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THIS WORD MEANS

FOETUS IN FOETU

When a 'twin' forms inside a human body. What causes it, and how frequently does it happen?

WHEN A 17-year-old girl Indian girl recently went to get a "lump" in her abdomen treated, it was found to be her twin growing inside her. This is a condition called *foetus in foetu* (FIF), or foetus within a foetus. Doctors say this is the first reported case of FIF in an adult woman worldwide, and the eighth such case in an adult in India (the previous cases were in adult men).

In this condition, a malformed parasitic foetus is usually found in the abdominal cavity of the living twin (host). Fewer than 200 cases of this condition have been reported in medical literature and it occurs in about 1 in 5,00,000 live births. While FIF can occur in various age groups, it is most commonly diagnosed in patients younger than 18 months.

In the case of the Indian 17-year-old, her abdomen would often hurt and she would feel full. However, no history of weight loss or altered bowel movements and urinary symptoms were recorded. Her "menstrual habits" too were within the normal limits, according to *BMJ Journals* where her case has been published. When the lump was microscopically examined, it measured 30×16×10 cm and was found to be composed of a "hairy cheesy material, multiple teeth and structures resembling limb buds."

According to *BMJ Journals*, there are two theories about the origins of FIF. The first is where a parasitic twin's malformed foetus is formed inside the body of the host twin and both share the blood supply.

The other is that FIF is a "highly differentiated" form of teratoma - tumours made from tissues foreign to the area or part of the body in which they are found.

FIF CASES AMONG ADULTS IN INDIA

YEAR	AGE	SEX
1999	27	Male
2000	16	Male
2001	30	Male
2001	27	Male
2005	39	Male
2007	36	Male
2009	20	Male
2019	17	Female

Source: BMJ Journals

What differentiates a FIF from a tumour is that the lumps in the case of FIF are benign (do not spread to other organs and tissues) in nature, and are of embryological origin.

When was the expression "foetus in foetu" first used? According to the *BMC Journal of Medical Case Reports*, it was first used by Johann Friedrich Meckel the Younger in the late 18th century. In a paper titled "*Fetus in Fetu* and the Retroperitoneal Teratoma" and published in 1960, R H Lewis credits Meckel with the use of the term around the 1800s.

One of the early cases of the condition surfaced in a patient called John Hare, born on May 18, 1807. The abnormality in the baby's abdomen led him to lose weight rapidly, "until at length he was nearly 36 inch in circumference", and he eventually died.

MEHR GILL

TIP FOR READING LIST

HOW TO BRACE FOR END OF THE WORLD

WHEN THE human species eventually goes extinct, what kind of event will have caused it? US-based science reporter Bryan Walsh looks at a number of possible catastrophic scenarios — volcanic super-eruptions, asteroids, artificial intelligence, climate change, nuclear wars — as well as possible solutions to prevent eventualities.

End Times: A Brief Guide to the End of the World is a study of these possible catastrophes, including interviews of those trying to stop them from happening, such as NASA's asteroid destroyers and disease prevention agencies around the world. The book also estimates the probability of these disasters occurring, along with the impact they could have. In its review of the book, *Scientific Inquirer* acknowledges Walsh's "attempt to root out the source of humanity's denial and ignorance" towards existential risks. "When discussing man-made climate change, *End Times* delves into how economic models such as the 'social discount rate' can explain why we 'privilege the present over the future'. The interdisciplinary approach Walsh uses to capture the pervasive effects and influences behind existential risks never attempts to leave his readers behind; rather, Walsh's accessible language attempts to inform the general reader of the multi-tiered nature of the issues he discusses," the review says.

Colonisation of other planets has long been the dream of businessmen and science-fiction writers. In his book, Walsh dedicates a chapter to space and details the faith that billionaires Jeff Bezos of Amazon and Elon Musk of Tesla seem to have in space exploration and colonisation as a means for human survival. Both have invested billions in manned spaceflight, an endeavour that even NASA is not contemplating. Walsh himself calls this a "distraction", and writes, "Space colonization may be our destiny, but it won't keep us safe — not for the foreseeable future. The energy and money that might be spent on nascent efforts to move off planet would be better used combating existential threats that could end that future — and readying our survival, should the worst occur."

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

What bank mergers can mean

The plan is to merge 10 state-owned banks into four larger ones. What led to the move, how is it intended to help the banks and the government, and what are the potential downsides?

SHAJI VIKRAMAN
CHENNAI, SEPTEMBER 1

ON FRIDAY, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the government's decision to merge 10 state-owned banks to create four large entities or lenders. Under the plan, Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India will be merged with Punjab National Bank; Canara Bank with Syndicate Bank; Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank with Mumbai-based Union Bank of India; and Allahabad Bank with Indian Bank. That will mean a consolidation of banks in India from 27 before 2017, to 12 after the merger goes through. What are the upside and downside of this move?

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during a press conference in Delhi to announce the merger plans. *Amit Mehra*

How does consolidation help?

For years, expert committees starting from the M Narasimham Committee have recommended that India should have fewer but bigger and better-managed banks to ensure optimal use of capital, efficiency of operations, wider reach and greater profitability. The logic is that rather than having several of its own banks competing for the same pie (in terms of deposits or loans) in the same narrow geographies, leading to each one incurring costs, it would make sense to have large-sized banks. This may be true especially in India's bigger cities and towns. It has also been argued that such an entity will then be able to respond better to emerging market trends or shifts and compete more with private banks. The Finance Minister has said that the proposed big banks would be able to compete globally and improve their operational efficiency once they lower their cost of lending and improve lending. But none of India's banks including the largest, SBI, figures in the list of the top 50 global banks. So that may be a long way away.

How does it help the government?

For over decades starting from 1992, the government as the biggest shareholder of over 25 banks had to provide capital for them. To grow and lend more, the banks often need a higher amount of capital to set aside also for loans that could go bad. With the government not willing to lower its equity holdings and with a large slice of the capital being set aside to cover for bad loans, which have swelled over the last few years, the burden of infusing capital rests on the majority shareholder. This means marking a large amount of money almost every year during the last few years in the Budget for many banks at a time when there is a huge demand for funds for education, health and other programmes. By reducing the number of banks to a manageable count, the government must be hoping that the demands for such capital infusion will be lower progressively with increased efficiencies and with more well capitalised banks. It will also help that the government can focus now on fewer banks than in the past.

On what rationale were the banks for the new mergers chosen?

The Finance Minister has said the government chose these banks on the basis of ensuring that there is no disruption in banking services and that these banks benefited from higher current and savings accounts (CASA) and greater reach. In the past, the government and the RBI had discussed potential mergers taking into account banks that operated in a particular geographical region or had strengths in such regions. During Raghuram Rajan's tenure as RBI Governor, one proposal discussed was to merge all PSU banks headquartered in the East which were inherently weak. In the currently proposed mergers, this argument may apply mainly to the Bengaluru-based Canara Bank and Syndicate Bank. In the PNB-led merger, Oriental Bank is also a Delhi-based lender, while the strengths of midsized banks such as Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank in the South may complement Union Bank that has a stronger presence in the West and elsewhere. For Indian Bank, a conservative bank and one of the few to have reported profits earlier when many other banks were hurting, the high CASA of Allahabad Bank is bound to help. That will imply cheaper source of funds.

What are the potential downsides of such a merger?

Smooth integration of operations always poses a risk, especially with the prospect of resistance from staff and unions in the entities being merged. There are issues like cultural fit, redeployment of staff, and fewer career opportunities for many in a merged entity. Another concern could be deterioration of services and disruption in the near term as the merger process gets under way. It could also reflect in fewer options for customers; an easing of the personal touch which many of the midsize and smaller banks have. The swelling of combined bad loans with some of these mergers is also an issue.

Yet another worry is the possible creation of what is known as systematically important institutions, or those too big to fail, leading to the prospect of bailouts in the future, which could hurt the government and financial stability. But a bigger challenge will be in ensuring that there is no disruption in activity, especially lending, because of the proposed mergers at a time when banks have been loath to lend. Whether this will lead to a further slowdown in lending for a while is another concern.

What do these mergers signal for the Reserve Bank of India?

The RBI keeps monitoring large institutions whose potential failure can impact other institutions or banks and the financial sector, and which could have a contagion effect and erode confidence in other banks. A case in point is the recent instance of IL&FS Group, which defaulted on repayments hitting many lenders and investors. The creation of more large-sized banks will mean the RBI will have to improve its supervisory and monitoring processes to address increased risks.

What has the global experience on bank mergers been?

It seems mixed with some studies indicating that only 50 per cent have succeeded. Integration and cultural fit have been issues.

Can consolidation alone make a difference to the state of Indian banks?

No. Governance of these banks has been an major issue, which has dragged down many. The government has spelt out some measures to address that while indicating that more steps could be in the offing. Former RBI Governor Y V Reddy, in his D T Lakdawala memorial lecture, had said the idea that consolidation of banks will solve the problem of public sector banks is not correct. According to him, if the problem is structural and of governance, it does not matter whether the banks are large or small.

3 decades ago, report that set merger template

SHAJI VIKRAMAN
CHENNAI, SEPTEMBER 1

POLITICS, IT is said, is the art of the impossible. In the early phase of the UPA government's first term between 2004 and 2009, the Finance Ministry headed by P Chidambaram was pushing hard for consolidation of state-owned banks. The first such proposed merger was of two Mumbai-based banks — Bank of India and Union Bank of India. The boards of both were to approve the proposal after being nudged by the government. But at the last hour, it was called off after a political call by the Manmohan Singh government, presumably taking into account the fallout of such a move in a coalition that had the support of the Left parties.

The recommendations

When on Friday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the mega merger of 10 public sector banks into four, she was in effect implementing a plan whose outline was contained in the report of an expert committee submitted nearly three decades ago. It was that report, whose main author, Maidavolu Narasimhan, is a 92-year-old former Governor of RBI, that talked about merging banks. Various governments and the Reserve Bank of India have all been guided by the report and recommendations. The committee, appointed by Manmohan Singh when he was Finance Minister and at the peak of the balance-of-payment and economic crisis in 1991-92, had suggested a new banking structure in India besides several other important measures in its two reports. What it envisaged then was a banking system with three or four large banks at the top with a global presence and size, eight to ten national banks which would cater to the needs of local industry and infrastructure, and a bottom tier consisting of a large number of regional or local banks.

The committee also favoured mergers to build the size and strength of operations for each bank. Since then, almost every major committee for financial sector reforms has suggested consolidation of banks or reducing the number of banks owned predominantly by the government. These include the committee appointed by the Planning Commission during the UPA government's term and headed by Raghuram Rajan, the committee on fuller capital convertibility headed by former RBI Deputy Governor S S Tarapore, the one headed by Percy Mistry, apart from the RBI which laid out a blueprint in a discussion paper on the way forward for Indian banking.

The rationale of experts for pruning the number of government-owned banks, which was over two dozen, was that with economies of scale, they would be more efficient and profitable. Besides, with pressure on government resources and growing demands to fund social sector programmes, infusing capital for a large number of banks would be a drag for the government, especially with many banks unable to raise the required capital from the markets directly. In May 2013, when Chidambaram returned to the Finance Ministry after a stint in the Home Ministry, said in his annual day address at the Competition Commission of India: "Some PSU banks among the 26 we have may be better off merging. The need for two or three world -size banks in an economy that is poised to become one of the five largest in the world is rather obvious." In short, it is something on which the government (the largest shareholder in many of these banks), the RBI and experts have been on common ground.

The mergers that followed

There were mergers and amalgamations during that period which involved private banks such as HDFC and ICICI and also Punjab National Bank. But the first big merger subsequently was when some of the associate banks of the State Bank of India were merged with the parent bank during the first term of the Modi-led NDA government. Technically, or on paper, that was a decision approved by the boards of SBI and the respective associate banks. It was rather an acquisition. But the last of the relatively bigger mergers like this time around (featuring four new entities and the folding of some banks into a bigger lender) that saw Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank being merged into Bank of Baroda — all publicly listed entities — was announced first by the government.

In its report, the Narasimham committee had made it clear that large banks should merge only with banks of equivalent size and not with weaker banks, which should rather be closed down. That may not be the script being followed in the last few cases, especially when the accompanying steps announced by the government indicated that boards of state-owned banks would be strengthened.

Former RBI Governor Y V Reddy had said in a lecture last year that the origin of PSU banking in India was political through an ordinance, its evolution has been political and its future will perhaps be determined by political and economic considerations. Last weekend's big move by the government reflects that.

The legacy of Firoz Shah, 14th-century ruler who built Kotla in Delhi

SOMYA LAKHANI
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 1

DELHI'S FEROZ Shah Kotla stadium is set to be renamed Arun Jaitley Stadium after the former Finance Minister, who passed away last month. The stadium takes its name from a 14th century fortress. What is the legacy of Firoz Shah, who built the fortress?

In his autobiography *Futuhat-i-Firozshahi*, Firoz Shah described himself: "Among the many gifts which God bestowed upon me, his humble servant, was a desire to erect public buildings. So, I built many mosques and colleges and monasteries... I was led to repair and rebuild the edifices and structures of former kings and ancient nobles which had fallen into decay with the passage of time."

And so, he built Feroz Shah Kotla (*kotla* means fortress), peppered Delhi with gardens, constructed canals, hunting lodges, and repaired Qutub Minar, Hauz Khas (royal tank) and Surajkund (lake of the Sun). In the 21st century, however, Surajkund is mostly known for its annual crafts mela, Hauz Khas for its bars and restaurants, and an auto ride to Feroz Shah Kotla on Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg usually ends at the stadium next to it.

Shama Mitra Chenoy, associate professor at Delhi Uinversity's Shivaji College said, "Firoz Shah was the first ruler to build a fortress next to river Yamuna. It was quite an urban sprawl." In Percival Spear's 1943 book *Delhi: Its Monuments and History*, which has been updated and annotated by historian Narayani Gupta and author Laura Sykes, the latter calls Firoz Shah "a medieval version of a management guru".

Born to a Hindu princess, Firoz Shah came to power in 1351, and died in 1388. He built Feroz Shah Kotla, the fortress, on the banks of the Yamuna and called it Firozabad. Sykes writes, "According to an old proverb, three things were necessary: *daria, badal, badshah* (river, rainclouds and ruler). The ruler stood ready, the rainclouds could be hoped for, and of course the river was waiting in the shape of the Yamuna: he built the first of the river-based Delhis."

In fact, Emperor Ashoka's pillar, erected near Ambala in 250 BC, was transported to Delhi and placed in Firozabad. Spear writes, "He found it when hunting and as he liked old monuments, he transported it to Delhi on a great carriage with 42 wheels."

The Feroz Shah Kotla fortress. Only the stadium is being renamed. *Express Archive*

At the Ridge in north Delhi stands another Ashokan pillar, smaller in size, near Hindu Rao Hospital. It was moved from Meerut to Delhi by Firoz Shah.

Professor Farhat Hasan of Delhi University said that during his reign, Firoz Shah did public construction activity on a massive scale. "Welfare projects — gardens, *serai* (inn), water supply — were his priority. By improving sources of water supply and irrigation facilities in Delhi and surrounding areas, he helped bring down the price of food grains too. It's a known fact that Haryana's irrigation systems go back to his era," said Hasan.

Professor Chenoy said that Firoz Shah also built Dargah Qadam Sharif, which is located in Delhi's Sadar Bazar. She said, "Story is that during his reign there was a saint who went to Medina. People there loved him so much that they gave him a stone with the footprint of the Prophet. That stone is on the grave of the saint's grandson. His other great contribution is a number of beautiful *shikargah* (hunting lodges) and hydraulic structures."

In Spear's book, Sykes writes that Firoz Shah is regarded as the honorary founding president of The Conservation Society of Delhi and that the British called him the 'father of the irrigation department' because of the many gardens and canals that he built.

Professor Gupta said that during Firoz Shah's reign at least 1,200 gardens existed between Mehrauli and Firozabad. "He built hunting lodges in north Delhi's Ridge area, one in Palam, and a third which came to be called Kushak Mahal, located within the Teen Murti Complex."

Apart from indulging in building his own structures, Firoz Shah "felt a sense of responsibility" towards old structures that needed repair, among which Qutub Minar, Huaz Khas and Surajkund stand out. Spear writes, "In his reign, an earthquake damaged the two top storeys of Qutub Minar. He repaired the Minar and added a little pavilion at the top." In the late 18th century, however, during another round of repair, an engineer called Major Smith replaced it with his own pavilion. Spear writes, "You can see the two storeys which [Firoz Shah] Tughlaq built because they are built of white marble and are quite smooth. The lower three storeys are the ones which Qutbuddin and Iltutmish built. of red sandstone."

Firoz Shah also repaired Hauz Khas, the royal tank built during Alauddin Khalji's reign in the late 13th century. Spear notes that Firoz Shah built a madrasa on its banks, and his own tomb is located at the corner of where the college stood. "The college was ruined by Timur's invasion," writes Spear. Similar repair work was done at Surajkund.

Professor Hasan said that apart from building new structures and restoring old ones, Firoz Shah was also able to create a "multi-lingual, multi-cultural space by providing patronage to poets, musicians, and various linguistic communities". He said, "Under his patronage, *premakhyan* which is Sufi poetry written in Awadhi grew. It was a new genre of literature. He built many institutes for musicians and poets too."

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

WE KNOW WHAT WE ARE, BUT NOT WHAT WE MAY BE.

— WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

NATION'S ORPHANS

NRC fails to bring closure in Assam. Flaw may lie in the idea, not just the process

THE FINAL NATIONAL Register of Citizens (NRC) for Assam was released on Saturday, but a closure to the citizenship issue in the state remains distant. In fact, the initial response of political parties and civil society groups in Guwahati indicates that the NRC may have opened up new fault-lines. The government has done well to promise legal help to the over 19 lakh people who have been excluded. They have a window of 120 days to appeal before the Foreigners Tribunals, which have been provided additional staff and facilities. The government has also indicated that deportation of the people rendered "stateless" is not on the cards — Minister of Foreign Affairs S Jaishankar recently said in Dhaka that the NRC was India's internal matter. However, political parties, including and especially the BJP, have alleged that the NRC is flawed and threatened to challenge it in court. For the large number of people who have been living on the edge since the process began in 2015, there is no end in sight to the uncertainty, it seems.

Citizenship and identity have been fraught issues in Assam for decades. The NRC was introduced in 1951 in response to a political demand that arose from the fear of migration, in the backdrop of Partition, causing demographic and cultural upheaval. The subnationalist politics that privileged Assamese identity over other categories, including class, caste and religion, has since shaped the social imaginary in the region, with devastating consequences. It has produced a narrative that plays on the fear of the "outsider" and a politics that borders on xenophobia. It is telling, however, that no party seems to be happy with the outcome of the current exercise. For the All Assam Students Union and the BJP, the exclusions are fewer than expected — the projected number of illegal immigrants in Assam, which has formed the basis of contrived political spectres, has varied from one million to two crore. The BJP also suspects that a substantial number of the affected are Bengali-speaking Hindus, whom it wants recognised as refugees and accorded citizenship. With its proposal to amend the Citizenship Act pending, the party has demanded re-verification of the list in districts bordering Bangladesh, suggesting a communal reading of the NRC.

Instead of blaming the process, political parties need to recognise, perhaps, the flaw that lies in the imagination that produced the NRC. Modern societies are shaped by migration and it may be futile to engage in costly exercises to identify "outsiders". Despite the fiasco in Assam, BJP leaders are demanding NRCs elsewhere too — for instance, Manoj Tiwari wants one in Delhi. During the 2019 election campaign, BJP President Amit Shah spoke about "ghuspaithiye" and compared illegal migrants to termites. The time has come to steer the conversation away from excluding people, and towards accepting the reality of migration and exploring ways to make it work better for the economy. The idea of citizenship can't be imprisoned within the framework of blood and soil or religion; it needs a broader, more inclusive definition rooted in the liberal spirit of the Constitution. For now, however, at the end of an elaborate NRC process monitored by the Supreme Court, which has shown unusual alacrity in doing so, the onus is on the court to ensure that human rights are not undermined by short-term political interests.

PEOPLE VS BORIS JOHNSON

British Prime Minister, by trying to circumvent parliament on Brexit, shows disdain for democratic institutions

LAST WEEK, BRITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson sought to justify the proroguing of the UK Parliament for over a month by claiming it is "normal procedure". It is not. The most that Johnson — a prime minister who was selected by a section of the Conservative Party and who hasn't faced a general election — can claim is that he has not technically broken the law. In fact, by asking the Queen to suspend the House of Commons till just 10-12 days before the October 31 Brexit deadline, Johnson has shown complete disdain for the British people, the forum in which their representatives make their voice heard, and for Westminster-style democracy itself. Ironically, among the issues that Johnson and other "leavers" had cited as reasons for Britain leaving the European Union three years ago was that the EU curtailed the powers of the country's parliament and the will of the British people.

Since June 2016, when the people of Britain voted by a slender majority to leave the EU, the country's political class has been unable to form a consensus on the modalities of the exit. Johnson's predecessor, Theresa May, resigned after she was unable to convince parliament of her Brexit plan. By all accounts, a no-deal Brexit will be an economic disaster for the UK. Johnson claims he will negotiate a new deal at the EU council in September and secure a parliamentary majority for a withdrawal bill before October 31. Either PM Johnson can magically forge agreement in eight weeks on an issue that vexed his predecessor for two years or, as is far more likely, he is doing his best to circumvent a much-needed debate and the messy compromises it would entail.

Britain does not have a formal, written constitution. But its laws and parliamentary customs have served it well because they are respected across political and ideological divides. In the Westminster model, parliament is not just a procedural necessity. It frames the will of the people, the source of political legitimacy. If Johnson wishes to suggest that the mandate for his version of Brexit is greater than the voice of all the MPs that oppose it, he must call a general election. The Opposition must ask for a vote of confidence in the government. Meanwhile, across the globe, as strongmen claiming a direct understanding of the will of the people undermine institutions that act as a check on executive power, how the first parliamentary system holds its own against this assault will be closely watched.

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY

Bits and economic pieces

A forum that facilitates cohesive thinking on economy, also has ears of political leadership, is urgently needed

VIKRAM SINGH MEHTA

OVER THE PAST few weeks, there has been much commentary on the economic slowdown. Whether the cause is structural or cyclical; whether the government should inject liquidity or allow the private corporate sector to stew in its woes. This division of views is unsurprising. After all, it is a commonplace barb that three economists in a room will eventually present four different views. What is worrisome is that this division appears to cut across the political and administrative apparatus of the government. The vice chairman of the Niti Aayog has stated that the economy faces an unprecedented liquidity situation: "Not in the past 70 years has the financial sector been in such a churn (where) nobody trusts anybody else." The Chief Economic Adviser appears somewhat more sanguine: "Some sectors are doing well — the government does not need a fiscal stimulus". The Minister of Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, has criticised the Niti Aayog for announcing a ban on petrol and diesel vehicles. He said that the Aayog was but a think tank with no executive authority, and that such decisions were for him to take.

This apparent lack of cohesion in economic thinking is worrisome because it makes one wonder whether there is any economic body in the government that has the mandate to look at the big picture — that is, evaluate the consequences of the macro impact of seemingly unrelated sectoral economic decisions — and also has the ear of the political leadership. It is also worrisome because the consequences of lack of cohesion can, in our connected economy, lead to avoidable systemic damage. Let me illustrate this point by drawing on the plight of the auto industry.

Demand for transport vehicles (passenger cars, heavy commercial vehicles, three-wheelers and two-wheelers) has dropped by 12.3 per cent in the first quarter of FY 19/20 over the comparable quarter of the previous year. This is the sharpest decline since 2001. No one can make the claim that this is entirely the result of government policy. There are deeper reasons particular to the structure and dynamics of the industry and every auto company will need to introspect hard on the specifics of the internal changes it must implement to tide over its current market problems. But, equally, no one can argue that the industry has not been impacted by government policy. The decision last year to increase the maximum load carrying capacity of trucks knocked the bottom out of the market for Heavy Commercial Vehicles. Demand for this category has, since that decision, fallen by around 20 per cent. The generalised constriction on retail financing by banks has squeezed dealers out of their working capital and dampened consumer demand. Consumers could, at one time, borrow upto 90 per cent of the cost of a vehicle. Now, they are fortunate to get even 65 per cent. Auto loans, incidentally, account for barely 2.5 per cent of banks' NPAs. The tightening of safety norms or the fast forwarding of the BSVI emission norms have raised the cost structure and, consequently, prices.

> Our administrative apparatus is vertically structured within siloed compartments. Bureaucrats have a narrow remit and few, if any, have the mandate to take a broad view in order to evaluate the consequences of their decisions on the system as a whole. There is no forum to enable and facilitate interdisciplinary, interdepartmental and collaborative economic decision-making. We do, of course, have the Niti Aayog and the PM's Economic Advisory Council (although I must admit, I am not clear on the latter's mandate or role). But the recent exchanges suggest they do not have the executive authority to contextualise sectoral initiatives within the broader sweep of the macro economy.

All of these decisions might make sense on a standalone basis. But when considered through the prism of their collective impact, they acquire some rough edges. This is because the auto industry sits at the nub of the manufacturing sector. It accounts for 49 per cent of manufacturing GDP and, according to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), it supports, directly and indirectly, 37 million jobs. The decline in demand for its products has sent ripples, therefore, across the macro economy. SIAM has estimated that 5-7 per cent of those employed along the Auto Value Chain (original equipment manufacturers, suppliers, vendors) have lost their jobs and that all contract hiring has stopped. It has also estimated that GST collections from the auto sector during the first six months of 2019 are Rs 6,000 crore less than what was received by the finance ministry during the first half of 2018.

I cite these figures not to make a case for relief for the automobile industry — I am a director of Mahindra and Mahindra and doing so might attract the criticism of conflict of interest — but to substantiate the consequences of lack of cohesion in economic management. It is also to make the point that sectoral initiatives must be viewed through the prism of the broader economy.

In November 2008, at the height of the global financial crisis, Queen Elizabeth asked an assemblage of economists gathered to celebrate the opening of an extension of the London School of Economics, why none of them had anticipated the crisis. The academics responded by letter in July 2009. They catalogued the macroeconomic, regulatory and behavioural reasons for the crisis but they also wrote that whilst "everyone seemed to be doing their own job properly" and "on its own merit", there was no one who understood the risks (of what they were doing) to the system as a whole. There was no one who saw the whole picture and who appreciated that "whilst individual risks may rightly have been small", the collective impact of these risks could well trigger a systemic collapse.

Our administrative apparatus is vertically structured within silo-ed compartments. Bureaucrats have a narrow remit and few, if any, have the mandate to take a broad view in order to evaluate the consequences of their decisions on the system as a whole. There is no forum to enable and facilitate interdisciplinary, interdepartmental and collaborative economic decision-making. We do, of course, have the Niti Aayog and the PM's Economic Advisory Council (although I must admit, I am not clear on the latter's mandate or role). But the recent exchanges suggest they do not have the executive authority to contextualise sectoral initiatives within the broader sweep of the macro economy. There is a need to fill this lacuna.

This is certainly not the first call for an administrative overhaul. Many reports have been written on the subject and this article is treading a well-trodden path. But, against the backdrop of the current economic downturn, I am reminded of Rahm Emanuel's (chief of staff to President Obama in 2009) exhortation to not waste a "serious crisis" and to grab the "opportunity to do what (one) could not do before". The opportunity now exists to dust off and implement the recommendations that call for a cohesive and integrated platform for economic management.

The writer is chairman & senior fellow, Brookings India

DEVDAS ISN'T A WOMAN

A man's heartbreak is celebrated on celluloid, a woman's loss is hardly depicted

EKTAA MALIK

ONE OF 800 MILLION

A VOICE, UNDER 35

"BAAT BIGDI HAI iss qadar/ Dil hai toota, toote hain hum/ Tere bin ab na lenge ek bhi dum/ Tujhe kitna chaahein aur hum," hums Arijit Singh in *Kabir Singh* (2019), as the eponymous character played by Shahid Kapoor comes to terms with his heartbreak — and the end of his "happily-ever-after" dreams with his college girlfriend, Preeti (Kiara Advani).

The film, a huge commercial success, was panned by critics and a section of filmgoers alike for its blatant misogyny. In the 172-minute-long film, heartbreak is used as an excuse for self-sabotaging behaviour, including a suicide attempt. But Hindi film and heartbreak have had a long, symbiotic relationship: Bollywood wields heartbreak as a tool to justify toxic masculinity and generates yet another poster child — whoever is the reigning A-list male star. But where are the women and their heartbreak stories? Aren't they the other half who suffer when a loving relationship comes apart at the seams? So why don't we see women crying their hearts out on screen with abandon, or beating up people or drinking themselves silly? Or having a streak of lovers, as their male counterparts in films do?

Women, more often than not, are the perpetrators in a heartbreak. The song in *Kabir Singh* uses the phrase "toote hain hum" — broken — and also evokes the fatality of the that emotion, with "Tere bin ab na lenge ek bhi dum/ Tujhe kitna chaahein aur hum".

> Hindi films and heartbreaks have had a long, symbiotic relationship: Bollywood wields heartbreak as a tool to justify toxic masculinity and generates yet another poster child — whoever is the reigning A-list male star. But where are the women and their heartbreak stories?

In the 1975 film *Amanush*, Kishore Kumar sings "Dil aisa kissi ne mera toda/ barbadi ki taraf aisa mora". The next line blames the heartbreak, and in turn the heartbreaker, for turning a man into beast: "Ek bhale manush ko amaanush banaa ke chora." In *Munna Bhai M.B.B.S* (2003), there is a scene which shows a young adult male explain his second suicide attempt: "Kyunki ladki chhod ke gayi". It results in a song and dance routine with Sanjay Dutt flexing his biceps.

Devdas — novelist Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's iconic character, and the films that it has spawned — is a pop-culture phenomenon. He is the patron saint of Bollywood's heartbroken. Actors K L Saigal, Dilip Kumar, Shah Rukh Khan and Abhay Deol have all seen considerable success in their rendition of the alcoholic-heartbroken lover. We never experience the agony of Paro, separated from her childhood sweetheart: We only see her later as the dutiful daughter-in-law of the household that she married into.

There are some exceptions. Kajol cries in the rain to "Tujhe yaad na meri aayi" in *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998). Karisma Kapoor dances in an envy-fuelled rage when she sees Madhuri Dixit dancing on "her" stage with "her" man (Shah Rukh Khan) in *Dil To Pagal Hai* (1997). A salwar-kurta wearing Kareena Kapoor, sans makeup, eats a bread-and-jam sandwich in *Jab We Met*, as she navigates a boyfriend-less life in Shimla. The other template features the scorned and spurned women, who are then relegated to the scheming vamp trope — the woman who will do anything to get "her man" back. For example, films like *Aaina* (1993), *Khal-Naaikaa* (1993) and *Pukar* (2000).

But all these instances are reduced to one song and one film, at best. We never hear the gut-wrenching sobs that are a definitive byproduct of heartbreak for women, as much as they are for men. So I wonder why we haven't had a female version of *Devdas*? Because crying women look "unattractive" on screen? Or the thought of women, unkempt, polishing off tubs of ice-cream and vodka seems unpalatable to the male population at large?

Heartbreak can be debilitating. Personally, I have had my share, and it took an intense phase of what is popularly known as TLC to get me back on my feet — in addition to an extreme hair-cut and a foreign trip. I know many women with similar stories.

So, let's just enjoy the idea that one day, an A-list female actor can get drunk senseless and rage against the world at large and men in particular, for the entire length of a movie. Now that's a film I would watch.

ektaa.malik@expressindia.com

SEPTEMBER 2, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

JAMSHEDPUR RIOTS

THE JANATA PARTY blamed "vested interests," including some political organisations, for the recurrence of communal trouble in parts of the country. The national executive of the party passed a resolution deploring the outbreak of communal violence in Jamshedpur and elsewhere. The executive felt that "in these disturbances there is the hand of vested interests, including some political organisations, which would like to create a fear psychosis among the minorities with a view to securing their political support". The party apprehended that as the general elections approach "such forces may become increasingly active."

PAYMENT AGREEMENT

LEADERS OF VARIOUS workers' organisations were reported to have agreed to the postponement of the interest payable on compulsory deposits in cash for another year. A finance ministry announcement said that the was meeting convened by the finance minister, H N Bahuguna, with representatives of nine trade union organisations "to contain inflation by restricting money supply in the market". Leaders of central workers' organisations were stated to have agreed voluntarily to advise the workers to opt for retention, for one more year, of the amount of interest payable to them in cash as a part of the instalment of compulsory deposits.

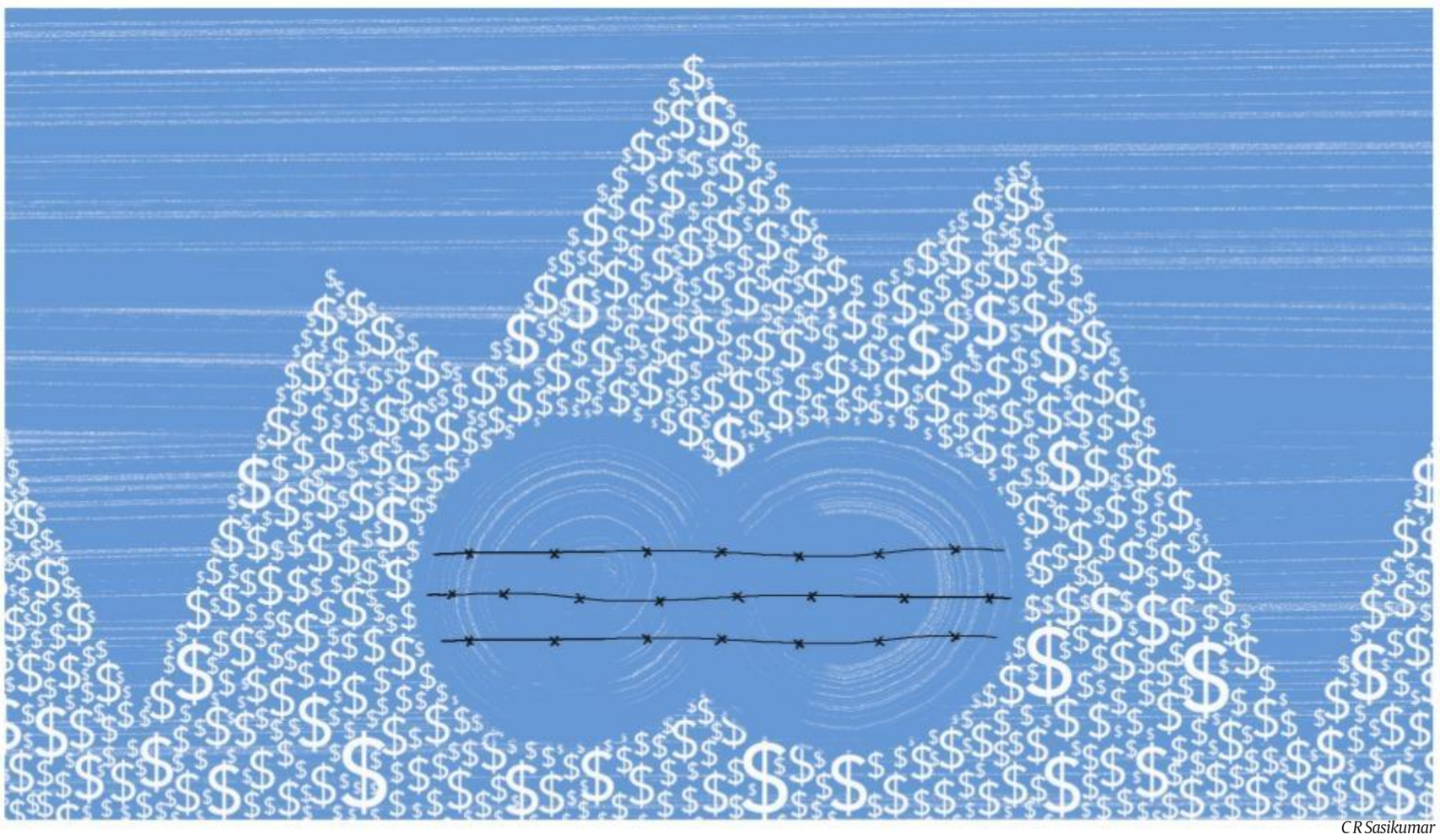
NO FREE PASS

THE GOLDEN PASS controversy involving the railway minister, T A Pai, and the chief election commissioner, has come at an unfortunate time for the Janata (S) chairman, Raj Narain. Narain will now not get the free travel pass he is reported to have sought from Pai. It is learnt that Narain wrote to the railway minister eeking countrywide free travel facilities for himself. Having already granted Narain's request for a pass for the Janata (S) leader's tantrik astrologer, there was little likelihood of Pai refusing Narain a pass. But in view of the considerable embarrassment caused to the involved parties, Pai is unlikely to bestow a similar favour on Narain.

THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"President Bolsonaro should assure world leaders he'll use aid to protect the ecological wonder (the Amazon) from fires." — THE WASHINGTON POST



C R Sasikumar

Pakistan's UN fantasy

Global community favours bilateral framework for India-Pak. But Pakistan refuses to see writing on wall

SUJAN R CHINOY

AFTER FAILING TO get the UN Security Council (UNSC) to take formal notice of its antics over Article 370 and the situation in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), Pakistan has yet again attempted to internationalise J&K by writing to the president of the UNSC. It has asked for "doubling the strength of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) Observers and to persuade India to allow them to patrol on its side of the Line of Control (LoC) as well". In the letter, Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi further requested the UNSC to consider "all possible avenues available under the UN Charter to fulfil its responsibility of maintaining peace in the region".

Pakistan knows that India totally rejects third-party involvement. Barring a few aberrant acolytes of Pakistan, the global community, including the US, has openly favoured the bilateral framework to address all the issues between India and Pakistan. Yet, Pakistan clings on to the idea of third-party mediation or a UN role in order to create a false alibi for continuing with the use of terrorism as an instrument to wage a low-intensity war against India. Pakistan has sought UN mediation despite being bound by the principle of bilateralism under the 1972 Simla Agreement.

UN resolutions have proved ineffective in the past in getting Pakistan to withdraw its occupying forces from Jammu and Kashmir, as was required under the UN Resolutions of April 21 and August 13, 1948, which have since been overtaken by the bilateral Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration of 1999.

This has not prevented a desperate Pakistan from turning its attention to UNMOGIP, another redundant vestige of the past, long overtaken by the bilateral process agreed to under the Simla Agreement. Its genesis can be traced to the UN Commission for India & Pakistan (UNCIP), which was set up through UNSCR 39 on January 20, 1948.

By way of background, UNSCR 47 of April 21, 1948 and the UNCIP Resolution of August 13, 1948, provided the basis for the UNMOGIP's establishment. The ceasefire was bilaterally agreed to by India and Pakistan on January 1, 1949, one day before the UNCIP Military Adviser reached the mission area. The first of the UN military observers arrived there only on January 24, 1949.

As outlined in para 3 of the UNSG's Report S/6651 of September 3, 1965, UNMOGIP's role was very limited, confined to observation of the Cease Fire Line (CFL) and monitoring of violations, if any. The limited mandate was related to the CFL and the Karachi Ceasefire Agreement of July 27, 1949, from which it flowed, both of which ceased to be operative when Pakistan committed aggression against India on December 3, 1971 and declared a state of war against India the following day. The UNMOGIP's mandate lapsed as a result, and did not legally extend to the LoC, a materially different line which came into being on December 17, 1971, following India's unilateral declaration of a ceasefire, later accepted by Pakistan. The Simla Agreement, which superceded all previous agreements and committed both sides to a bilateral framework, delivered the coup de grâce with regard to UNMOGIP's locus standi.

The UNMOGIP's limited mandate renders it incapable of monitoring the terrorist havens on the Pakistani side of the LoC or preventing cross-border infiltration. Nor is it capable of preventing the frequent ceasefire violations.

The Indian side has not lodged any complaint over the ceasefire violations by Pakistan since January 1972, which further buttresses India's standpoint on the UNMOGIP and denies it any role. Pakistan continues to lodge "complaints about ceasefire violations by India" with the UNMOGIP, which issues reports containing the unilateral "complaints" made by Pakistan. This is yet another example of obfuscation by Pakistan of facts relating to Jammu and Kashmir.

> Pakistan knows that India totally rejects third-party involvement. Barring a few aberrant acolytes of Pakistan, the global community, including the US, has openly favoured the bilateral framework to address all the issues between India and Pakistan. Yet, Pakistan clings on to the idea of third-party mediation or a UN role in order to create a false alibi for continuing with the use of terrorism as an instrument to wage a low-intensity war against India.

In recent years, the Government of India (GoI) has taken the right steps vis-à-vis the UNMOGIP. In response to a question in Parliament on August 13, 2014, the then Minister of State for External Affairs, V K Singh, stated that the UNMOGIP was mandated to supervise the CFL established in July 1949 under the agreement between military representatives of India and Pakistan, and that with the signing of the Simla Agreement and the establishment of the LoC, its role had become redundant, and further, that it had "outlived its relevance". The GoI has taken various steps asking the UNMOGIP to vacate government properties in India, which had been provided free of charge until then. Action has also been taken to monetise various other facilities that were earlier being provided free of cost to the UNMOGIP.

Given President Donald Trump's strong criticism of the performance of the UN and his lamenting the fact that the US provides one-fourth of its budget, it is worth noting that the US alone contributes $4.3 million, the lion's share, of the UNMOGIP's annual budget of $19.7 million.

These funds could be better utilised to achieve Sustainable Development Goals in developing countries, including for the long-suffering people of Pakistan, who have yet to realise their true potential as a result of the appalling policies and abysmally poor track record of successive Pakistani governments and military rulers. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has, on many occasions, driven home the point that eradication of poverty and economic development are the primary and common challenges confronting both countries and that both countries should work together for the welfare of their peoples.

The writer, a former Indian Ambassador with extensive experience on UN and national security issues, is director general of Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi

The farmers' finance minister

Arun Jaitley hoped to transform agri-markets, subsidy structures. Implementing these ideas would be a fitting tribute to him

FROM PLATE TO PLOUGH

BY ASHOK GULATI

THERE HAVE been several obituaries of Arun Jaitley. Most focus on his contribution to the BJP as a political strategist, or to the nation through GST-type reforms, or as personal friend, including by those occupying the opposition benches in Parliament. But I have not read anything about how he contributed to agriculture policies. And that's what I want to focus on.

Before I venture into this less-known aspect of Jaitley's contribution, let me say that we both studied together at the Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC), in the same batch (1970-73), with Arun in commerce and me in economics honours. After SRCC, he went on to do a degree in law and I pursued economics in Delhi School of Economics. But I did watch his rise in politics and public affairs from his Delhi University Student Union (DUSU) president days to being imprisoned during Emergency, and then later being the crowd-puller for Atal Bihari Vajpayee during his election campaigns. Like Arun, I too had the privilege to work with Vajpayee ji when he became prime minister in 1998. But my interaction with Arun on issues related to agriculture started more when he became finance minister in the Narendra Modi government in 2014.

In 2015, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, I happened to be one of those Padma awardees. Immediately after the ceremony, Jaitley, who was sitting in the front row, came to congratulate me and then said, "Ashok, I read your piece 'Lead from the Centre' today in *The Indian Express*, and what you are saying, that we need to invest much more in irrigation, makes a lot of sense to me, especially when India is facing occasional droughts. I think we can do it." I thought his words were a normal gesture on such an occasion. But I was pleasantly surprised when I found him announcing a special scheme for a "Long Term Irrigation Fund" of Rs 40,000 crore through NABARD in his next budget speech. The scheme helped many languishing major and medium irrigation projects to move somewhat faster towards completion. He was a silent doer with regard to many such schemes.

On another occasion, I was called to give a presentation to him and his key advisors in the Ministry of Finance on revamping the crop insurance scheme in the wake of the back-to-back droughts of 2014 and 2015. He listened attentively and then asked how much extra it will cost. And my curt reply was that the central government was already giving away to states about Rs 6,000-7,000 crore per annum through the PM's Disaster Relief Fund. The modalities adopted in compensation were not very scientific. But if you go for a proper crop insurance system (I suggested it be weather-based with high-tech automatic weather stations installed all over the country), it may cost the Centre a bit more — say another Rs 5,000-7,000 crore, but it can be made more science based. His immediate response was, "This is doable". After that presentation, what I heard was an announcement by the prime minister about the revamped PM's Fasal Bima Yojana on Baisakhi day as a gift to Indian farmers. It is still going through teething problems as, instead of being weather based, it was rolled out on crop cutting experiments, which can be manipulated through the patwari system.

But the biggest agri-idea that came from Jaitley, and many heard it during the last year or so on various occasions, was when he said that the highest pay-off from economic reforms, after the GST reform, is to come from agriculture. He knew that agriculture is a state subject, and if one has to reform agri-markets by amending Essential Commodities Act and APMC Act, engaging states in "cooperative federalism" would be essential. He spoke about this idea, loud and clear, at one of the foundation day functions of NABARD. He was also clear that the push for such a reform has to come from the Centre. In fact, he even asked NABARD to initiate some spade work in this direction.

Similarly, if one has to undertake any tenancy reforms with a view to open up land lease markets, the blueprint has to be of something like the GST council, involving both the states and the Centre.

The other big agri-idea with which Jaitley concurred was to gradually transform various subsidies in the agri-food space to cash transfers directly into the accounts of beneficiaries. He said this while releasing one of my books, *Supporting Indian Farms the Smart way*, in 2018. The book was based on two years of in-depth research on how different agri-policies impact Indian farmers, agriculture, food security, natural resources, especially water and soil, etc. The central message was that Indian agricultural policies have an inherent consumer bias, and that input subsidies related to fertilisers, power, irrigation, interest subvention, etc do not promote efficiency in their use. Instead, they are creating several environmental problems like groundwater depletion. The best way forward would be to give these subsidies directly to beneficiaries in cash and free up the highly subsidised prices of fertilisers, power etc. He echoed this in his speech and said that this is surely a "smarter" way to help our farmers.

It is sad that Arun Jaitley's health deteriorated so quickly and he is no longer with us. The best tribute to such a personality is to implement his ideas fully, in good faith. Can the Modi government create a GST-type council for agriculture reforms and realise his wishes by implementing agri-marketing reforms and transferring agri-input subsidies directly to beneficiaries' accounts through Aadhaar? That would be the most meaningful tribute to Arun Jaitley.

Gulati is Infosys Chair Professor for Agriculture at ICRIER

VIEW FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

A weekly look at the public conversations shaping ideas beyond borders — in the Subcontinent. Curated by Aakash Joshi

THE KASHMIR CATALYST

WHILE *DAWN* THIS week has brought into focus a variety of issues beyond Kashmir — from Pakistan's political scenario to the economy and climate change challenges — *The Express Tribune* has maintained a somewhat jingoistic stance. Some of its contributors have invoked Nazi Germany in polemical attacks on India, while others have called for a muscular, military response to the change in Jammu and Kashmir's status.

Dr Moonis Ahmar, in his column in *The Express Tribune* on August 30, has taken an alarmist position on "India's ethnic cleansing" in Kashmir. After talking of rape, murder and other heinous crimes to make a polemical point, Ahmar "warns" India on not learning the lessons of history: "The Indian state has failed to learn lessons from the policy of genocide and ethnic cleansing which was pursued in the past by militaries in different parts of the world. India must understand the lesson of the history that despite its 800,000-strong armed force, it will not be able to crush the nine million Kashmiri Muslims who are facing the worst humanitarian crisis in the form of curfews, communication lockdown and shortage of essential commodities, including medicines."

For Ahmar, the Indian policy has three aspects. First, "to humiliate and degrade Kashmiri Muslims". To substantiate this point, he uses as fodder the ill-informed statements by leaders of the BJP and Sangh Parivar claiming that Indian men can marry Kashmiri women, assault them, etc. Second, he acknowledges that there are people in India who are standing up against the government's moves in Kashmir and as such, the jailing of leaders in Kashmir, stifling of dissent within the Indian heartland is an extension of the government's ideological position. Third, Ahmar calls for Pakistan to intervene: "in a situation when the Kashmiri Muslims under the Indian occupation are facing the worst kind of human rights' violations, it is high time for Pakistan to practically support them."

The editorial in *The Express Tribune* on August 31 expresses its admiration for the Pakistanis who showed up on the streets in "solidarity" with the people of Kashmir: "Tens of thousands of Pakistanis yesterday poured onto the streets in almost all big and small cities and towns of the country in a government-led demonstration of solidarity with the Kashmiris who have refused to accept New Delhi's illegal annexation of their abode on August 5."

The editorial asks citizens of Pakistan "to keep the Kashmir issue burning".

The implication to be drawn from both the article and editorial is obvious. Kashmir is becoming a way to whip up nationalists sentiments in Pakistan, too.

ISLAND'S DILEMMA

Jayanath Colombage, a former Navy chief of Sri Lanka and strategic analyst has an article in *The Daily Mirror* taking off from a seminar on the Indian Ocean littoral and its strategic, environmental and economic potential. He cites the speeches from analysts across the region.

According to Colombage, Sri Lanka can "shape the Indian Ocean environment". But the strategic dilemma comes from being a small economy which can only leverage its strategic position and geography to meet its development goals: "World Bank Group released a report in 2018 stating that 50% of world infrastructure needs are in Asia. The same report indicated that Asia needs USD 460 Billion from 2016-2030 to develop infrastructure.Where can this many come from? Can it be from traditional donors, self-financing, own banks or multi-lateral lending? The answer is no. It has to be FDI. But it is not coming. FDI to Sri Lanka is 1.2% of GDP in 2018… We are unable to make decisions based on economics.We have or we are compelled to undertake strategic balancing."

For India, which is in competition with China in Sri Lanka as well as vying to be a power in Indian Ocean, the concerns of its island neighbour are worth paying attention to.

ARUNDHATI'S MISTAKE

The August 28 editorial in *The Dhaka Tribune* attacks Arundhati Roy for defending Pakistan with falsehoods. However, the editorial made an error (which it later corrected): The statement it said was "recent" was actually made by Roy in 2011. Nonetheless, her defence of Pakistan has many in Bangladesh upset. The editorial reads: "The Indian author said:"The State of Pakistan has not deployed the army against its own people in the way that the democratic Indian state has." We cannot agree with this statement, which at best is incorrect and at worst looks like an attempt to whitewash the sins of the Pakistan army."

The editorial further responds: "To this day, Pakistan refuses to acknowledge the atrocities committed against our people in 1971 — crimes which included murder, torture, rape, and looting. That is why it is all the more inexcusable that a writer and activist of the stature and reputation of Arundhati Roy would make a blatantly false statement that aligns perfectly with Pakistan's own denials of its crimes."

The editorial has asked that Roy not diminish the Bangladesh freedom struggle.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

VERDICT REVISITED

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The darkest hour' (IE, August 29). Along with Justice Chandrachud and Justice Beg, Justice Bhagwati was one of the judges involved in the *ADM Jabalpur* judgment. Thirty four year after that verdict, Justice Bhagwati confessed that he had made a mistake in concurring with the majority view. The lone dissenter Justice Khanna was not elevated to the post of CJI. However, he was made chairman of the Eighth Law Commission.

Ashwinkumar N Karia *via e-mail*

TIGERS AND HUMANS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Fewer human sightings' (IE, August 30). It's heartening to know that India's wild tiger population has increased by more than 30 per cent in four years. But the figures should be treated with some caution as the rise may indicate better counting procedures because this comprehensive survey is based on information collected by wildlife officials across 380,000 sq km of land and on the basis of data collected from almost 350,000 images taken by 26,000 camera traps in known tiger habitats. The census may suggest more tigers are breeding in protected areas but there were worrying signs of tigers not able to safely disperse. If we want our numbers to be stable tigers need to disperse.

Sanjay Chopra, *Mohali*

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

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

THE WINNER RECEIVES SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Fewer human sightings' (IE, August 30). Merely talking about an increase in the tiger population is not just enough. There are many ecological disturbances the world over. The Amazon rainforest fire is one such. Humans should stop encroaching into the world of wildlife and learn to give spaces to species to survive.

Gracy Singh, *Delhi*