their own destiny. India does not recognise this demand, and underlined that rejection in the very manner in which the August 5 decisions were unrolled. A communication blockade is now in its 45th day. No influential Kashmiri voice has been allowed to speak on the far reaching decisions of the Centre. Kashmiris feel robbed of all agency. It makes their "integration" with India more difficult than before.

By unilaterally taking that first step towards freezing the map, India has given this plan another chance. Irrespective of what Imran Khan says, he and his army know that war with India is not a good idea, and a proxy war even worse. At this point — not unlike a 1971 moment for Pakistan — if India wishes to salvage something of its own credibility as the world's largest democracy, it should first roll back all the restrictions imposed in J&K, free all political prisoners, restore communications and other rights of people. Then it should then signal its readiness for talks with Pakistan along the lines of the only plan for a *modus vivendi* acceptable to Pakistan, India and the people of J&K, and on which, counter-intuitively speaking, Delhi has already made the first move.

The people of Kashmir have long demanded a seat at the table with India and Pakistan, for a say in the shaping of their own destiny. India does not recognise this demand, and underlined that rejection in the very manner in which the August 5 decisions were unrolled. A communication blockade is now in its 45th day. No influential Kashmiri voice has been allowed to speak on the far reaching decisions of the Centre. Kashmiris feel robbed of all agency. It makes their 'integration' with India more difficult than before.

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nirupama.subramanian@expressindia.com

### WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"India has a written constitution and a parliamentary democracy. Yet Mr Modi has shown how constitutional politics can be subordinated to a single leader via manipulation and theatre." — THE GUARDIAN

## For the demographic dividend

Focusing on health, education of women will bring down population, increase work participation



AMITABH KUNDU

THE WORLD POPULATION Prospects 2019 has reported that India's total fertility rate (TFR) has declined from 5.9 in early Sixties to 2.4 to 2010-15. TFR is defined as the total number of children to be born to women in her lifetime by the current age specific fertility rates. By 2025-30, it will fall to 2.1, sliding further to 1.9 during 2045-50. As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), India's TFR declined from 2.7 in 2005-6 to 2.2 in 2015-16. When the TFR touches 2.1, which is called replacement fertility level, we can say that the population is getting stabilised, subject to the momentum factor. India's population was predicted to peak at 1.7 billion in 2060, declining to 1.5 billion by 2100. The faster decline in TFR, as reported by NFHS, suggests that these can happen much earlier than predicted. Thus, there seems to be no reason for panic in the context of the demographic trends.

The increased acceptance of contraceptives is just one of the factors for the decline of TFR. Data from various NFHS rounds do not show a significant increase in contraceptive practices by married women. The percentage of women using modern contraceptive methods too has not increased much. This was the case between 2005-6 and 2015-16 as well — the period recorded a high decline in TFR. The main factor which led to this significant decline is the rise in the age of marriage. The NFHS 2015-16 records that among married women in 20-24 age group, persons who were either pregnant or had a baby at or before the age of 18, declined from 48 per cent in 2005-06 to 21 per cent in 2015-16. The country has this demographic advantage primarily due to an increase in the age at the first child birth. No increase being reported in contraceptive use is understandably due partly to the increase in the age of marriage, as younger couples are more likely to opt for these methods than older ones.

The decline in TFR would lead to reduction in the dependency rate. A reduction in the share of children and an increase in the adult population are important for achieving a high rate of economic growth since it will lead to an increase in the percentage of the working population. India is expected to grow at least 6.5-7.5 per cent per annum in the coming three decades, as per the predictions of the Asian Development Bank. This record growth can be achieved largely due to a demographic dividend and other structural factors, the present economic crisis notwithstanding.

The scenario of high income growth in India is critically dependent on the increase in the work participation rate and skill development. In order to achieve the predicted growth rate, an increase in the percentage of women participating in the workforce is a must. Despite the declining trend in the percentage of working women, the trend of sharp decline in TFR and rise

in age of marriage suggest that this is feasible. A sharp rise in migration of women for employment reasons further corroborates this point.

The high level of poverty and illiteracy among the Muslim community explains its larger "desired number of children", than other communities. The situation, however, is changing dramatically. In 2005-6, the TFR for Muslims was 3.4 which fell to 2.6 in 2015-16, a decline of 0.8 percentage points. For the Hindus, TFR declined from 2.6 in 2005-06 to 2.1 in 2015-16 — a fall of 0.5 points. The fall for Christians and Sikhs was just 0.3 percentage points. This is due to improvement in education status and benefits of economic development and modernity reaching the marginalised communities. Clearly, the acceptance of non-terminal and spacing methods of family planning have gone up among Muslim women, although terminal methods such as sterilisation are not very popular. Primary health and education has played an important role in bringing down their TFR. The decline, as a result of spread of primary education, is universal but the impact is higher for Muslim women, as revealed through NFHS data.

The lower rate of school attendance and less years spent in schools by Muslims is due to poverty, as young boys enter the labour market very early. Girls drop-out of schools due to traditional and cultural factors, besides the need to take care of young siblings. There are pointers towards exclusionary socio-economic trends.

The labour market scenario is changing fast with modern ideas seeping into the communities, bringing about attitudinal changes. More Muslim girls/women are entering schools and colleges as well as the labour market. The fact that educated Muslim women report very high unemployment rate is an evidence that the societal norms have been relaxed, permitting many more of them to seek jobs than the capacity of the labour market to absorb.

Historically, Muslims have fared worse in education than other communities. In pre-Partition days, their literacy rate was higher than those of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This changed during partition as many educated Muslims opted to move to Pakistan. Over the past seven decades, Muslim literacy has increased sluggishly. During the past decades, SCs/STs have benefited due to reservations and scholarships. Muslims did not have this advantage.

Policy-making in India has in recent decades been generally neutral to data and research. However, in matters of demography, particularly while prescribing strong punitive measures for having large families, decisions must be taken based on rigorous analysis of the data to avoid a China type crisis. There has been talk of measures to control population, independent of caste and community considerations. However, most of the "target districts" recording TFR above 3.5 have a large Muslim population. It would be important to promote health and education in these districts, focusing on women, to bring down population growth effectively and increase work participation, needed for realisation of the demographic dividend.

The writer is Distinguished Fellow at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### MISLEADING TITLE

THE TITLE THAT you have given to our article ('Spend to grow', IE, September 17) may be a bit misleading. What we had advocated was that any increase in government expenditures must be in the form of capital expenditures. We had recognised the limited fiscal space that is available. In this context, we had suggested three things. First is to take advantage of "escape" clause in the Amended FRBM Act to take fiscal deficit to 3.5 percent of GDP. The second is to get state governments on board to find out additional space and third public sector enterprises may be requested to increase their capital expenditures. We are aware of the damage that can be caused by unrestrained fiscal expansion. This we think is also the message of D Subbarao's article ('Austerity to grow', IE, September 18).

C Rangarajan, D K Srivastava, via email

#### MASSIVE BLUNDER

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Identity fixation' (IE, Septmeber 18). Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar is using the NRC as a propaganda tool, hoping perhaps to stoke some embers before elections. The aim seems to be to manipulate the emotions of the general public to benefit further a particular political agenda. Moreover, if Khattar brings the NRC to Haryana, it will be a massive blunder. The whole country has witnessed the trauma of people residing in Assam.

Ridhi Jain, New Delhi

#### 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

#### GOA MODEL

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Not in the spirit of the Constitution' (IE, September 18). The Goa civil code was enacted in a very different era, under extraordinary circumstances. The same is the case with multiple personal laws. The idea is not to emulate their family laws in letter and spirit but to take inspiration from the fact that a uniform civil code can successfully function over a diverse group of people.

Sudip Kumar Dey, Kolkata



KAPIL SIBAL

## Changing times

The musclemen of new India are crushing old values

I YEARN FOR the days when political giants spoke in measured tones, dialogues were bereft of angst, and opponents tried to understand and respect the other's point of view. I yearn for the days when there was no fear of the taxman breathing down our necks on a daily basis and when institutions were sensitive to people's concerns. I yearn for the day when I could live a life unhassled by the blood bath on television channels, and gory stories of rape and murder in print did not accompany our morning cups of tea.

I wonder when things will change. Ever since Arvind Kejriwal, on the shoulders of Anna Hazare, crossed the "Lakshman Rekha" by including vitriol and abuse in ordinary public discourse, there has been a qualitative change in the nature of interactions within civil society. In all walks of life, those seeking obedience from others are confident that those in power will be by their side: If you do not say "Jai Shri Ram", for instance, you may be flogged or lynched. Society has become far more unstable in its dealings. Otherwise, Tabrez Ansari, who bled to death with a cracked skull, could have been saved. I also cannot imagine why a professional, aware of his injuries, opined that Tabrez died of a heart attack. Professionals, too, are perceived to have lost their moorings. The alacrity with which they support those responsible for violence because they happen to represent a

particular mindset, has become the norm. If not, why would Pehlu Khan and Mohammad Akhlaq not get justice?

Why would the court, especially the highest court of the land which has a legacy of protecting the fundamental rights of ordinary citizens, curtail those rights with interim orders? When a leader of a political party, Sitaram Yechury, sought permission to go to Kashmir to enquire about the health of a party colleague, the permission came with a condition: That Yechury's dialogue with his colleague will be limited to enquiring about his health and that he would, upon return, file an affidavit in the Supreme Court. It is difficult to discover the legal justification for such a judicial order. Perhaps, the SC believed that its power under Article 142 can be exercised suo-motu to curtail the most fundamental right of all rights — freedom of speech.

Clearly, societal norms have changed. The state is convinced that it can deal with its citizens in the manner that it wishes — no institution will stand in the way. The bureaucracy facilitates that process. Those charged with the responsibility to give independent advice convert themselves into instruments that will do the bidding of their political masters — at times they even feed these masters ideas to serve them politically. The chosen few in the bureaucracy have become choir boys of the political class. Yet, they are not

alone in this.

Enforcers of the law, instead of discovering facts, manufacture them to implicate targeted political opponents. Those investigating crimes manoeuvre to humiliate. The expansive boundaries of the law are used for political advantage and one-upmanship. Collaborations with investigators is rampant. The result is that people are slowly but surely losing confidence in the justice delivery system.

The prime minister, in a public speech, is ecstatic that those who, he says, looted the country, are in the right place (jail). It is clear that the PM has no concern for the rule of law and happily endorses the actions of investigating agencies. He knows that a person, in our system of jurisprudence, is innocent till proven guilty. One wonders how the PM has reached the conclusion that a political opponent has looted the country, unless he has personal knowledge of it. Today, our political masters are emboldened to make statements holding others guilty even before any semblance of a chargesheet is filed in court. In the new jurisprudence model, that finds favour with this government, the accused is deemed to be guilty till he proves his innocence. In the good old days, the SC would have intervened and warned those making such statements.

The law has become an instrument of op-

pression — harsh penalties, impossible conditions for bail, a person getting prosecuted having to demonstrate that he is innocent and the court convinced of his offence before he is released on bail. Such processes of law have changed the equation between the citizens and the state.

The animal spirit of business has been subdued — it has been tamed by law enforcement agencies. Any public display of discomfiture with the government attracts the attention of the political class. The enforcement agencies, including the CBI, then get into the act. The result is that business leaders become compliant and criticise the government in the muted environment of closed walls.

The difference between "normal" times and today lies in the rise of the musclemen. The musclemen triumphs when he makes pronouncements which are harbingers of change. The consequences of such pronouncements are not his concern. The musclemen on the ground kills because he demands obedience to his beliefs. The musclemen in the university targets faculties who disagree with the new norm. The musclemen in court tries to dictate to the judge: This is an era of musclemen and the rule of law has little value.

The writer, a senior Congress leader, is a former Union minister