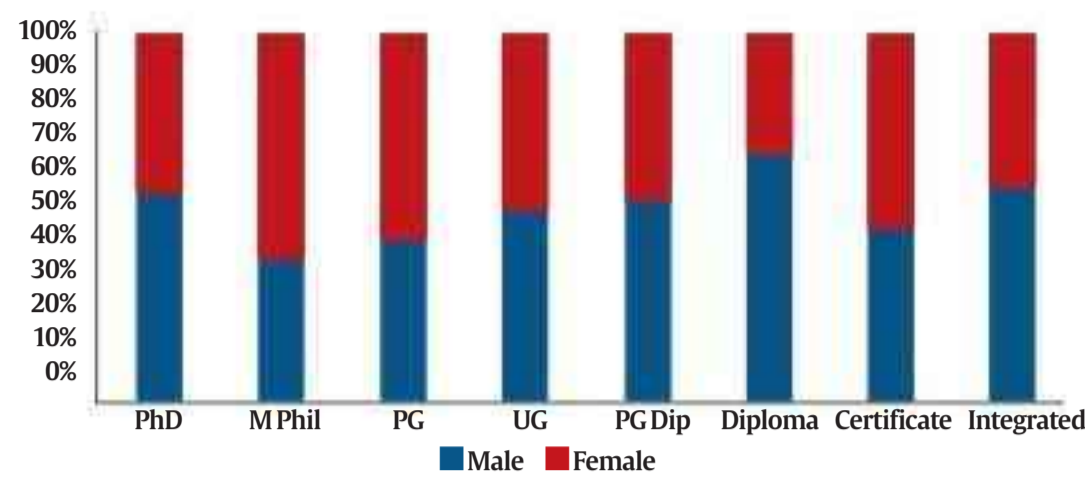


TELLING NUMBERS

In higher learning, the gender breakup in courses and states



THE ALL India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2018-19, aspects of which were reported in *The Indian Express* on Sunday, looks at, among other aspects, the gender distribution of students enrolled in various higher education courses in the country. The total estimated student enrolment in the country is 3,73,99,388, out of whom nearly 51.36% are male and the remaining 48.64% are female.

Course levels

The gender ratio is higher on the male side in most courses, but there are exceptions — female enrolment is higher at MPhil, postgraduate and certificate levels. Enrolment at undergraduate level is 51% male and 49% female, while diploma has a highly skewed distribution at 66.8% male and 33.2% female. At PhD level, male enrolment is 56.18% and female enrolment is 43.82%. At integrated level, the distribution is 57.50% male and 42.50% female. PG Diploma student enrolment is 54.09% male and 45.91% female.

The states

A higher overall share of male students in enrolment is a trend also in most of the states. The top six states in terms of total student enrolment — Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Rajasthan and Karnataka — account for 54.23% of the total enrolment in India. The female students in these states represent

54.43% of the female students across India, and the male students in these six states account for 54.05% of the male students across India.

In Uttar Pradesh, with the highest student enrolment in India, male students account for 49.30%. Maharashtra, with the second highest student enrolment, has 54.95% male and 45.05% female students. Tamil Nadu has 50.87% male and 49.13% female, West Bengal has 50.37% male and 49.63% female students, Karnataka has 50.04% female students, and Rajasthan has more male students than female students.

Student categories

SC student enrolment is 14.89% of the total enrolment and the male-female ratio is more or less similar to that of all categories. Students belonging to the ST category constitute 5.53% of the total student enrolment; here again, the male-female ratio is similar to the overall national ratio. Among OBC students, who constitute 36.34% of the total number of students, 50.83% are male.

In the minority category, data on Muslims were collected separately. The survey found that 5.23% students belong to Muslim minority and 2.32% to other minority communities. Among Muslims, there are more male students than female, whereas among other minorities, there are more female students than male.

STATES WITH HIGHEST ENROLMENT

State	Male students	Male %	Female students	Female %
Uttar Pradesh	31,89,520	49.30%	32,79,847	50.70%
Maharashtra	23,24,424	54.95%	19,05,902	45.05%
Tamil Nadu	17,36,870	50.87%	16,77,326	49.13%
West Bengal	10,56,511	50.37%	10,40,899	49.63%
Rajasthan	10,82,466	51.93%	10,01,947	48.07%
Karnataka	9,93,417	49.96%	9,95,077	50.04%

GENDER DISTRIBUTION BY CATEGORY

Category	Students	Male	Female
Scheduled Castes	55,67,078	50.94%	49.06%
Scheduled Tribes	2,067,748	50.88%	49.12%
OBCs	1,35,91,994	50.83%	49.17%
Muslims	19,59,004	50.71%	49.29%
Other minorities	8,68,100	45.75%	54.25%
Persons with disability	85,877	56.14%	43.86%

Source: AISHE 2018-19

SIMPLY PUT

The debate over status of Hindi

Many of today's assertions and apprehensions about the alleged imposition of Hindi over the rest of India were also heard in the Constituent Assembly, which discussed this question over seven decades ago

UDIT MISRA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 23

HOME MINISTER Amit Shah's Hindi Diwas (September 14) call for "one language" for all of India triggered protests. Shah said that while it was natural to have a difference of opinion on the official language of a Union as diverse as India, the founding fathers of the Constitution had evaluated all arguments in the Constituent Assembly and agreed unanimously to have Hindi as the "Raj Bhasha".

It was almost exactly 70 years ago, between September 12 and September 14, 1949, that the Constituent Assembly of India discussed the language question.

President Rajendra Prasad underlined the great importance and sensitivity of the debate: "Even if we (get) a proposition passed by majority, if it does not meet with the approval of any considerable section of people... the implementation of the Constitution will become a most difficult problem".

These are edited excerpts of what some of the members of the Constituent Assembly said. Many of their arguments are echoed in India even today.

N GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR presented the initial draft and the first amendment. It said Hindi in Devanagari script should be the official language, but English should be used for at least 15 years.

SETH GOVIND DAS argued that Hindi should replace English at the earliest. "Democracy can only function when majority opinion is honoured... We have accepted our country to be a secular State but we never thought that that acceptance implied the acceptance of the continued existence of heterogeneous cultures... We do not want it to be said that there are two cultures here."

NAZIRUDDIN AHMAD, by contrast, cautioned: "We should not make a declaration of an All India language all at once. English should continue... till a time when an All India language is evolved, which will be capable of expressing the thoughts and ideas on various subjects, scientific, mathematical, literary, historical, philosophical, political..."

MOHD HIFZUR RAHMAN argued for replacing Hindi with Hindustani, the language that Mahatma Gandhi favoured. The clamour for Hindi was "the reaction of the Partition" — "in this state of grief and anger... they are showing their narrow-mindedness against a particular community. They want to settle the language question in the atmosphere of political bigotry..."

R V DHULEKAR presented a forceful



Jawaharlal Nehru and some other members of the Constituent Assembly of India during one of the early sittings of the Assembly. Archive

counter-argument: "...I belong to Indian nation, the Hindi Nation, the Hindu Nation, the Hindustani Nation. I do not know why you say it is not the National Language. I shudder at the idea that our universities, schools and colleges, and our scientists should, even after the attainment of Swaraj, have to continue to work in the English language..."

FRANK ANTHONY cautioned that the Hindi that was being imposed was very different from the one that common people spoke. "In this present fanatical movement a new kind of Hindi which is unintelligible to the Hindi speaking Hindu in the street... a highly Sanskritised Hindi will be imposed..."

QAZI SYED KARIMUDDIN pitched for Hindustani: "Why you are denying the Muslims their rights by banning Urdu script? You have got a majority so you are trying to ban it completely — to finish it... Only that language in which both Hindus and Muslims easily express themselves, i.e. Hindustani, should be made the national language..."

LAKSHMINARAYAN SAHU argued for Hindi being made the national language. "I can also claim the same status for Oria, which is far more ancient than Bengali... Some people are so much enamoured of English that they think they would lose their very existence if English is not used as the official language..."

N V GADGIL on the other hand, said Sanskrit should be the national language, and English should be retained "for at least one century more". Hindi, he said, is a provincial

language; "there are languages in which literature is far more rich, and yet we have accepted Hindi as the national language".

T A RAMALINGAM CHETTIAR said this "very difficult question... probably means life and death for the South". He had "great admiration for the Hindi people", but "they will have to realise that we too may have some patriotism and love for our language, for our literature...", and Hindi "is no more national to us than English or any other language".

SATISH CHANDRA SAMANTA said Bengali should be the national language because, among other things, it was the language of *Bande Mataram*, the poem that inspired the freedom struggle.

SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE said he did not share the view of those who speak of the day "when India shall have one language and one language only". "Unity in diversity is India's keynote and must be achieved by a process of understanding and consent, and for that a proper atmosphere has to be created." "If the protagonists of Hindi had not been perhaps so aggressive in their demands and enforcement of Hindi, they would have got perhaps more than what they expected, by spontaneous and willing co-operation of the entire population of India".

Mookerjee said that for Hindi to "really occupy an All-India position and not merely replace English for certain official purposes" it must be made "worthy of that position" by allowing it to "absorb by natural process words and idioms not only from Sanskrit but

also from other sister languages of India..."

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU recalled Gandhi's views on this question. One, "while English is a great language (that) has done us a lot of good, no nation can become great on the basis of a foreign language". Two, the chosen language should be "more or less a language of the people, not a language of a learned coterie". And three, "this language should represent the composite culture of India".

Nehru, however, cautioned against imposing Hindi on all of India's peoples. In the speeches of "the enthusiasts for Hindi", he said, he had detected "a tone of authoritarianism, very much a tone of the Hindi-speaking area being the centre of things in India, the centre of gravity, and others being just the fringes of India". This, Nehru said, was "not only an incorrect approach, but... a dangerous approach".

PANDIT RAVI SHANKAR SHUKLA of the Central Provinces and Berar argued that Hindi is prevalent "almost everywhere", and should "be made the common language throughout India". He advised "friends from the South" to "learn Hindi as early as possible".

G DURGABAI of Madras expressed "shock" at the way Hindi in Devanagari script was being pushed. Giving "a national character to what is purely a provincial language is responsible for embittering the feelings of the non-Hindi speaking people", she said.

SHANKARRAO DEO of Bombay warned that "one culture" has "dangerous implications". "The Chief of the RSS appeals in the name of culture. Some Congressmen also appeal in the name of culture. Nobody tells us what exactly this word 'culture' means. Today, as it is interpreted and understood, it only means the domination of the few over the many... To me it means the killing of the soul of India." India stood for "vividhata", Deo said.

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD expressed disappointment that the Congress had given up its consensus on Hindustani: "It was this narrow-mindedness... which had buried the glory and advancement of ancient India in the darkness of gloom... Of all the arguments employed against Hindustani, greatest emphasis has been laid on the point that if Hindustani is accepted then Urdu also will have to be accommodated. But Urdu is one of the Indian Languages. It was born and bred and brought up in India and it is the mother tongue of millions of Hindus and Muslims of this country."

(WITH SHYAMLAL YADAV)

Longer version of the Constituent Assembly debate on www.indianexpress.com

How AWS lets users keep data within India

SHRUTI DHAPOLA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 23

AS INDIA starts conversations on whether companies should keep more of their critical data within India, companies like Amazon Web Services (AWS) have started offering the option of choosing to keep the data within the boundaries of India. A number of private companies, public sector institutions and even state governments have started opting for this.

But how does Amazon Web Services, the world's leading vendor of public cloud services, manage its data centres spread across the world?

To start with, it divides its services into its 22 regions around the world, one of which is Mumbai. Within each region, AWS has

multiple availability zones, each basically a collection of one or more data centres. Overall, a region is a collection of three or more availability zones — Amazon does not share the number of data centres around Mumbai.

"In India, we have three availability zones. We ensure that each availability zone is independently fault tolerant," Manav Sehgal, head of solutions architecture at Amazon Web Services, explained to *The Indian Express*. Within the availability zone, AWS ensures that risks like floods are taken into consideration. So if one data centre faces any risk of flooding, the other should have lower risk of flooding. Each availability zone is connected with a very



Getty Images

high speed 'dark fibre' connectivity.

Where are these data centres?

"We don't share exact location. Even I don't know the exact location," said Sehgal,

explaining how Amazon follows the "principle of least privilege", of the "first principle of security". "So if I, as a senior executive, don't need to know where my data centre is, I should not know. If we tell everyone where the data centres are, then that becomes a threat for all our customers," he said.

Can the customer choose where to keep data?

The customer gets the choice to store data within India or choose to move it outside. This can be done from the AWS console itself by selecting the region. "Customers for whom data sovereignty or data residency within India is important, like government customers, keep it in the Mumbai region," Sehgal said.

First in pollution control: how Surat industries will trade particulate matter

AVINASH NAIR
SURAT, SEPTEMBER 23

LAST WEEK, the Gujarat government launched what is being described as the world's first market for trading in particulate matter emissions. While trading mechanisms for pollution control do exist in many parts of the world, none of them is for particulate matter emissions. For example, the CDM (carbon development mechanism) under the Kyoto Protocol allows trade in 'carbon credits'; the European Union's Emission Trading System is for greenhouse gas emission; and India has a scheme run by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency that enables trading in energy units.

How will the Gujarat scheme work?

Launched in Surat, the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is a regulatory tool that is aimed at reducing the pollution load in an area and at the same time minimising the cost of compliance for the industry. ETS is a market in which the traded commodity is particulate matter emissions. The Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) sets a cap

on the total emission load from all industries. Various industries can buy and sell the ability to emit particulate matter, by trading permits (in kilograms) under this cap. For this reason, ETS is also called a cap-and-trade market.

How many industrial units are participating in ETS?

Live trading began last Tuesday, with 88 industries taking part in the first round out of 155 that have joined ETS so far. Emission permits worth Rs 2.78 lakh were traded. These industries are from sectors including textiles, chemicals and sugar, and spread over an area of 50-30 sq km. These industries use either coal or bagasse (residue after juice is extracted from sugarcane) as fuel, thus emitting a high amount of ash. The participants were selected on the basis of the size of their chimneys — those with a diameter of 24 inches or more. "So most of the participants are larger players," said N M Tabhani, member secretary of GPCB.

Why was Surat chosen for the scheme?

In the last five years, the quality of air in Surat has deteriorated. In 2013, when the

project was conceptualised, the PM10 level at Air India Building in Surat was 86 micrograms per cubic metre. According to GPCB annual reports, pollution levels have increased between 120-220 per cent, with PM10 in 2018 reaching 189 µg/cu. m at Air India Building, 282 µg/cu. m at Sachin Industrial Estate and 261 µg/cu. m at Garden Silk Mills. Surat was chosen because its industrial associations agreed to run the pilot scheme, said officials associated with the project. Also, industries in Surat had already installed Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems, which makes it possible to estimate the mass of particulate matter being released.

How does the trading take place?

At the beginning of every one-month compliance period (during which one emission permit is valid), 80 per cent of the total cap of 280 tonnes for that period is distributed free to all participant units. These permits are allocated based on an industry's emission sources (boilers, heaters, generators) as this determines the amount of particulate matter emitted. GPCB will offer the remaining 20 per cent of the permits during

the first auction of the compliance period, at a floor price of Rs 5 per kilogram. Participating units may buy and sell permits among each other during the period. The price is not allowed to cross a ceiling of Rs 100 per kilogram or fall below Rs 5 per kg, both of which may be adjusted after a review. On Tuesday, GPCB put out 55,993 permits, of which 55,614 were traded.

How are the auctions conducted?

These take place on the ETS-PM trading platform hosted by the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange e-Markets Limited (NeML). All participants must register a trading account with NeML. Transactions are linked to the bank accounts of the users, who can view updates through these accounts.

There are two types of auctions. In the Uniform Price Auction every Tuesday between 3 and 5 pm, the week's permit price is discovered by participating members through bidding. Second, there is a continuous market between Wednesday and Monday (2 pm to 5 pm) where members will buy and sell permits whose prices were fixed on Tuesday.

For a true-up period of 2-7 days before the completion of the compliance period, units may continue to buy and sell any remaining permits at the final auction price to meet their compliance obligations.

How will ETS help reduce emissions?

"Industries in this area are emitting way above [the cap] at 362 tonnes per month. To bring them down to 280 will be a huge reduction. In the future this cap may be reduced below 280 tonnes," said Gargi Goswami, a research associate at Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) with its global office at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, J-PAL, along with Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago in India, and NeML and South Gujarat Textile Processors Association are partners in the ETS project.

"These permits are not a way to allow industries to keep polluting. Purchasing permits is only an interim measure for many of these units who find it financially difficult to install air pollution control measures. In other words it helps you buy some time and make investments later. So the idea of this scheme is also to make sure that some units

realise that it is cheaper to install APCM and reduce emissions rather than buy permits at a higher cost that will vary due to the bidding process," Goswami said.

Will there be a punitive action for non-compliance?

Based on permits held by units at the close of the compliance and true-up periods, units will be declared compliant or non-compliant. An environmental damage compensation at Rs 200/kg will be imposed for emissions in excess of a unit's permit holdings at the end of the compliance period. This amount will be deducted from an environmental damage compensation deposit that each unit has to submit before the start of the scheme — Rs 2 lakh for small units, Rs 3 lakh for medium ones and Rs 10 lakh for large units. After any deduction, a unit will have to deposit extra money to meet that shortfall.

To prevent any participant from hoarding permits, an upper limit has been set — 1.5 times the initial allocation for the compliance period, or 3 per cent of the market cap for the compliance period. Also, no unit may sell more than 90 per cent of its initial allocation.



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

BROTHERS IN ARMS

For PM Modi, President Trump, Indian-American community is an important constituency and a diplomatic bridge

ENGAGING ACTIVELY WITH the Indian diaspora has been a hallmark of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy, and the BJP's ideology, since 2014. In almost every official foreign trip, PM Modi has interacted with the local Indian community. The event in Houston on Sunday was significantly larger than the others of its kind, including the two previous such interactions in the US. And while the diaspora has thrived across the globe, they are much better integrated in the English-speaking world. The US, as a nation of immigrants, has more readily embraced talented Indians and at the same time, the organisation and mobilisation of hyphenated Americans is quite common. But even given this context, there is a great significance to the "Howdy Modi" event. The audience at the NRG stadium — 50,000 strong — was the largest any foreign leader has drawn other than the Pope. The PM displayed his ability to connect with an audience, to speak of India to Indians abroad. And it is the first time an American president has joined a visiting leader at a diaspora event. As one of the wealthiest and fastest-growing minorities in the US, Indian-Americans are increasingly influential in US society and politics. And as a group drawn from the Indian middle classes, they are an important bridge to the US for India.

For Modi, there is a tactical calculus behind the event. The grand show is a way of mobilising the diaspora for India's national development as well as a vehicle to further New Delhi's diplomatic goals. The aim also appears to be to generate support outside the country for the PM's political moves and those of his party, such as the erosion of Jammu and Kashmir's special status, its bifurcation and downgrading to a Union Territory. For Trump, who is running for re-election, the event was about reaching out to the large Indian-American community. This convergence of interests of the two leaders is being framed as a celebration of the Indo-US relationship and as a basis for expanding common ground and overcoming thorny bilateral issues like the trade imbalance.

However, the bonhomie between the President and the Prime Minister did not hide some of the downsides that emerged from the event. Modi seemed close to crossing the red line on intervening in US domestic politics when he nearly endorsed Trump's re-election — "ab ki baar, Trump sarkar," he said. He was also unable to resist the temptation of criticising Pakistan, albeit indirectly. On the other hand, while Trump talked of combating radical Islamic terror and India's border security, New Delhi cannot ignore Trump's recent outreach to Imran Khan. President Trump continues to have a stake in the development of the US-Pakistan relationship and the outcome of his meeting with Khan in New York may not necessarily please Modi. On a positive note, the prime minister's decision to highlight India's pluralism as an intrinsic part of its identity is a welcome assertion, given that Home Minister Amit Shah's statements on immigration and language policy recently engendered widespread fears of India's monochromatisation under the present government.

EYE ON REVENUE

Rationalisation and simplification of GST may have to wait following the corporate tax cuts

THE GST COUNCIL meeting in Goa last week was overshadowed by the finance minister's announcement of a steep cut in corporate tax and a few other changes in direct taxes to counter the slowdown and to revive business sentiment. The corporate tax break naturally eliminated the chance of a cut in GST rates sought by the automobile industry, now facing its worst slump in decades, and the FMCG sector. The fitment committee with representatives from both states and the Centre was not convinced by the industry's arguments and chose to reject their demand considering the revenue implications.

Given the state of the economy and below par revenue collections, rate cuts by the GST Council were modest this time with the lowering of tariffs for hotel rooms and outdoor catering, to provide a boost to the tourism industry, rate cuts on precious and semi-precious stones besides zero tax on jewellery exports and a hike in caffeinated beverages. But over two years after the introduction of GST, there is much to worry for both the Union government and states. System-related issues still persist, reflected in the absence verification of statements of sales and purchases or invoice matching and leading to claims of huge input tax credit set offs and charges of shell companies being formed to beat the taxman. The delay in unveiling a revised return and a relatively softer enforcement mechanism in many states could be costly in terms of maximisation of revenues. The other major concern now is the grand bargain of a compensation to states spread over five years to persuade them to buy into the new regime. With the growth slowdown, what that implies is pressure on the Centre to ensure that the compensation cess and funds are adequate.

In the current scenario, it is clear that states will not accept any suggestion to lower the compensation structure, especially after last week's direct tax cuts amounting to Rs 1.45 lakh crore. The tax cuts impact states too since it will eat into their share of the tax pool. What all these signal is that the wait for rationalisation of rates or a simplified two or three tier structure may have to be longer.

PACKING A PUNCH

Amit Panghal's historic World Championship silver points to a new spring in Indian boxing

AFTER DECADES SPENT looking through the ropes from the ringside, Indian boxing announced itself to the Olympics with a stinging 1-2 combination. Vijender Singh opened country's account with a bronze in Beijing, Mary Kom followed suit with one at London. Then came a body blow. The national body was suspended, and Indian boxing keeled over. During an Olympic cycle when the breakout performances should've bred more contenders, the sport floundered. After the nadir of a disastrous campaign in Rio, the formation of the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) in 2016 has brought about a revival, the latest chapter of which is Amit Panghal's historic World Championship silver, the first for an Indian in the men's category.

The revival, however, is about more than just the medals. The health of Indian boxing can be gauged by the talent pool, especially in the men's section. Another indicator is the large net being cast. The Bhiwani Boxing Club served as a conveyor belt for long, but the sport has moved beyond Haryana. Along with the Northeastern states, it remains the cradle, but pockets are opening up in Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. The Services team deserves credit as well for shaping six of the eight boxers who competed at the Worlds in Russia. State-of-the-art training facilities such as the Army Sports Institute in Pune and competent coaches are further bringing India on par with several powerhouse.

But the Worlds is not enough. Glory remains reserved for Olympic medalists, and the ultimate test will be in Tokyo next year. India's Olympic plans have again been dented, the culprit this time being the suspended world body, and the postponed qualifiers. Not all is well in the federation too, issues owing to India's sporting culture. The image-conscious stars are still protected, and occasional lack of transparency is frustrating. Next month's World Championships could also be the reality check for women. One thing though is for certain: This is not a false dawn.

Houston, we have a spectacle



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

Modi-Trump event is a window to the politics of our times: They have sold the thrill of power and prejudice

THE MODI-TRUMP spectacle at Houston is a window to the politics of our times. Such a spectacle has its ethical dangers. But in purely political terms, it cannot be judged by our conventional categories. We can worry about whether the claims made so resoundingly by Narendra Modi and Donald Trump fit the reality on the ground. But politics is not about correspondence with truth; it is about tapping into anxieties and making people believe. We might believe that there are red lines where international politics should not get entangled with domestic partisanship. But those conventions were blurred even in the last US election, by Benjamin Netanyahu and Vladimir Putin. We might scream morality and human rights. But those have always been precarious things. Now there is such contempt for them that they are not even the currency of hypocrisy. Forget convention. Houston was about new forms of power. Modi's immediate goal was to show the world that India stands with him; and India that the US stands with it. Pakistan was cut to size. But, beyond immediate politics, Houston was also an expression of a larger politics. What are its elements?

Modi's political alchemy has always consisted of the fact that he does two things simultaneously. He projects leadership and resolve. But in his liturgy he also artfully stands in as the representative of the nation; he constantly produces that identification. For instance, in this narrative, the abrogation of Article 370 does not become an act of his government, it becomes the will of the Indian people which he carries. One can criticise a government. But who would dare indict the Indian people for their choices? These rallies in the overseas context make this identification between him and the nation easier.

The currency of power in modern politics does not come through sociological or economic determinism. Modi has always understood that social life is constituted by an ability to make the vicarious seem vivid and real. This is what he can do with nationalism. His gestures like speaking in different languages, his reminders that his schemes, however faulty, are directed at those who empower him reinforce his power. We can contest the facts, point the stark variance between a tottering economy and his high

blown rhetoric; we can be suspicious of his invocation of diversity. But he understands that the power of the image and the gesture far outlives the mundaneness of reality: What are the real sufferings of the few compared to vicarious thrills of the many? The abiding image of India's power that will matter politically will not be its trade statistics. It will be the Indian prime minister leading in taking the American president's hand and making him do a round in a homage to the power of the Indian community. We may decry this as illusory politics. But we still do not have a political vocabulary to disrupt this spectacle.

Modi is not shy of thinking of the diaspora as a possible unified force in world politics. There is a curious irony here: While so many Indians used to worry that membership in assorted transnational communities like the umma are a threat to the nation state, Hindu nationalism sees ethnicity as a fundamental transnational force, an identification that survives the partitions of nationality and citizenship. At this geopolitical juncture, there is the belief that transnational ethnic identification does not conflict with national citizenship. So, an assertive celebration of trans-ethnic identification in this form is not seen as jeopardising the claims of citizenship.

In the case of the Indian diaspora in America, this is made easier by the India-US alignment. For the last decade or so, there has been the belief that India and the US are in the following relationship: They will often have tough transactional issues to negotiate, from trade to Iran. But the fundamental dynamics of the relationship now converge to a deep alignment, especially on security and defence matters. There is the contingent alignment in the fact that both Trump and Modi have contempt for open societies and freedom. There was something chilling about the triumphalism of the moment of an alliance against Islamic extremism, shorn of any geopolitical nuance. It signalled less a resolve to tackle a real problem effectively, and more a determination to find an enemy against whom to consolidate identity, with a crowd cheering on.

But the fundamental dynamic of the Indian relationship transcends political parties. It has grown deeper by the fact that cur-

rently there is a bipartisan consensus on the gravity of the China challenge. What the India-US bonhomie does vis-à-vis China is an open question. India's hope has always been that alignment with the US does not close more doors with China; in fact, it leverages them open. But these waters will be tested now. But Houston was the most spectacularly public and visible ideological affirmation of that alignment. There are no China doves left in Washington. At least in relation to the US, this gives India a lot of head room. It probably underlies the confidence that even if the rally seems to shade into a partisan endorsement of Trump, it will have no implications for relationships with the Democrats.

How will this play out in US domestic politics? That will depend on two things. India has sold the narrative that Kashmir has been in dire straits for the last 70 years. Even if there is a short-term crackdown, the long-term consequence will be much improved conditions for Kashmiris. But this promise is yet to be redeemed. All the signs are that it will not be. Second, we are probably underestimating the "Leftward" turn in American politics, especially in Congress. Unlike in India, where the Right has now produced total dominance, US politics is more deeply contested, and the negative effects of throwing a lot with a manifest endorsement of Trump are not entirely trivial.

But while these concerns are valid, the lead up to the Houston event demonstrated the one advantage, Modi and even Trump have. They are not constrained, literally, by anything. A few months ago, the press was full of their lack of personal chemistry. Now, they are ideological blood brothers. On the economy, Modi can change policy tack with alacrity to change the narrative. That gives them the confidence that there is always a next move, a next spectacle available to them. They play politics spectacularly, in an emotion that elevates those who participate. They have sold the thrill of power and prejudice over the sweetness of freedom and openness. And at the moment we are buying it.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express



MALOVIKA PAWAR

"YOU KNOW, looking back, you will not remember who the cabinet secretary was when you were a young officer, but you will always remember who your director was at the Academy." As I woke up to the sad news that B N Yugandhar is no more, I saw the truth in his words — born out of his two long stints at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, where he was responsible for training probationers and preparing them for the challenges that lay ahead.

For me, the loss feels very personal. I worked with him as a young officer, when he was Secretary, Rural Development, and, later in the PMO, when he was secretary to two PMs — P V Narasimha Rao and H D Deve Gowda.

His was a life of inveterate do-gooding, and being in a position of great power in the PMO meant that he could push initiatives faster and further. To this end, he selected his foot soldiers well — young officers eager to deliver outcomes. In the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), he selected seven of us from the 1982 batch of the IAS. "My '82 Mafia," he called us.

Yugandhar could be a demanding boss. On my first day at the PMO, he said: "Here, we expect zero-error notes. After all, these are briefing notes for the PM. The staff is only there to physically hand over the related pa-

A LEGACY OF SERVICE

B N Yugandhar was anti-hierarchical, an inspiration to young bureaucrats

pers. You initiate the note, you do the research, you talk to the ministries. Remember: A zero-error note".

While being the kindest of men, he did not suffer fools lightly. His default manner of talking was acerbic, laced with sarcasm and humour. He was a sharp dresser, fond of his Arrow shirts, and enjoyed chilled beer at the IIC. About his heavy smoking, he would cough, rasp and then chuckle, as he said: "My doctor says that given my life-long smoking, I am statistically dead!"

Yugandhar was a prolific reader and his taste was eclectic. In the PMO, he kept a copy of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* on his desk and read a few pages in between meetings. He waxed lyrical about Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja* and advised me to read this haunting story of the decline in fortune of a tribesman of the Paraja tribe in the hills of Orissa.

You might wonder how a director with merely 14 years in the service could have this kind of access to an officer of his seniority and stature. This was because he was fundamentally unconcerned about status, rank or seniority. He was a man of blunt opinions, and he appreciated this in others. I always found him to be determinedly anti-hierarchical.

Many may not know that the National Social Assistance Programme, launched in 1995 as India's umbrella programme for

National Old Age Pensions, the Widow and Disability Pension in addition to other benefits, was very much Yugandhar's idea and initiative. While making a passionate case for protective social security for the poor, he would quote the late S Guhan, doyen of development studies in India: "For old-age pensions, I challenge anyone of you to give me an alternative. Can we do without pensions? Can we prevent old age?"

He once told me with infinite regret: "As a young officer, I was poor and couldn't do much for my parents. When I came back from my ESCAP posting (in Bangkok), I felt like a rich man. I wanted to buy things, buy curtains for my father's house. But by that time, he was too old. These things meant nothing to him. The moment had passed."

In 1994, while he was serving in the MoRD, I asked him about his son. He replied in an off-hand way: "Oh, he is one of Bill Gates' boys." Twenty years later, in 2014, as the news broke of his son's elevation to CEO of Microsoft, I wrote to congratulate him. He responded with a brief thanks. Nothing further was said.

So, it is goodbye to the man, but also to the world he moved in and the values he represented. It feels very much like a yuganta, his passing. Godspeed, sir.

The writer is a former IAS officer

SEPTEMBER 24, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO



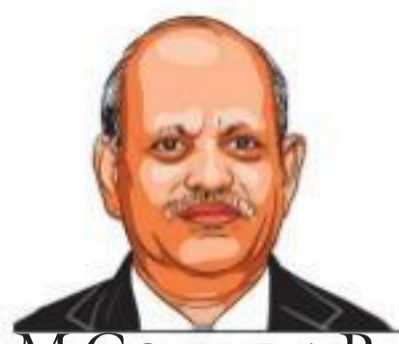
INDIA IMPROVES RANK
INDIA, DESPITE ITS problems, emerges in the latest annual report of the World Bank as a country which made solid gains in 1979 although the popular perception is that the Morarji Desai government took the country downhill. For the Indian economy, says the report, fiscal 1979 was another prosperous year. Overall economic growth is tentatively estimated at three to four per cent after seven per cent the year before. Four consecutive years of healthy growth have now occurred accompanied by a significant rise in per capita incomes. Total savings and fixed investments have also increased in relation to income, the report states.

EYE ON PSUS
PRIME MINISTER CHARAN Singh has asked his cabinet colleagues to closely monitor the public sector units and ensure that their profitability improves during the year. In a letter to his colleagues looking after the economy, steel, commerce, industry, transport and shipping ministries, Singh has said that the government is deeply concerned at the poor performance by many state-run units. He also stressed the need of their generating financial surpluses so that the fight against inflation can be more meaningfully carried forward. He urged that every public sector unit should put in extra efforts to improve their production and profitability.

LESS ASIANS IN UK
THE TORY GOVERNMENT appears determined to cut down drastically the number of Asians entitled to come and settle down in the UK as British citizens. A committee report, leaked by a section of the UK press, says that the number of Asian immigrants with British passports should be reduced from 20,000 to 4,000 each year. This means that those affected by the recommendations would include elderly parents and children over 18 who have not yet been allowed to come here. Husbands and fiancées of British women would also not automatically be allowed in. Restrictions would also be imposed on the labour who come here on yearly permit.

Leaning on the states

Defence is a national public good. It is the primary responsibility of the Centre



M GOVINDA RAO

THE AMENDMENT TO the terms of reference (TOR) issued to the Fifteenth Finance Commission asking it to examine "a separate mechanism for funding of defence and internal security ought to be set up and if so, how such a mechanism could be operationalised," has triggered some suggestions on the need to have a relook at the assignment system and redesign of centrally sponsored schemes (CSS). In an interesting article, Bibek Debroy (IE, September 22) rightly states that the Seventh Schedule is not cast in stone and that if the Union government is required to contribute to CSS in the State List, why should states not contribute to items in the Union List like defence. He also states that any restructuring/rationalisation of the CSS requires a relook at the Seventh Schedule and that this must be done with consultation with the states in an appropriate forum. These suggestions are important and need to be discussed in some detail.

Clearly, the Constitution (except fundamental rights) and, more particularly, the Seventh Schedule is not cast in stone. There have been as many as 103 amendments so far including a few in the Seventh Schedule. In fact, Article 368 provides for the amendment by introducing the bill in either house and passing it with a majority of the total membership of the house and at least two-thirds of members present and voting. In addition, changes in Seventh Schedule requires ratification of the amendment by the legislatures of at least one-half of the states. In fact, the 42nd amendment actually transferred five subjects from the State List to the Concurrent List which are: (a) Education; (b) forests; (c) weights and measures; (d) protection of wild animals and birds and (e) administration of justice; constitution and organisation of all courts except the Supreme Court and the High Court.

The constitutional assignments between the central and subnational governments in federations are done broadly on the basis of their respective comparative advantage. The provision of national public goods is in the federal domain and those with the state-level public service span are assigned to the states as the latter are assumed to have comparative advantage in providing these services according to the varied preferences of the people. The transaction cost of providing state level public services at the central level is higher than scale economies. In addition, there are meritorious public services with inter-state spillovers and their efficient provision requires subsidisation. Thus, while the provision of public services is mandated at subnational levels, financing is done either fully or partially by the Centre to ensure that a minimum standard of such services are provided across the country.

In the Indian context, for this reason, there are central sector and centrally-sponsored schemes. In the case of the former, funding is entirely by the Centre and states are merely implementing agencies. The CSS is a shared cost programme and is meant to ensure a minimum standard of service across the country. In fact, many of the schemes are introduced by the Centre on subjects in the State List ostensibly for their externalities but also to have a direct appeal



CR Sasikumar

to the electorate. Not surprisingly, several schemes were introduced and they are now restructured into 28 umbrella schemes classified into "core of the core", "core" and "optional" with states' contribution fixed at 30 per cent, 40 per cent and 50 per cent respectively for non-special category states. In principle, these schemes have expiry dates, but going by past experience, they are never folded up and always get repackaged. In fact, each of the schemes has multiple objectives and service delivery standards are not clearly defined. Under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, for example, there are 42 interventions and states are required to prepare their budgets for each intervention with little flexibility and any change in the allocations between these heads would have to be approved by the Project Appraisal Board chaired by the Union HRD Secretary.

In principle, there should be consultations with states in designing the schemes, but this is hardly done. The classic example is the health insurance scheme announced by the prime minister from the ramparts of the Red Fort in his Independence Day speech in 2018 which evolved into "Ayushman Bharat", requiring non-special category states to share 40 per cent of the cost. Of course, in principle, they can opt out, but only at a huge political cost. In fact, most schemes create permanent liabilities and do not have an effective expiry date.

In fact, the Finance Commissions are aware of the need for specific purpose transfers to ensure minimum standards of meritorious services and leave some fiscal space to the Centre to undertake CSS. Thus, the Fourteenth Finance Commission, while concluding that there is a compelling case for reforming the existing system of fiscal transfers stated, "In our view, the Union government should continue to have fiscal space to provide grants for functions that are broadly in the nature of 'overlapping functions' and for area-specific interventions."

Can states pay for defraying expenditure on items in the Union List? In fact, Article 282 has this provision when it states, "The Union or a State may make any grants for any public purpose, notwithstanding that the purpose is not one with respect to which

Parliament or the Legislature of the State, as the case may be, may make laws". However, the important question is that should the states be asked to pay for defence?

Here, there are two specific reasons why they should not. First, defence is a national public good and keeping in view the principle that the beneficiaries of services should pay for it, it becomes the primary responsibility of the Centre to defray the cost of protecting all the people of the nation. Second, given the fact that the assigned expenditure responsibilities of the states are much larger than their revenue potential, the Constitution provides for the sharing of taxes collected by the Centre and making grants to them from the consolidated fund of the Centre based on the recommendations of the Finance Commission. The Finance Commission is supposed to take into account the capacities and needs of the Union and different states in making recommendations and the Centre's need includes the requirements for defence of the country. The TOR of the Fifteenth Finance Commission, for example, emphasises that it should have "...regard, among other considerations, to the demand on the resources of the Central government particularly on account of defence, internal security..."

Thus, once the commission makes recommendations after assessing the requirements including those for defence, the responsibility for defraying the expense falls on the Centre. The states simply do not have the resources to spend beyond the subjects in their domain because the Finance Commission will not provide for it in its assessment.

Indeed, there is a need to reform the CSS. There should be consultations in formulating, designing and closing them down. "The one-size-fits-all" approach cannot succeed in a large and diverse country like India. As the schemes are implemented by states, they should have substantial flexibility to ensure that the schemes benefit the targeted groups. While these are important, it is not clear how a relook at the Seventh Schedule would achieve this objective.

The writer is adviser, Centre for Public Policy, IIM, Bangalore. Views are personal

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"It is believed Chinese people will combine confidence, cheerfulness and rationality together and make this year's National Day an unforgettable one in PRC history."
— GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

Beyond Modi-Trump chemistry

India and the US need to address the vexed issues in trade. This will prepare New Delhi for profound changes in global economic order



RAJA MANDALA
BY C RAJA MOHAN

AT THE HOUSTON spectacle on Sunday that bought together an enthusiastic Indian diaspora, the personal chemistry between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump was all too evident. But the celebrations at Texas must yield tangible outcomes at New York where the two leaders are set to meet again today on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly's annual session.

According to media reports, Modi and Trump are apparently racing to wrap up the negotiations on trade that have been underway for some time. The speculation is about a "small deal" between the two countries. Yet, the two leaders also know that they need to look beyond the tactical and signal a change of direction in bilateral commercial engagement and set ambitious trade targets for the near and medium term.

In diplomacy, personal rapport and trust between the leaders is quite valuable. Although the leaders themselves might not negotiate the details of agreements, they need to communicate their respective interests to each other and signal the political will to overcome domestic obstacles.

Even more important is the recognition of your interlocutor's priorities. When you address the other leader's most important concern and give him or her room to claim victory, you will get a lot more in return. In the last two decades, the success of India's engagement with the US has been rooted in Delhi's sensible judgement about the immediate focus of the other leader.

It is easily forgotten that the then External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh offered quick unilateral support in May 2001 when US President George W Bush's announced an initiative to build missile defences and move away from the doctrine of deterrence through nuclear terror. While Bush was being pilloried at home and abroad for overturning arms control orthodoxy, Delhi's support was more than welcome in Washington. This was followed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee's strong support for Bush's war on terror immediately after 9/11 and set the stage for a political and strategic approach to the Indo-US relationship that was hobbled for decades by disputes over nuclear issues.

Delhi's new political warmth to America saw Bush extend unprecedented support for India's rise and nudge a reluctant US establishment to invest much political capital in changing the US domestic nonproliferation laws as well as international regulations to lift a long-standing nuclear blockade against India. While the UPA government wavered in taking the nuclear deal forward, Bush stayed the course thanks to his strong empathy for India.

The resolution of the nuclear issue created the basis for a productive partnership with the US that saw liberalisation of US technology transfers, the launch of counter-terror cooperation, the expansion of defence rela-

tionship and political cooperation on regional and global issues. If Jaswant Singh and Vajpayee recognised what mattered for Bush, Modi saw that addressing climate change was President Barack Obama's highest priority. Modi, who had sensible climate convictions of his own, quickly reoriented India's policy to make Delhi part of the solution in the stalled international negotiations on mitigating global warming. When he was a senator, Obama had expressed serious reservations about the nuclear deal. Once he saw Modi as a partner, Obama helped finalise the nuclear agreement and integrate India into the global nonproliferation regimes.

On the nuclear issue as well as climate change, there was strong resistance within the Indian system from two different quarters — those who picked nits and others who turned every engagement with America into a supreme test of India's commitment to non-alignment. The nit pickers were mostly from the bureaucracy that refused to see the larger gains accruing to India. The political class revelled in denouncing any change in India's long outmoded negotiating positions.

When Trump took charge of the White House in January 2017, Modi and his advisers did not take long to see the president would be very different from his predecessors and that he was going to alter many long-standing American policies. While Modi recognised the centrality Trump's trade concerns, the PM's initial responses did not seem adequate.

More consequentially, Modi did not devote enough political attention to the emerging challenges on the trade front. He seemed to let the nit pickers lead the trade negotiation. India's prickly attitude to trade liberalisation that congealed in recent years put it at odds with its major trading partners. While most of them had given up on India, Trump made it a bone of contention. In his effusive speech on India-US relations, Trump did insist that the people of India must have "access to products stamped with the beautiful phrase Made in the USA". Put simply, market access has been the issue that has troubled the relationship in recent years. While referring to the difficulties in the bilateral trade negotiations and suggesting a deal might be at hand, Modi reassured Trump that he is learning from the President on the "art of the deal".

The PM is aware that cutting a trade deal with Trump, will make it a lot easier to deal with his administration on a range of issues including terrorism, Kashmir and the unfolding crisis in Afghanistan. But a trade agreement with the US is not just about immediate give and take between Modi and Trump. A new trade agreement must be about preparing India for profound changes in the global economic order, buffeted by Trump's politics as well as the unfolding technological disruption. Many of Trump's trade concerns in relation to India resonate with the left wing of the Democratic Party that is gaining ground. Getting India's most important trade relationship right in the near term and charting a bold course for a mutually beneficial commercial partnership with the US over the long term are urgent and worthy goals in themselves.

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



RANGIN PALLAV TRIPATHY

Lessons unlearnt

Linguistic policy should not be driven by a politics of identity

A STATEMENT BY Purushottam Das Tandon in 1949 neatly captures the major problem that saddles any discussion on linguistic policy in India — looking at language only as a marker of identity. Speaking at a public meeting, he declared: "Those who oppose acceptance of Hindi as national language and Nagari as the national script are following the policy of anti-national appeasement and are catering to communal aspirations."

The debate in the Constituent Assembly on language was marred by extreme positions. As Glanville Austin notes in *The Indian Constitution: The Cornerstone of a Nation*, while the moderates wanted the issue to be resolved by consensus, the extremists were willing to push through the imposition of Hindi even if they could secure a majority of one vote. That the Constitution does not speak of a "national language" was deliberate. Instead, the term "official language" was used in Article 343 as a tactical euphemism to avoid friction amongst different linguistic communities.

There were bitter contestations on the definition of Hindi and the sources of its vocabulary. Some leaders argued for new words to be coined from a Sanskrit base to deal with modern requirements instead of assimilating words from other languages. Ravi Shankar Shukla insisted that Hindi's source of learned terms can only be from Sanskrit. There was resentment against Urdu as an influence on

Hindi. The more popular term at that time, "Hindustani", stood for a confluence of linguistic and cultural influences from different traditions. However, the scars of Partition damaged the discourse on language. The compromises in this respect can be seen in the text of Article 351, which talks about the promotion of Hindi, mandating the state to promote Hindi so that it serves as a medium of expression for the "composite culture" of India. This appeased those uncomfortable with the imposition of a Sanskritised Hindi. On the other hand, Article 351 also mentions that Hindi shall draw its vocabulary primarily from Sanskrit. There were also a tussle on the official form of numerals to be used amongst "Arab Numerals", "Nagari Numerals" and "International Numerals", which finally led to a compromise in the expression "international form of Indian numerals" in Article 343.

The defining feature of the debate in the Constituent Assembly was merging the issue of language with that of national identity. At some level, this sentiment is understandable in the context of those times. India was gaining freedom after centuries of suppression and some leaders were eager to carve a national identity of a similar texture to that of the Eurocentric experiments of nation-states. English, being the language of the English colonialists, was not acceptable to many. Multilingualism was deemed incompatible with the fervour

of national unity. While the sentiment of forging a national identity may be laudable, language was a poor choice of medium for such a project in a multicultural society.

As a functional tool, language inherently serves a communicative function. It enables us to transfer knowledge and ideas, and serves to transmit cultural heritage and preserve historical memories. Multilingualism should be an aspirational value. This spirit of aspiration ought to inform the design of linguistic policies in multicultural societies. On average, we interact more frequently with people from diverse linguistic backgrounds than our ancestors. Language should be looked at as an important skill to operate in a world which is more connected today than at any other point in time. This is not to contend that our linguistic heritage should be neglected or trivialised.

The problem we faced at the time of drafting the Constitution, as we face even today, is that the approach towards linguistic policy seems to be driven more by the politics of identity than values of aspiration or accommodation. The primary argument in favour of Hindi has been reduced to assertions of slim majoritarianism. Even then, there are concerns about the claim based on mere numerical strength, as only 25 per cent of Indians seem to recognise Hindi as their mother tongue (Census 2011).

Language, used as a political weapon, can be divisive and chauvinistic. It can be used to create hierarchical identities and unequal power dynamics. When we look at languages primarily as markers of identities, we build barriers to acceptability. People begin to assert linguistic supremacy, resist learning a language which they perhaps would not have objected to otherwise.

It is essential to move the discussion away from the binaries of Hindi and non-Hindi camps. The issue which merits attention is the manner in which linguistic policies ought to be designed in a multicultural society. Should linguistic policy be built on chauvinistic underpinnings or on practical concerns? Should the country should have a single national language or multiple? How to select a national language from amongst the many that people speak? Should there should be a national language at all? What are the parameters for evolving an effective linguistic policy?

The linguistic diversity that India has to negotiate is without precedent. We started off on a wrong foot at the time of independence by confining language as an issue of identity. We must learn to avoid the same pitfalls which have damaged our polity so deeply.

The writer is a Fulbright post-doctoral research scholar at Harvard Law School

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TAX RELIEF

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Booster shot' (IE, September 21). The slashing of the corporate tax rate from 30 to 22 per cent is indeed a booster shot. It is an invitation to more FDI as well as greater domestic investment. Loss-making public companies like Air India and BSNL must be privatised. There's no use in sustaining loss making companies at the cost of the exchequer. Besides, just as six airports have been handed over to the Adani Group for maintenance and upgradation, similar steps ought to be taken for the Railways. The government should also give tax relief to the poor and the middle class to boost the economy.

Sauro Dasgupta, Kolkata

FOR FARM'S SAKE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Let prices rise' (IE, September 23). The RBI and the government must avoid any temptation to contain food inflation because any boost to farm income will do two things. First, it will help the agriculture sector grow and second it will give a huge boost to the demand side of the economy. Rather than banning exports of essential items, it will do a great service to the sector if it improves the warehousing infrastructure as huge amount of food goes waste every year.

Bal Govind, Noida

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

TOLERANT HINDUS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'An inseparable destiny' (IE, September 23). Hinduism teaches us "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam". Different communities in the country should live in harmony. Only then will "sabka saath sabka vikas" be possible.

Neha Yadav, Lucknow