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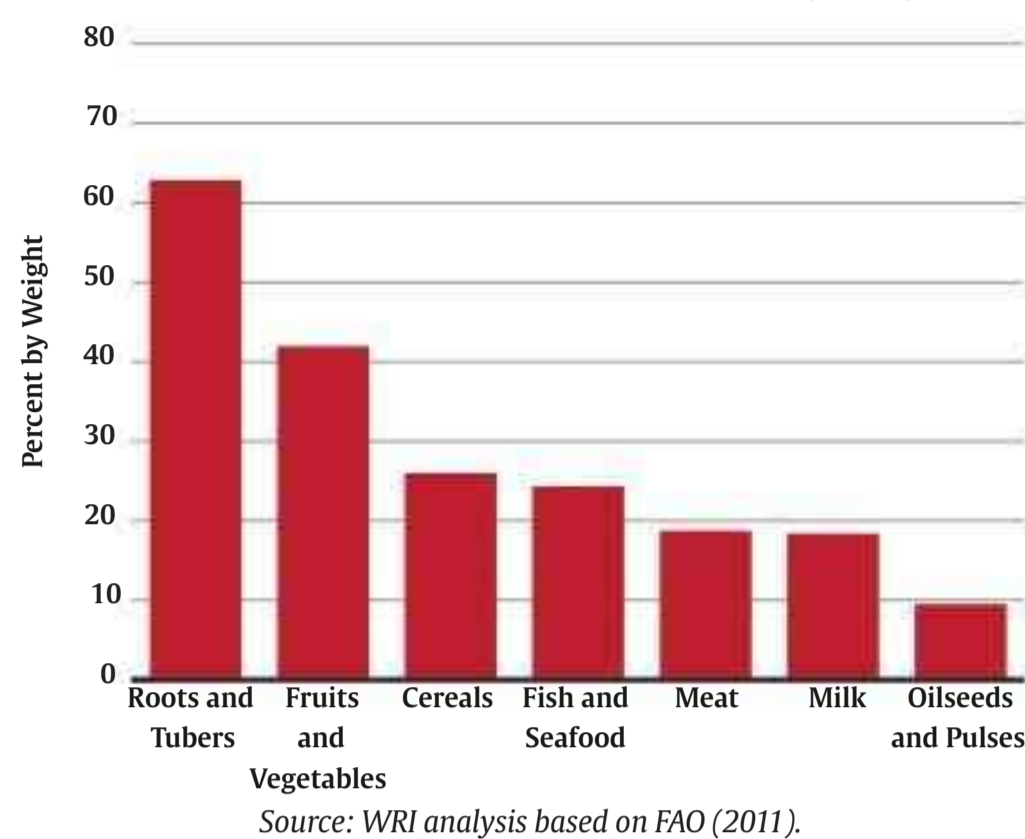
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TELLING NUMBERS

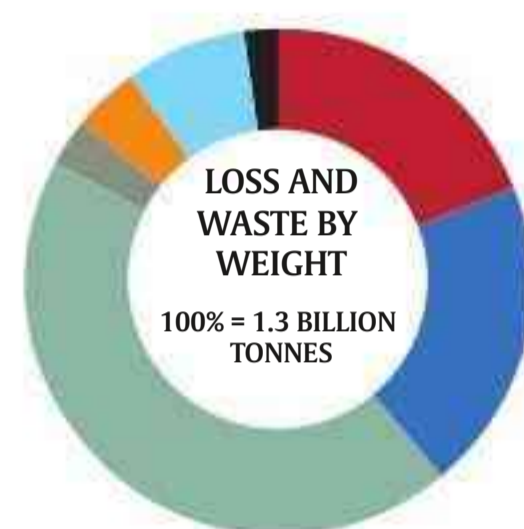
The food we waste, and what it costs the global economy

SHARE OF FOOD GROUP LOST OR WASTED (2007)



Source: WRI analysis based on FAO (2011).

SHARE OF GLOBAL FOOD LOSS



■ Cereals (19%)
 ■ Roots and Tubers (20%)
 ■ Fruits and Vegetables (44%)
 ■ Oilseeds and Pulses (3%)
 ■ Meat (4%)
 ■ Milk (8%)
 ■ Fish and Seafood (2%)

Source: WRI analysis based on FAO (2011).

the maximum wastage, at over 62% for 2007. Fruits and vegetables follow, with over 41%. When viewed as a proportion, by weight, of all the food estimated to be lost and wasted globally, fruits and vegetables make up the largest share of total annual food loss and waste.

A NEW report by the World Resources Institute (WRI) with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation has quantified global food wastage — nearly one-third of the food that is produced each year goes uneaten, costing the global economy over \$940 billion. The uneaten food is responsible for emitting about 8 per cent of planet-warming greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, said the report, "Reducing Food Loss and Waste". It put forward a Global Action Agenda that calls on governments, companies, farmers and consumers to collectively overcome "the world's food loss and waste problem." Some of these actions include developing national strategies for food loss and waste reduction, creating national public-private partnerships, launch supply chain initiatives, reducing small-holder losses and shifting consumer social norms.

Referencing "numerous studies", the report said most of the food loss happens "near the farm" predominantly in lower-income countries and most of the food waste happens "near the plate" predominantly in higher-income countries. Using data from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, the report concluded that roots and tubers are the food group that face

THIS WORD MEANS

CATEGORY 5 HURRICANE

Hurricane Dorian is one. How does US classify storms?

HURRICANE DORIAN struck the northern Bahamas on Monday, and is forecast to head for the Florida coast. One of the strongest Atlantic storms ever recorded, it has been classified as Category 5, the highest level in the classification system followed by the US National Hurricane Center. Category 5 involves wind speeds of 252 km/h or higher. The scale used to classify hurricanes is on the basis of wind speed (see chart). Called Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale, this is different from the "T scale" used in India to classify cyclonic storms.

While hurricanes and cyclones are both tropical storms, they get their names based on the location of their formation.

THE CLASSIFICATION

Category	Wind Speed (km/h)
Category 1	119-153
Category 2	164-177
Category 3	178-208
Category 4	209-251
Category 5	252 km/h or more

Hurricanes are essentially tropical cyclones that originate in the Atlantic basin, the eastern North Pacific Ocean and less frequently in the Central North Pacific, while cyclones are formed over the South Pacific and Indian Ocean. There is another name, typhoons, which is used for storms formed over the Northwest Pacific Ocean.

NEHA BANKA

KOLKATA, SEPTEMBER 2

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What is the coin about?

The coin had been scheduled for a November release to mark 50 years since the death of Blyton, whose books include 'The Famous Five', 'Noddy' and other series and have been popular with children in the Commonwealth countries.

A spokesperson for the Royal Mint, who did not wish to be named, told *The Indian*

Express that events, anniversaries and themes are commemorated each year. "To create a fair shortlist each proposal is subject to a rigorous planning and design selection process governed by an independent panel known as the Royal Mint Advisory Committee (RMAC)," the spokesperson said.

What led to its decision not to do so?

The spokesperson said the final decision is taken not by the Royal Mint itself but by the Committee, which includes experts in various fields. *The Mail on Sunday* reported that the Committee's remarks on Blyton were the result of a request under the Freedom of Information Act to see minutes from the committee meetings. *The Mint* spokesperson declined to make additional comments on the decision.

Why has Blyton faced criticism?

Blyton (1897-1968) wrote over 700

UDIT MISRA

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 2

THE CENTRAL Statistics Office (CSO) on Friday released the economic growth data for the first quarter (Q1, or April to June) of the current financial year (2019-20, or FY20). A disappointing number was widely expected, especially after the 5.8% growth in Q4 of FY19, and the wave of bad news such as falling sales of automobiles and everyday consumables—even so, the official GDP data of just 5% came as a shock to many.

Real vs Nominal Growth

At 5%, the real GDP growth rate has hit a six-year low (see *Chart 1*). Real GDP growth rate is a derived figure—it is arrived at by subtracting the inflation rate from the nominal GDP growth rate, that is growth rate calculated at current prices. What is more worrying is the deceleration in the nominal GDP growth, which has been pegged at 8% for Q1. For perspective, it should be noted that the Union Budget, presented on July 5, had expected a nominal growth of 12%. The idea was that with a 12% nominal growth and 4% inflation rate, real GDP would be 8%.

At 8% nominal growth, all calculations—real GDP and tax revenues etc.—go haywire. An 8% nominal growth is unusually low; just once has nominal growth fallen to this level in both the current GDP series (with a base year of 2011-12) and the past GDP series (with the base year of 2004-05). And that was in the wake of the global financial crisis in 2009.

GVA vs GDP

There are two main ways in which the CSO estimates economic growth. One is from the supply side—that is, by mapping the value-added (in rupee terms) by the various sectors in the economy. The sectors are broadly divided into Agriculture, Industry and Services, and all workers in the economy fall into one or the other category.

There are sub-categories too—Industry, for example, has Manufacturing, Construction, Mining & Quarrying, etc. When all the value-added is totalled, we get the Gross Value Added (GVA) in the economy. In other words, GVA tracks the income generated for all the workers in the economy.

The GDP is arrived at from the demand side. It is calculated by mapping the expenditure made by different categories of spenders. Broadly speaking, there are four sources of expenditure in an economy—namely, private consumption, government consumption, business investments, and net exports (exports minus imports). Because the GDP maps

PARTHA SARATHI BISWAS

PUNE, SEPTEMBER 2

ON AUGUST 22, a two-judge Bench of Justices S C Dharmadhikari and Sandeep K Shinde of the Bombay High Court ordered the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Mumbai Police to register an FIR against the 44 erstwhile directors of the Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank for their alleged role in the various irregularities in sanctioning of loans and financial dealings. The list includes political leaders including former Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar of the NCP and Jayant Patil (PWP).

The order came on a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by Mumbai resident Surinder Arora in 2015. Arora had cited a 2009-10 annual inspection report by NABARD, an inquiry report of the Commissioner of Cooperation and the internal audit report of the bank, all of which talked of irregularities and connivance of the then board of directors in extending loans to cooperative sugar mills, spinning mills and

Enid Blyton (1897-1968), enidblyton.co.uk

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final expenditure, it includes both taxes and subsidies that the government receives and gives. This component, net taxes, is the difference between GVA and GDP.

Typically, GDP is a good measure when you want to compare India with another economy, while GVA is better to compare different sectors within the economy. GVA is more important when looking at quarterly growth data, because quarterly GDP is arrived at by apportioning the observed GVA data into different spender categories.

The supply-side story

The GVA in Q1 is pegged at 4.9%. Such a low level of GVA suggests that producers are not adding enough value—in other words, their income growth is low.

As *Chart 2* shows, growth in all three sectors has declined, but most of the decline is in Agriculture and Industry. Within Industry, Manufacturing has seen a spectacular collapse. Other sub-sectors of Industry such as Mining & Quarrying and Construction too, have slumped over the past five quarters.

other agri based businesses.

Why the bank is important

MSC Bank is the state's apex cooperative bank. Its primary function is to re-finance district central cooperative banks (DCCBs) that extend agricultural credit to farmers. It also extends capital to the agri-processing units like sugar mills, spinning mills, food processing units etc. The RBI is the bank's regulator with NABARD conducting yearly financial inspection.

Before it was dismissed, the bank was run by a board of directors who were elected from district-level cooperative bodies. The last board had 44 directors and a majority of them were elected representatives from the then ruling NCP-Congress. Leaders from other parties also had representation on the board. Since 2011, the bank is run by a board of administrator appointed by the state government.

facing adverse criticism.

British researcher David Rudd wrote in a 1997 thesis that a lot of the criticism against Blyton has been misplaced because "popular books are meant to be popular because they have the qualities that are liked by children at a certain age". Andrew Maunders, professor at the University of Hertfordshire, who is currently researching Blyton's work, told *The Indian Express*: "Adults and children do read her books differently but that doesn't mean her books are any better. (The criticism) pops up because Enid Blyton was a woman of her time and people were casually and thoughtlessly racist in Britain in the 1940s and 1950s—and later. She is one of them."

What was racist about her writings?

One of the characters that commonly feature in Blyton's works is the 'golliwog'. A 1984 op-ed in *The Guardian* said: "There is not much doubt in my mind that the

SIMPLY PUT

How to read GDP data

Q1 growth data show that the two biggest job-providing sectors, Agriculture and Industry, are witnessing feeble income growth. That explains why private consumption demand has collapsed in the economy

GDP GROWTH FALLS TO A SIX-YEAR LOW

Chart 1: GDP growth slowed for the fifth consecutive quarter

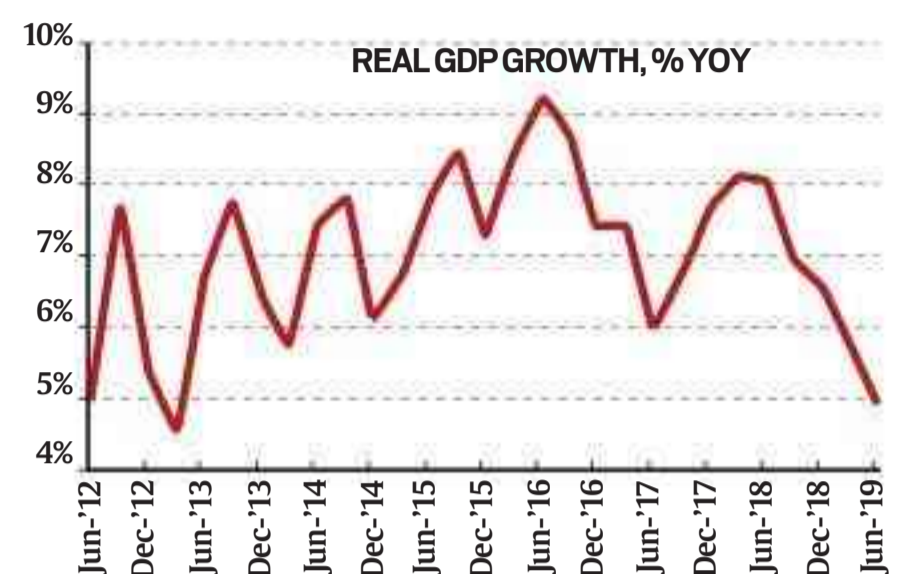


Chart 3: Private consumption and business investment demand have decelerated



Chart 2: GVA Growth Rate by Economic Activity (%)

Sectors	FY19				FY20 Q1
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Agriculture	5.1	4.9	2.8	-0.1	2
Industry	9.8	6.7	7	4.2	2.7
Manufacturing	12.1	6.9	6.4	3.1	0.6
Services	7.1	7.3	7.2	8.4	6.9
Total GVA at Basic Price	7.7	6.9	6.3	5.7	4.9

Sources: ICICI Securities, SBI Research

What the numbers imply

Firstly, the growth trajectory suggests there is more pain ahead. According to an analysis by State Bank of India, when GDP grew by 8% in Q1 of FY19, 70% of the leading indicators such as car sales showed acceleration. In this quarter, only 35% of these indicators showed acceleration, and GDP grew by 5%. For Q2 (July to September), only 24% indicators show acceleration.

Secondly, since the release, GDP growth rate forecasts for the current year have been dialled down yet again. Most observers expected a real GDP growth rate of somewhere between 5.4% and 6.4% for Q1. Now, SBI pegs the full-year growth at 6.1%. ICICI Securities at 6.3%, and Pronab Sen, former Chief Statistician, pegs it at 5.5%. Roughly six months ago, most estimates for FY20 were around 7.5%.

Thirdly, such weak growth implies that the government's fiscal deficit figures are likely to be breached.

Lastly, since weak growth will lead to lower tax revenues, the government is likely to struggle if it wants to push up growth by spending on its own.

Why probe ordered against Ajit Pawar, others



Ajit Pawar

As of March 31, 2019, the net worth of the bank is pegged at Rs 2,689.89 crore and it has savings worth Rs 15,839.87 crore. The total loan portfolio in the last financial year stood Rs 19,599.54 crore, and the bank reported a net profit of Rs 251.35 crore.

The alleged irregularities

On May 4, 2011 the RBI suspended the then board of directors and appoint administrators instead. This decision was taken in view of the inadequacies observed by NABARD during its 2009-10 annual inspection report and the abnormally high nonperforming assets of 31.2 per cent. The board of directors had denied all allegations of wrongdoing, and the dismissal started a war of words between NCP and Congress with each accusing the other.

In their 84-page judgment, the judges quoted from the NABARD report on shortfall

in provisioning for NPAs, and high level of NPAs. The report had accused the board of directors of not taking discernible action for recovery in 86 cases worth Rs 2806.9 crore registered under the SARFAESI Act, 2002. It talked about the bank continuing to violate norms for providing loans, and said loans worth Rs 297.14 crore were sanctioned to eight cooperative sugar mills without securing collateral and government guarantee.

Following Arora's PIL, the court asked the EOW to look into the complaint. On August 22, the court pulled up the EOW deputy commissioner for failure to file an FIR.

Why it matters politically

The FIR comes at a time when the state gears up to elect a new Assembly. For the NCP, the order is yet another blow as Pawar is one of its senior-most leaders. The BJP and Shiv Sena are likely to target the NCP-Congress over alleged corruption. In fact, some NCP leaders named in the FIR, such as Vijaysingh Mohite Patil, have since joined BJP, while others such as Dilip Sopal have joined the Shiv Sena.

Longer report: www.indianexpress.com

Was Enid Blyton racist and sexist? Royal Mint thinks so, scholars debate

NEHA BANKA

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What was racist about her writings?

One of the characters that commonly feature in Blyton's works is the 'golliwog'. A 1984 op-ed in *The Guardian* said: "There is not much doubt in my mind that the

golliwog...with its goggle eyes, spiky hair, and banana lips is in fact a distorted representation of a black person." Maunders said: "The use of the golliwog is racist now and I think it was then. Blyton was a supporter of the British Empire and her representations of non-white people is coloured by that. It's impossible to get away from it."

In later editions of Blyton's books, the golliwogs were replaced with goblins.

What was homophobic and sexist about her writings?

Not everyone agrees with accusations of homophobia and sexism. George (given name Georgina) from 'The Famous Five' series shuns traditional gender constructs—from the way she chooses to dress to how she views her abilities in comparison with the boys in the group. "I don't think (Blyton) can be described as sexist. George in 'The Famous Five' and the girls at 'Malory

Towers' were very sparky and some of the boys seemed feeble by comparison. I also don't get homophobic," literary biographer Laura Thompson told *The Mail on Sunday*.

In his paper, Rudd writes that Blyton's characters and their relationships are often misinterpreted in a haste to denounce the author. Rudd notes that Noddy's relationship with others in Toyland is given sexual connotations when it isn't necessarily so, or even perceived to be so by children.

Why did the Royal Mint feel she is not a 'very well-regarded' author?

Despite the sale of 600 million books and international recognition, she did not have much standing as an author in English literature. "Blyton seems to have been very popular overseas...For many children she seems to have presented an attractive vision of England—picnics and adventures," Maunders said.

Longer report: www.indianexpress.com



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

THE PAK MUDDLE

On Kashmir, Islamabad blows hot and cold. New Delhi must keep watch, its responses are still evolving

EVER SINCE THE government took the decision to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, the plethora of responses from the Pakistani leadership has shown up the confusion at the top in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Pakistan's effort has been to "internationalise" the Kashmir issue, and to an extent, it has succeeded. In four short weeks, Kashmir has been the subject of a "closed door" discussion at the UN Security Council and drawn renewed interest from the international press. It has caught the attention of US President Donald Trump and lawmakers in the US, UK and EU. This month, there is every likelihood of a discussion in other UN fora such as the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. But the problem for Pakistan and PM Imran Khan is that most foreign governments still seem to take Delhi's side when they say it is a bilateral issue — there seems to be no pressure on the Modi government from any foreign capital to talk to Pakistan, nor has any government challenged India's position that the August 5 decisions are "internal". Except for Turkey, no OIC member has rushed to support Pakistan. Even the Taliban were cut to the quick when Pakistan linked the developments in Kashmir to the Afghan talks. The spectre of a nuclear holocaust, drawn by the Pakistan PM in an op-ed in a venerable US newspaper, has neither shaken nor stirred world leaders. His exhortation to all Pakistanis to stand still for 30 minutes every Friday in support of Kashmiris has only provided comic relief.

In fact, Pakistan's responses appear aimed more at the domestic audience, three generations of which have been nurtured on the rhetoric of Kashmir as the country's "jugular vein". Imran Khan is desperate to show his voters that he is doing something, that his government has not abandoned the issue. But for all the sabre rattling, both the civilian and military leadership of that country know only too well that confrontation over Kashmir is not an option. Pakistan's economy is tanking and its only hope is life support from the IMF. It is only too aware of the possible consequences of unleashing the jihadi *tanzeem* from its side — not just the international retribution it might attract, but also, post-Balakot, the unpredictability of India's response.

A realistic assessment of its situation may be one reason why Pakistan has blown cold after blowing hot. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi rushed to clarify that war with India was not an option, and declared Pakistan ready for conditional talks with India. Pakistan also overcame its hostility enough to provide, as directed by the International Court of Justice, unconditional consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav, the former Indian Navy officer in its custody. But it would be a mistake to read these as signs of Pakistan's acceptance of the "new normal" set by India in Kashmir. Pakistan's responses are still evolving, and much will depend on how the situation develops in Kashmir over the coming weeks.

UNDUE PROCESS

JNU's pettifoggery over Romila Thapar's fitness to remain professor emerita makes its administration a laughing stock

THE AUTHORITIES OF Jawaharlal Nehru University have caught the withering gaze of the academic community by calling for the CV of Romila Thapar, professor emerita, premier historian of ancient India and a student of AL Basham, to evaluate if she is competent to retain the honour. There are two absurdities here. First, Thapar's CV is on the university's own website and if the administration were to lose its way online, Google would be an infallible friend. And second, it is unlikely that anyone in the administration has the credentials to evaluate Thapar.

This exercise is apparently in pursuance of a 2018 ordinance which specified periodic revaluations. But that is illogical, and betrays the administration's ignorance about the term "emeritus", whose meaning in academic use has been clear from 1794 — the conferment of an honour for past achievements. These, being in the past, cannot have changed — unless the university has acquired the capacity to warp time by science fiction — and therefore revaluation would be a pointless exercise. Besides, such positions are seen as recognition of status, and no obligations adhere either to the university conferring it, or the recipient. Revaluation would have meaning in examining a contract, under which service levels may be gauged. However, in the case of professors emeritus, no such contract exists. Apart from such absurdities, in the matter of the supposed revaluation of Thapar, the change in the rules made last year is being imposed retrospectively.

The university has argued that it is simply following due process. How egregiously diligent of them, when due process is getting short shrift in so many vital matters in the public sphere, in JNU and outside it. Romila Thapar may be right in assuming that while her relations with the university may remain unaffected at the end of the process, the process itself would be the punishment, inflicting "dishonour" upon one of the leading lights of the institution who has been vocally critical of its functioning in recent years. She is also correct in assuming that even if she were declared unfit by JNU, it would in no way harm her standing. On the contrary, one of India's most prestigious institutions would stand much diminished in the eyes of the world. With its administration's stunted understanding of academics and its willingness to play petty politics, it would be the laughing stock of the world of learning.

TO BAWA SIR, WITH LOVE

Marzban Patel has helped many players to fall head over heels in love with hockey

THERE IS A short, charming video, from five years ago, of a straight-shooting Marzban Patel, lovingly called "Bawa sir", who is also this year's recipient of the Dronacharya award for coaching young hockey players and producing at least 30 internationals and six Olympians. Asked about his record, a nonplussed Patel says, "normal feeling hai. If four players played for India, there are more who don't make it. No need to be happy or to celebrate. It's part of training." He goes on to lament the lack of focus at the grassroots, and talks about how the education system in the country is "bakwaas", useless, as teachers and parents don't encourage children to play.

It is in this milieu, where hockey is seen as an endangered sport, that Patel has spotted, nurtured and produced quality players with his labour of love. His tribe is fading in the soulless world of academies where some sportstars lend their names to establishments for money but hardly ever invest their own time, labour and commitment to them. No wonder, gratitude-filled tributes have poured in from the likes of Viren Rasquinha to Valmiki for Patel. Memories abound, of how he convinced everyone involved to let a 14-year old Viren Rasquinha play with the adults — a move that changed his career. How he changed the minds of the initially-reluctant parents of Suraj Karkera, currently playing for India.

Not many who have trained with him remember him wielding a hockey stick. His speciality was in spotting talent and in conveying the love of the game to the young players and ensuring they engaged with it long enough for them to fall head over heels in love with the sport. He believes coaching can't be restricted to just imparting game skills, but its success lies in how a coach can affect the sporting ecosystem itself. He has built relationships with parents, convincing the stubborn ones to let their kids play. His philosophy is of total commitment, of a kind rarely seen nowadays. He would cajole, scold, inspire the players and somewhere down the line, their awe and respect would be replaced with love and gratitude.



SUN WEIDONG

Upholding the law

China has strong resolve and confidence to maintain Hong Kong's prosperity and stability

RECENTLY, THE SITUATION in China's Hong Kong has drawn much attention. What happened in Hong Kong? Who caused the current situation there? What is China's position and attitude? I would like to take this opportunity to share the truth and China's views.

First, as protests in Hong Kong have descended into violent acts, the top priority is to stop the violence and chaos, and restore order in accordance with law. Over the past two months, Hong Kong saw continued illegal protests, which have become more and more aggressive and descended into extreme violence. This is by no means a matter of democracy or freedom. The aggressiveness and destructiveness of these acts are shocking.

Radical protesters attacked official institutions. They stormed the Hong Kong Legislative Council building, tore up copies of the Basic Law and defaced the regional emblem of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). They besieged the Liaison Office of the Central People's government in HKSAR and defaced China's national emblem. They repeatedly removed China's national flag from the flagpole and threw it into the sea. Radicals have staged multiple violent assaults against the police. They attacked police with toxic liquids and powders and bit off one officer's finger. They hurled petrol bombs at police at various locations. A dozen police officers were injured and sent to hospital. What is even more horrifying is that on the evening of August 30, three masked men hacked a Hong Kong police officer with a knife, leaving him with bone-deep wounds. Radical protesters have assaulted citizens, bound up and attacked one reporter from the mainland, vandalised shops and hurled petrol bombs. These atrocities, which are still escalating with extreme hazards and cruelty, defy laws both human and divine, and cannot be tolerated by any civilised society.

Second, behind the demonstrations is the interference and instigation by some countries. External meddling in Hong Kong must cease. If one looks for the source of the violent acts, it can be found that rushing at the front are radical protesters, behind the scenes

are "anti-China" forces inside and outside Hong Kong who scheme to destabilise the city. These people colluded with each other in an organised and premeditated attempt to create social unrest in Hong Kong. Some external forces have played a very disgraceful role in this regard. Instead of condemning the recent violent crimes in Hong Kong, some Western politicians criticised the HKSAR government for stopping the violence and chaos and restoring order in accordance with the law, defaming China's social system and internal and external policies.

The diplomatic agencies of some countries in Hong Kong support radicals by providing guidance and funding to them secretly or in public. Some Western media follow suit — they distort facts and paper over violence, advocating that "violence is the only solution to problems". They blame the Hong Kong police, who uphold public order, for "excessive law enforcement", but turn a blind eye to the atrocities committed by radicals against the police. With such double standards, how could equity and justice be upheld?

Third, what's happening in Hong Kong is purely China's internal affair. Any attempt to endanger China's sovereignty and security is absolutely impermissible. On July 1, 1997, China resumed sovereignty over Hong Kong and Hong Kong returned to the embrace of the motherland. Hong Kong is a part of China. The Chinese government exercises jurisdiction over Hong Kong according to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law of the HKSAR. Hong Kong affairs are purely China's internal affairs. This is a fact recognised internationally. All governments in the world recognise China's sovereignty over Hong Kong. There is no sovereignty issue over Hong Kong at all.

Hong Kong implements the policy of "One country, Two systems". What needs to be highlighted is that "One country, Two systems" should be understood and implemented as a whole. When talking about "Two systems", one must not forget that "One country" is the fundamental premise. In implementing "One country, Two systems", any attempt to endanger China's sovereignty and security, to challenge the power of the cen-

tral government and the authority of the Basic Law, or to use Hong Kong to carry out infiltration and sabotage activities against the mainland is absolutely impermissible.

Fourth, the central government of China has the strong resolve and confidence to maintain Hong Kong's prosperity and stability. Hong Kong is known for its openness, prosperity and law and order. In the 22 years since its return to China, and with the support of the central government, Hong Kong's economic output has doubled and its global rule of law ranking jumped from below 60th to 16th. Hong Kong's status as an international financial, shipping and trade centre has been consolidated. It has been recognised by many international institutions as one of the world's most free economies and most competitive regions. Maintaining the rule of law, stability and prosperity of Hong Kong is in line with the common interests of all parties. I believe that all our fair-minded Indian friends would like to see Hong Kong put an end to violence, curb chaos and restore order.

Lessons from history tell us that so-called democracy and freedom without rule of law and order only lead to anarchism and social disorder. The people of Hong Kong can no longer bear the current grim situation and have spoken with righteous voices "anti-violence, seeking stability". What Hong Kong needs most today is to stop the violence and chaos, advocate the rule of law, restore order and punish violent activities.

The central government of China will continue to firmly support Chief Executive Carrie Lam in leading the Hong Kong government's administration according to the law, firmly support the Hong Kong police in strictly enforcing the law, and firmly support Hong Kong's prosperity and development. I hope and believe that the people of Hong Kong and the HKSAR government can work together to stop violence and chaos, resolutely resist foreign interference and restore and maintain the rule of law in Hong Kong as soon as possible.

The writer is the Chinese Ambassador to India



SHIVANI NAIK

SMASHING GENDER BIAS

PV Sindhu, Saina Nehwal are tracing their own paths, not chasing male records

HAD PV SINDHU — or Saina Nehwal before her — settled for merely equalling the stupendous feats of Prakash Padukone (1980) and Pullela Gopichand (2001) at All England, India would never have had three silvers (2015, 2017, 2018) and one precious gold (2019) at the Badminton World Championships. Keeping men as the benchmark has its obvious limitations in sport, as in life: Sometimes, when the moon is there for the taking, why go chasing after twinkling stars?

The All England still has its charm — the Chinese still covet it and both these Indian women are yet to win it. However, both Saina and Sindhu were prodded, by the same two gentlemen in fact, to aim for what is now considered the pinnacle in the sport, the World Championships.

Of course, that was well after the women themselves had made up their minds to let their ambition be unfettered and limitless. After all, why restrict your career goals to just bettering the best from India — which happened to be the two men in singles?

And so, they aimed obsessively for the biggest crowns, this grand pursuit giving India some rousing sporting memories: Saina scything through the game of Danish All England champ Tine Baun on way to her Olympic bronze at London 2012. Sindhu scuttling every Chinese attempt that came in her path, and her glorious final matches at the World Championships — one won, some lost — since 2016 and Saina's defiance against

younger opponents while making the finals of the All England and World's in 2015.

None of these forays (into World Championship finals) had any precedent amongst Indian men. Padukone, who won a Worlds bronze in 1983, was a trailblazer in figuring out the first steps internationally for Indian men. And Gopichand fought against his rotten luck with injuries, putting in a massive effort into winning his All England crown before the knee gave out.

Sindhu and Saina had this past to turn to but they still had to swim in uncharted waters when they played those big finals. They had to control their fraying nerves and maintain their poise in order to win big: And Sindhu did it marvellously last week, becoming the World Champion.

But neither she, nor Saina who won India's first World's silver in 2015 — nor the doubles pair of Jwala Gutta-Ashwini Ponappa who won bronze in 2011 — allowed the occasion to get to their heads. They have eight of India's 10 World Championship medals to show for their incredible tenacity.

As a sport, badminton is equitable. Equal pay has existed for as long as one remembers in the sport — the prize money is always equally distributed between men and women. This isn't just a function of how both men and women play the best of three punishing sets. Badminton's equal pay is also a function of a distinctly Asian value system, given the sport's predominance in the eastern hemisphere: Pay is proportional to hard

labour. There is minimal interference of the markets or popularity when it comes to determining one's earnings.

At their sporting zenith, first Indonesia and then, China, had iconic female champions — Susi Susanti and Zhang Ning — matching the feats of their male compatriots effortlessly. The first challenge to the Chinese juggernaut a decade ago in women's singles was mounted by Mew Choo Wong from Malaysia. Women like Mia Audina and now, Carolina Marin, have been pioneers for the sport in their respective countries as well.

At a starry gathering of legends — Lin Dan, Lee Chong Wei, Peter Gade and Taufik Hidayat — in a Mumbai five-star hotel a few years back, the quartet were left fielding questions on whether men's singles had become too uni-dimensional and... umm... boring, when compared to the burst of talent and sheer variety in styles in women's singles.

In the context of these developments worldwide, it is little wonder that Sindhu and Saina have become badminton's biggest names in India. One can go on about when this duo will bring back the All England crown. With Sindhu's form and game, such a prospect seems inevitable. But, Saina Nehwal and PV Sindhu have always known better than to measure their sporting arcs against male achievements. Why trot towards equality with men when you can gallop away to further greatness?

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SEPTEMBER 3, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO



HAVANA SUMMIT STARTS
HAVANA IS THE scene of frenetic activity, welcome signs and rousing slogans as the non-aligned summit, which has grown to 96 nations with the admission of Pakistan, Iran, Nicaragua and others, gets under way. Foreign ministers are struggling to hammer out consensus that will satisfy conflicting views, interests and orientations. Fifty to 60 heads of state are expected to attend. India, which played a major role since NAM's inception as founder member is handicapped because while the rest of the Subcontinent is represented by heads of government, it is represented at only the foreign ministerial level, and that too by a government whose

future is uncertain.

NO FREE LUNCH
DID RAJ NARAIN seek a golden railway pass for himself to be able to travel anywhere in the country, first-class or air-conditioned? "The newspaper that has started that slander is a liar", Narain retorted angrily in response to a reporter's query. But did he seek such a pass for a well-known tantra expert, P N Kapur? Narain did not reply directly but clearly implied that he had, in fact, helped Kapur in having the pass renewed. "The pass was first issued to this person during Mrs Gandhi's rule, by the then railway minister, Kamalapati Tripathi", Narain clarified.

THE RSS QUESTION
THE RSS ISSUE, which continues to be a point of contention between top leaders of the Janata Party, dominated the second day's debate at the Janata national executive with the former commerce minister, Mohan Dharia, insisting on resolving the issue "here and now". The executive, however, did not reject out of hand the suggestion of Jagjivan Ram that the party president, Chandra Shekhar, should be allowed to handle the issue. Ram, in his opening remarks at the executive, said that the party had gained public sympathy after the President's refusal to let it form the government: This was in sharp contrast to the public criticism of the party in July.



CR Sasikumar

Centre must loosen purse strings

Direct stimulus is needed, measures announced by government are unlikely to prop up growth immediately



MADAN SABNAVIS

THERE IS A sense of déjà vu with a difference, with the government going in for a series of announcements to reinvigorate the economy over the last couple of weeks. The first set of announcements came against the backdrop of mis-governance of the earlier regime. This time around, it is an acknowledgment that something is amiss in the economy with GDP growth for the first quarter of 2019-20 slipping to a six-year low of 5 per cent. While economists are debating whether the current slowdown is cyclical or structural, the fact is that jobs are not being created. Consumption is not picking up and companies are not investing like they used to. This has been the trend since demonetisation in 2016.

Growth, across sectors, barring electricity and the government, has been less than 8 per cent, and less than last year. Manufacturing, in particular, has grown by just 0.6 per cent in the first quarter, and while the high base effect of 12.1 per cent last year provides some comfort, the fact is that there is evidence of a washout in the auto segment with large job losses reported and with India Inc's sales at around 4-5 per cent in the first quarter. In 2017, low growth was attributed to GST, which led to destocking and hence, lower production. This time, it is structural in nature, with the demand side dominating.

The trade and transport as well as finance and real estate sectors have also witnessed lower growth in the first quarter at 7.1 per cent and 5.9 per cent respectively. In the case of the former, lower economic activity has resulted in slower growth, while the latter still hides the major restructuring that is required. While public sector banks appear to be out of the NPA conundrum, the NBFCs, which have been a major financier of small and medium enterprises, infrastructure and housing sectors, have witnessed a setback. This has been a work in progress for almost a year now with banks not too willing to lend.

Growth in construction has also slowed down from 9.6 per cent in the first quarter last year to 5.7 per cent this year with limited ac-

tivity seen only in segments such as roads, where the central government is involved. The private sector is still cautious in investing, as evident in the slight dip in the gross fixed capital formation ratio from 30 per cent of GDP in Q1 2018-19 to 29.7 per cent in Q1 2019-20.

The reason for the slowdown is more on the demand side. Households are not spending as employment generation has been limited and incomes have not been rising. The rural economy has been buffeted in the last three years by demonetisation and lower price realisation due to good harvests. It remains to be seen whether prices will firm up at the time of the kharif harvest. The auto and consumer durable segments have been affected the most on this score as the propensity to spend tends to be higher in rural areas, especially during the harvest season which coincides with the festive season. The sectors that have been doing relatively better are cement and steel, where expenditure is government linked, and segments such as housing, e-commerce and retail. However, the real estate segment has been under pressure with the NBFC route of financing being severed.

In this situation, there has been little incentive for industry to invest as reflected in the dip in fixed capital formation. Investment has been scattered and concentrated more in sectors like power, natural resources and metals — a part of which is coming from public sector enterprises.

The solution so far has been for the government to nudge the RBI to lower interest rates. But the impact has been limited as companies don't borrow just because rates come down. There needs to be a reason for fresh investment in terms of prospects, and more importantly, there has to be demand. The housing segment has benefited to an extent as home buyers are better off. However, even a 50 bps reduction in home loan costs cannot on its own prop up demand as the repayment capacity of the borrower has to be there, which is dependent on growth in incomes.

It is only appropriate that the government, in the last fortnight or so, has come up with a series of policy announcements and there are indications of another round of reforms in the coming weeks, probably pertaining to the real estate sector. From more general announcements involving the reversal of some financially onerous measures announced during the budget and an attempt to revive the auto sector, the policies have focused on foreign direct investment and the banking sector.

How is one to read all these steps? The first package was more in terms of fostering oper-

The solution so far has been for the government to nudge the RBI to keep lowering interest rates. But the impact has been limited as companies don't borrow just because rates come down. There needs to be a reason for fresh investment in terms of prospects and more importantly there has to be demand. The housing segment has benefited to an extent as home buyers are better off. However, even a 50 bps reduction in home loan cost cannot on its own prop up demand as the repayment capacity of the borrower has to be there which is dependent on growth in incomes.

ational convenience — reversal of the surcharge on FPIs and revisiting the clause relating to angel investors. SME payments are to be streamlined with a one-time settlement plan in place and the government is to ensure that it makes its payments on time for projects (over Rs 40,000 crore is stuck in the pipeline). Banks have been given Rs 70,000 crore through recapitalisation (this was already in the budget through recap bonds which was anyway fiscal neutral), and structures have been created for the corporate bond market. While the auto sector is to get some relief on depreciation on vehicles and the government has clarified on the validity of registration on Bharat IV vehicles, the government will now be buying new vehicles, which was barred earlier. But, the question is whether the government has more money to spend given its tight budget. The stocks of auto companies have not been enthused.

The FDI rules now give single brand more breathing space in terms of local procurement and setting up of physical structures. Also, 100 per cent FDI through the automatic route in coal mining and related activities has been permitted as has 26 per cent FDI under the government route for uploading/streaming of news and current affairs in digital media. However, these rules take time to work out and one does not expect to see a flurry of capital flows.

Lastly, the big bank-merger plan announced on August 30 is progressive. But, it may not really add much on the credit side as the amount of capital to be provided remains unchanged and only the bank names would change. While governance standards will change, there will still be a reluctance to lend to risky projects. Therefore, while there will be fewer public sector banks, the mindset will not change. Besides, in the present environment, liquidity is less of an issue compared to the willingness to lend, given the credit risk profile of India Inc.

What is definitely missing from the policies announced so far is a direct stimulus in terms of financial outlays from the Centre. This is critical, as the problem is deep on the demand side. Making "doing business" easier is a positive, and creating mega PSBs a progressive step. But this cannot change the 5 per cent growth number immediately. Money has to be spent and a fiscal compromise is required. Or else, we will continue to walk the path of gradual upward movement.

The writer is chief economist, CARE Ratings. Views are personal

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Boris Johnson's experience as the face of Vote Leave has taught him how to turn outrage into political energy. Since taking office, his administration has leaked the idea that it is prepared to do the constitutionally shocking to deliver Brexit." — THE GUARDIAN

Reaching out to Europe

New Delhi's diplomacy in the last week indicates its break from the past and willingness for a more productive engagement with Brussels



RAJA MANDALA

BY C RAJA MOHAN

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA Modi's visit to Biarritz on the Atlantic coast of France late last month to join the G-7 leaders as a special guest of President Emmanuel Macron and his travels to Vladivostok on Russia's Pacific coast for a meeting with the Russian President Vladimir Putin this week helps frame the growing importance of Eurasia for India's changing geopolitics. The Modi government is unwilling to buy the proposition that the tension between the concepts of Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific is real. Russians and Chinese establishments see the "Indo-Pacific" as an effort to contain China. The Americans believe the promotion of "Eurasia" is about a Sino-Russian design to marginalise the US in the continental space.

Located at the crossroads of Asia and at the heart of the Indian Ocean, India sees itself as a maritime power in the Indo-Pacific with big interests in continental Eurasia. Delhi may find Europe is the right partner in overcoming the presumed tension between the two concepts. In his bilateral talks with Macron last month, Modi highlighted the importance of India's new alliance with France, by coining a characteristic acronym, IN-FRA, that might be critical for India in both the maritime and continental domains.

Meanwhile, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to Moscow, Budapest, Warsaw and Brussels in the last few days may have laid the basis for thinking more strategically about Europe. Jaishankar's visit should also elevate Central Europe in the list of India's diplomatic priorities.

In deepening its partnership with Europe, Delhi can overcome some of the recent challenges that have emerged in the conduct of its foreign policy. First is the Russian question. If the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the integration of Russia into the global order opened up enormous geopolitical space for India after 1991, renewed tensions between Russia and the West have begun to shrink Delhi's room for manoeuvre.

Macron is leading a new effort, very welcome in Delhi, to ease the conflict between Russia and the West. He has the strong backing of US President Donald Trump, who has made the public case for bringing Russia back into the collective "Western" forums such as the G-7. Russia was suspended from the G8 forum after its intervention in Ukraine in 2014. France and Germany are planning to make a fresh bid to resolve the European stand-off with Russia on Ukraine.

Paris is not the only one eager for a reconciliation with Russia; Tokyo is even more enthusiastic. When he arrives at the annual summit of the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok this week, Modi will run into his friend and partner, Shinzo Abe. The Japanese prime minister has attended the

Forum since it was launched in 2015. Abe has consistently sought to resolve the long-standing territorial dispute with Russia and make Moscow a partner in the Japanese strategy for the Indo-Pacific. No country has a higher stake than India in seeing a rapprochement between Russia and its European neighbours in the west and Japan in the east.

Second, as it seeks to address the current contradictions in Eurasia, France is eager to work with India in developing new coalitions to stabilise the Indo-Pacific. France, a resident power in the Indo-Pacific, is eager work with India, Japan, Australia and other nations to prevent the littoral from becoming a hostage to the vagaries of US-China relations.

Third is the problem of US-China tensions over trade that is affecting all major nations, including India. Delhi has good reasons to support the initiative by France, Japan and others to save the global trading system through much needed reforms to make it work for all nations. In the past, India's preference was to forge coalitions like the G-77 that have long ceased to be effective. Working with Europe and Japan, however, might lend greater weight and credence to India's trade diplomacy.

Fourth, India has a strong interest in joining the so-called "Alliance for Multilateralism" — a German initiative backed by France — that calls for modernising international institutions, strengthening the rules-based order and promoting global, rather than national, solutions to global challenges. It does not include the US, Russia and China, but is drawing many middle powers like Japan and Canada in the developed world and South Africa in the developing world.

The alliance is set to be launched later this month on the margins of the annual session of the UN General Assembly in New York. India, which is already working with France in promoting the International Solar Alliance, may find the Alliance for Multilateralism useful in reinforcing its new international initiatives such as cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief that Modi is expected to announce in his address to the UN.

Last, but not least, there is room for expansive cooperation between India and the Central European states. In sticking to its traditional method of engaging Europe through big powers, India has neglected the enormous possibilities for mutual enrichment with other European states as well as the European Union. Jaishankar's visit to Brussels, hopefully, renews the momentum in the partnership with the EU.

That no prime minister has visited Hungary since Rajiv Gandhi in 1988 and Poland since Morarji Desai in 1979, underlines India's strategic neglect of Central Europe all these decades. As the region's weight grows within Europe, Eurasia and the world, Jaishankar's visit has hopefully created the basis for a more productive engagement with the region. It could begin with an early summit meeting between the PM and the leaders of the Visegrad group — the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

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



HARBANS MUKHIA

Babur and the masjid

The first reference to Ram temple in Ayodhya comes as late as 1822

A SUBMISSION WAS made to the Supreme Court on August 28, 2019 by one party to the dispute that Babur never visited Ayodhya and makes no reference to Ram temple.

Well, Babur did visit the place in 1528 and records it twice in *Babur Nama*: "...stayed a few days... in order to settle the affairs of Aud" (medieval Persian texts' synonym for Ayodhya) and went out for a hunt. However, the submission is right on the second point. Babur makes no mention of a Ram, or any other temple there, nor that he had commissioned the construction of a mosque.

The first and primary evidence of the construction was inscribed on the outer and the inner walls of the mosque in a verse. Mir Baqi, Babur's noble, affirms in this verse that the mosque ("the alighting place of angels") was constructed by him under the express command of his master, the emperor. But he makes no mention of a temple, much less a Ram temple, having been made to yield the place for it. Babur himself makes no mention of either the mosque or of his command to the Mir.

The next bit of evidence comes from Abu'l Fazl, Akbar's courtier-historian, in his *Ain-i Akbari*, where he records the length and breadth of Ayodhya and that "it is esteemed one of holiest places of antiquity... It is the residence of Ramchandra who in the treta

age combined in his own person both the spiritual supremacy and kingly office". But he does not identify any site as his place of birth nor mention any temple dedicated to him, nor the existence of a mosque there.

If Babur as emperor and Abu'l Fazl as historian do not record the erection of a mosque at the site of a temple, they are not alone in their silence. None of Babur's descendants down to "the last Mughal" Bahadurshah Zafar, ever reminisces about it, not even the bigoted Aurangzeb, himself responsible for the demolition of Varanasi's Kashi Vishwanath and Mathura's Krishna temples and building of mosques in their place. Memory of his great ancestor's deed at Ayodhya should have filled him with joy, if he could locate it. Silence is all we hear. Silence also from the massive list of historians from the Mughal period — Muslims and Hindus, dogmatic and liberal. Silence also in enormous numbers of Hindi literary compositions, most astonishing being the silence of Goswami Tulsi Das. The great poet was a resident of Ayodhya and perhaps the greatest ever devotee of Ram, writing within five or six decades of the construction of the mosque; anger at the construction at the site of his Lord's birth itself and after destroying a temple dedicated to him would have driven him hopping mad. Not a word from him. Nor

from anyone else.

The first concrete evidence of the identification of the site with Ram and the erection of Babari masjid comes from an 1822 document in the Persian language submitted to the Faizabad court by daroghah-i adalat, Hafizullah. It says "Jama masjid, constructed by Emperor Babur at the janma asthan, that is at the site of birth of Ram, son of Raja Dasrat and is adjacent to the rasoi (kitchen) of Sita, wife of the aforesaid Ram"; it does not mention the existence of any temple at the site demolished to make way for the masjid. It is clear that the monument neither invited great celebration nor great lamentation nor even commemoration in any quarter.

In the 19th century, events took a fast turn and in some versions, a Ram temple came to be located at the site of the mosque, even as occasional violence began to erupt. But the version was still shaky enough in the 1860s when P Carnegy, writing about the Faizabad district, accepted it at one place attributing it to "locally affirmed sources", i.e. popular tradition and wondering whether the temple was dedicated to Ram or to Buddha at another in the same book. By 1905, the tradition that the masjid had replaced a temple had found its way to the Fyzabad District Gazetteer of H R Neville, though it still spoke

vaguely of "an ancient temple". In 1922, A S Beveridge, translator of *Babur Nama*, among other books, had firmly asserted that "presumably the order for building the mosque was given during Babur's stay in Aud (Ayodhya) in 934 A.H", and leaves none in doubt that it had "displaced at least in part an ancient Hindu shrine" though even she does not mention Ram. This is not part of the translation of the text but an Appendix U, she has added. It is a guess she has made and not a factual statement.

We can infer from the above that the first concrete historical evidence about the association of Lord Ram with the site under dispute comes nearly 300 years after the construction of the masjid. And as the discipline of history goes, the authenticity of evidence is greatly dependent on its proximity to the event it narrates. The later the evidence, the lower its reliability. How reliable would a statement first made in 2019 about an incident in 1719 be? There are other relevant variables too, but the chronology of the evidence is primary. Popular traditions are good subjects of study of the evolution of cultural norms; but these are poor testimony for judging the authenticity of a specific event in history.

The writer taught history at JNU

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NATIONS & BORDERS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Nation's orphans' (IE, September 2). The editorial argues that the idea of NRC itself is flawed for "modern societies are shaped by migration". It adds that citizenship should be interpreted in a more "liberal spirit of the Constitution". These points are well-taken. However, nations do have boundaries. The NRC serves to account for refugees who may have entered India during the Bangladesh Liberation War and for any documentation error that might have occurred in the initial NRC.

Rohan Goswami via e-mail

BREXIT WOES

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'People vs Boris Johnson' (IE, September 2). Brexit has divided Britons like no issue in recent times. Amidst all that, Britain's prime minister, Boris Johnson, has shocked the country by announcing the suspension of parliament. Since the October 31 deadline is less than 60 days away, the best option for Britain would be to stay in the EU.

Bal Govind, Noida

WORLD POWER

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Pakistan's UN fantasy' (IE, Sep 02). India's hyper-

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

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THE WINNER RECEIVES SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS

sensitivity to international agencies including the UN was understandable when the country was weak economically and militarily. Today, we should not shy away if a third party mentions Kashmir, rather we should inform the world of our stance in no uncertain terms.

H N Bhagwat, Chiplun