

FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

HOW MAMALLAPURAM BECAME MAHABALIPURAM, REGAINED OLD NAME

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, OCTOBER 10

THE VENUE of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with China's President Xi Jinping over Friday and Saturday has been referred to, interchangeably, Mamallapuram and Mahabalipuram. It is 56 km to the south of Chennai on the coast. The Ministry of External Affairs' media advisory mentions 'Mahabalipuram', and officials have been using that name in informal communication.

THE PALLAVA 'MAMALLAN'

Today's seaside resort was once a bustling port that derived its name from Mamallan or 'Great Wrestler' — one of the names of Narasimhavarman I, the Pallava monarch who ruled from 630 AD to 668 AD, and who commissioned much of the architecture Mamallapuram is famous for.

BIRTH OF 'MAHABALIPURAM'

S Swaminathan, author of *Mamallapuram*, a book on the architectural and sculptural achievements of the Pallavas, said Mamallapuram was the original name, even though the town is also called Mahabalipuram. "The name Mahabalipuram emerged much later, some time in the Vijayanagara period (14th-17th centuries). But there is nothing to directly connect the Asura King Mahabali with Mamallapuram," he said.

The only, indirect link, he added, is the legend of Trivikrama carved in stone at Mamallapuram's famous Varaha Mandapam (Varaha Cave Temple). "Mahabali was killed by Trivikrama, the giant form of Vamana, the fifth avatar of Vishnu. Maybe that is the only connection that Mahabali has with Mamallapuram. But this Trivikrama panel too is just one of the many compositions there," he said.

BACK TO 'MAMALLAPURAM'

After Independence, the prevalent



The Varaha Mandapam has the only link, although an indirect one, between the town and the legend of Mahabali. *Wikipedia*

Dravidian politics of Tamil Nadu made sure that Mamallapuram's original name was retained. "Mamallapuram, was notified in a government gazette in 1957, and that name was reiterated when the ancient port town was declared a village panchayat in 1964. "Instead of the association with a mythological king (Mahabali), the governments here made sure that the original name in the memory of a Tamil king was restored," Swaminathan laughed.

BEYOND MAMALLAN LEGACY

While Narasimhavarman I is credited with excavating the stone caves of Mamallapuram, it was Mahendravarmam I, Narasimhavarman's father who ruled from 600 AD to 630 AD, who was the pioneer of Pallava rock-cut architecture. The successors of Narasimhavarman I, especially his grandson Parameswaravarman I (670-695 AD) and his great grandson Narasimhavarman II (700-728 AD), continued to build in Mamallapuram. Narasimhavarman II, also known as Rajasimha Pallava, built the magnificent Shore Temple among others in Mamallapuram, as well as grand temples at several other places, including the famous Kailasanathar Temple at Kancheepuram.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Why dairy is RCEP sticking point

It is the industry that is lobbying the hardest to keep its products out of the free trade agreement currently under negotiation among 16 countries to India's east and north. Why is this so?

HARISH DAMODARAN
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 10

What makes milk and milk products such a big deal for India?

Milk is the country's largest "crop". In 2018-19, the estimated production of milk, at 187.75 million tonnes (mt), was more than that of paddy (174.63 mt) or wheat (102.19 mt). The value of milk output (Rs 5,63,250 crore at an average farm-gate rate of Rs 30/kg) far exceeded paddy's (Rs 3,05,602 crore at a minimum support price of Rs 1,750/quintal) and wheat's (Rs 1,88,030 crore at Rs 1,840/quintal). Milk is, moreover, a source of liquidity for farmers, as it is sold daily and generates cash to take care of routine household expenses, unlike other crops that are marketed only once or twice a year.

But milk matters equally to consumers in India, because it meets the animal protein/fat requirements of a significant portion of the population that is vegetarian.

Milk, in the Indian context, is also a 'superior' food with income elasticity of demand greater than one. This means that as incomes rise, the demand for milk goes up even more. The moment families experience some upward mobility, they are likely to put *desi ghee* (butter fat) rather than *vanaspati* (vegetable fat) on their rotis.

So, where does the RCEP come in?

Global dairy trade takes place not in milk, but in the solids that derive from it — mainly milk powder, butter/butter oil, and cheese. India isn't a major player in the world market. Till the eighties, it used to import up to 50,000-60,000 tonnes of skim milk powder and 10,000-15,000 tonnes of butter oil annually, largely channelised through the National Dairy Development Board.

Over the past couple of decades, with sustained production increases, the country has become self-sufficient, or even marginally surplus. This is evidenced by its dairy product exports surpassing imports in most years (table 1), although their values are insignificant relative to both domestic output and global trade. Further, as can be seen from table 2, one reason for India's imports being low is the high tariffs, especially on milk powder (60%) and fats (40%).

If dairy products are covered under an RCEP deal, India may have to allow members of the bloc greater access to its market, whether through phased duty reductions or more liberal tariff rate quotas (TRQs). There is an already existing TRQ for milk powder, which enables import of up to 10,000 tonnes per year at 15% customs duty, and quantities beyond that at the regular rate of 60%. The Indian dairy industry is resisting any enhanced TRQs or other import concessions, even if extended only to RCEP countries, as opposed to the US or European Union.

Which are the major global dairy players within the RCEP group?

Only New Zealand and Australia. The two countries together exported 19,37,000 tonnes of milk powder, 5,18,000 tonnes of butter/fat and 4,94,000 tonnes of cheese in 2018, accounting for 44.5%, 58.3% and 24.8% of the world trade respectively in these commodities. New Zealand, in particular, hardly has a domestic market for dairy products. In 2018, 93.4% of its milk powder, 94.5% of its butter, and 83.6% of its cheese production was exported.

India's milk powder and butter/ghee shipments, by contrast, have barely touched 1,30,000 tonnes and 50,000 tonnes even in their best ever years of 2013-14 and 2018-19 respectively. But the country is the world's biggest market for milk and milk products — which will only grow with rising incomes and high elasticity of demand. Access to this market will obviously benefit the predominantly export-oriented dairy industry of New Zealand and Australia.

16 COUNTRIES, PROPOSED INTEGRATED MARKET



21 OF 25

In negotiations since 2013 over details of the deal that aims to reduce trade barriers, 21 chapters out of 25 finalised so far

PARTNERS IN NEGOTIATION

10 ASEAN MEMBER STATES:

Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

6 FTA PARTNERS:

China, Japan, India, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand

INDIA'S TRADE DEFICITS WITH...

Country	Value (bn)
China	\$53.6 bn
S Korea	\$12 bn
Indonesia	\$10.6 bn
Japan	\$7.9 bn
Singapore	\$4.7 bn
Thailand	\$3 bn

TABLE 1: INDIA'S DAIRY PRODUCTS TRADE (IN Rs CRORE)

Year	Exports	Imports
2010-11	1216.76	847.83
2011-12	647.79	1219.41
2012-13	2324.68	184.25
2013-14	4407.78	232.68
2014-15	2169.03	375.01
2015-16	1677.46	371.58
2016-17	1701.18	254.84
2017-18	1954.63	312.59
2018-19	3375.73	254.12
2018-19*	957.15	108.90
2019-20*	921.43	114.43

*April-August

Source: Department of Commerce

TABLE 2: INDIA'S DAIRY IMPORTS DUTY STRUCTURE

Product	Duty %	Imports (Rs cr)
Milk powder	60	8.55
Butter/fat	40	14.27
UHT milk*	30	12.69
Yogurt**	30	6.56
Cheese	30	70.85
Whey	30	85.57
Ice cream	30	24.8

*Includes cream; **Includes butter milk.

Source: Ministry of Finance and Department of Commerce

What are the specific dairy segments that overseas suppliers would target?

India's imports primarily comprise whey products and cheese, which have limited consumer markets in the country. For all the hype, the domestic market for cheese is just Rs 1,400-1,500 crore, of which Rs 900-1,000 crore goes for industrial use (basically pizza-making), and only the balance is sold in consumer packs. There may not be too many takers for foreign ice cream or yogurt brands either.

What New Zealand and Australia would really be eyeing is the Indian market for commodities, viz. milk powder and fat. That is where the volumes are — which Malaysia and Indonesia successfully exploited in palm oil, as did Argentina and Brazil in soybean oil and Ukraine in sunflower oil.

RCEP could perhaps end up doing to dairy what the free trade agreement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) did in palm oil, fear many in the industry in India.

Opportunity, fears in regional trade deal

PRABHA RAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 10

COMMERCE MINISTER Piyush Goyal is in Bangkok for the eighth Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) ministerial meeting, which will continue until October 12. The meeting, which is likely to be the last one at this level, is expected to work out the unresolved issues in the negotiations on the mega trade deal that is to be concluded later this year.

What is the RCEP?

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a trade deal that is currently under negotiation among 16 countries — the 10 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the six countries with which the ASEAN bloc has free trade agreements (FTA).

The ASEAN, which includes Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, has FTAs with India, Australia, China, South Korea, Japan and New Zealand.

Negotiations on the details of the RCEP have been on since 2013, and all participating countries aim to finalise and sign the deal by November.

What does the RCEP propose?

The purpose of RCEP is to create an "integrated market" spanning all 16 countries, making it easier for products and services of each of these countries to be available across this region.

ASEAN says the deal will provide "a framework aimed at lowering trade barriers and securing improved market access for goods and services for businesses in the region".

The negotiations are focussed on areas like trade in goods and services, investment, economic and technical cooperation, intellectual property, competition, dispute settlement, e-commerce, and small and medium enterprises.

Why is the RCEP important?

It is billed as the "largest" regional trad-

ing agreement ever — these countries account for almost half of the world's population, contribute over a quarter of world exports, and make up around 30% of global Gross Domestic Product (the value of all goods and services produced in a year).

How have the talks progressed?

Of the 25 chapters in the deal, 21 have been finalised. Chapters on investment, e-commerce, rules of origin, and trade remedies are yet to be settled, and ministerial guidance is being sought at the on-going meeting in Bangkok.

How does India stand to gain?

Sections of Indian industry feel that being part of RCEP would allow the country to tap into a huge market, if the domestic industry becomes competitive. Pharmaceuticals and cotton yarn are confident of gains, and the services industry too, may have new opportunities.

And what are the concerns?

Several industries feel India needs to be mindful of the amount of access it gives to its market. There is fear that some domestic sectors may be hit by cheaper alternatives from other RCEP countries. Apprehensions have been expressed that cheaper Chinese products would "flood" India.

Critics are also not confident that India would be able to take advantage of the deal, given its poor track record of extracting benefits from the FTAs with these countries. India's trade gap with these countries may widen if it signs the RCEP deal, they say. (See figures with map above)

Industries like dairy and steel have demanded protection. The textile industry, which has already raised concerns about growing competition from neighbouring countries with cheaper and more efficient processes, fears the deal would impact it negatively.

There are some differences within industries. The bigger players in steel, for example, are apprehensive of the potential impact on their businesses; however, makers of finished goods have argued that limiting steel supply to domestic producers through higher import duties will put them at a disadvantage.

THIS WORD MEANS

INTERCONNECT USAGE CHARGE (IUC)

Why Jio is charging 6 paise/min for certain outgoing calls

RELIANCE JIO announced this week that its customers would now have to pay an Interconnect Usage Charge (IUC) on outgoing calls made to the networks of its rivals Airtel and Vodafone-Idea. Reliance Jio announced "IUC top-up vouchers", which will give customers certain minutes of outgoing calls.

IUC is the cost paid by one mobile telecom operator to another when the customers of the former operator make outgoing mobile calls to the customers of the other. The IUC rate used to be 14 paise per minute, but the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has now fixed it at 6 paise per minute.

TRAI wants to bring IUC to zero from January 1, 2020, based on the assumption that all networks would be able to move to VoLTE, or Voice over LTE (Long Term Evolution) technology by then. Jio is an entirely VoLTE network, but Vodafone and Airtel continue to offer their legacy 2G and 3G networks as well.

Jio claims that because voice is free on the Jio network while there are high tariffs on 2G networks, customers on Airtel and Vodafone-Idea are giving missed calls to Jio customers. It claims that the Jio network receives 25 crore to 30 crore missed calls every day, presumably because callers want friends or family on Jio to call them back for free. Jio has claimed the call-backs by its customers results in 65 crore to 75 crore minutes of outgoing traffic — and it "has been compelled, most reluctantly and unavoidably, to recover (from its customers) this regulatory charge of 6 paise per minute for all off-net mobile voice calls so long as IUC charges exist".

Jio has said the 6 paise/minute charge will only apply to outgoing calls made to Vodafone-Idea and Airtel networks; not to Jio-to-Jio calls, incoming calls, calls made to landlines, or calls made using WhatsApp or other OTT platforms.

SHRUTI DHAPOLA

A scandal, two years' Nobels, and why these authors were chosen

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
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ON THURSDAY, the Swedish Academy announced the Nobel Prize in Literature for this year as well as the last, with Polish author Olga Tokarczuk winning for 2018 and the Austrian author Peter Handke for 2019. The 2018 award had been postponed for a year on account of a scandal involving the Academy's close ties with a man convicted of rape and jailed that year.

The delayed prize went to Tokarczuk "for a narrative imagination that with encyclopedic passion represents the crossing of boundaries as a form of life", the citation said. For the current year, Handke was awarded "for an influential work that with linguistic

ingenuity has explored the periphery and the specificity of human experience".

Olga Tokarczuk

Tokarczuk, 57, one of Poland's most successful authors, has found a wider English-reading audience in recent years and won the Man Booker Prize in 2018 for *Flights*, a translation of her 2007 novel *Biegunki*. Much of her work is marked by historical/mythical settings with realistic details, and themes of conflicting cultures and perspectives. "She constructs her novels in a tension between cultural opposites; nature versus culture, reason versus madness, male versus female, home versus alienation," the Academy said on its website.

Tokarczuk studied psychology at the University of Warsaw and made her fiction



Olga Tokarczuk (left) for 2018 and Peter Handke for 2019. AP, Reuters

debut in 1993 with *Podróż ludzi Księgi* ('The Journey of the Book-People'), set in 17th century France and Spain where the characters search for a mysterious book in the Pyrenees. Her breakthrough novel *Prawiek i inne czasy*, 1996 (*Primeval and Other Times*, 2010) is again set in a mythical place, yet full

of realistic details. "Tokarczuk has claimed that the narrative was a personal attempt to come to terms with the national image of the past. The novel is an excellent example of the new Polish literature after 1989, resisting moral judgement and unwilling to represent the conscience of the nation," the Academy said.

Her *magnum opus*, *Księgi Jakubowe*, 2014 ('The Books of Jacob'), is a 900-page novel about Jacob Frank, a little-known 18th-century sect leader who upset the orthodox with his effort to unite the Jewish, Christian and Muslim creeds.

Peter Handke

Handke, 76, published his debut novel *Die Hornissen* in 1966, dropped out of his law course at the University of Graz, and went on to write novels, essays, dramatic works and screenplays in a vast body of work spanning more than 50 years. The Academy described him as one of the most influential writers in

Europe after the Second World War.

Son of a Slovenian-minority woman in Austria and a German soldier whom he would meet only as an adult, Handke chose to "revolt against his paternal heritage, that in his case was perverted by the Nazi regime", and "chose the maternal line of heritage". He once described contemporary German literature as suffering from *beschreibungsimpotenz* (description impotence) and has "found much of his own literary inspiration within the New Novel-movement in French literature", the Academy said.

Handke, now based in France, is widely seen as sympathetic of the Serbian far right. He attended former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic's funeral in 2006, and expressed sympathy for the Serbs in the 1990s Yugoslav wars, a subject he has also written about. The Academy acknowledged that Handke has sometimes "caused controversy" but added that "he cannot be considered an engaged writer in the sense of Sartre,

and he gives us no political programs".

Why 2018 in 2019

The 2018 scandal followed the imprisonment for rape of Frenchman Jean-Claude Arnault, with whom the Academy has close ties. He is married to then Academy member Katarina Frostenson, who resigned. The couple ran a cultural club in Stockholm that received funding from the Academy. The scandal caused a rift among members over how to manage their ties with him — seven of them resigned — and exposed scheming, conflicts of interest, and a culture of silence.

It led to the first postponement of the Literature Nobel in 70 years. A group of Swedish cultural figures set up a substitute award, the New Academy Prize, and chose their laureate as Maryse Conde, an author from Guadeloupe. This was to show that "a winner could be chosen in an open fashion, in contrast to the Academy's secret workings", *The New York Times* reported.



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Time to think small

With China, India must recognise power imbalance, liberate itself from prolonged illusions, false hopes



C RAJA MOHAN

A DAY BY THE SEA

PM Modi and President Xi need to go beyond Wuhan, stabilise ties at a moment of great political churn in the global system

AS PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi hosts China's President Xi Jinping at Mamallapuram on the outskirts of Chennai for a second informal summit between the two leaders, it is bound to be different from the first such engagement last year in Wuhan, Central China. For one, the sea-side pow-wow in Mamallapuram will be somewhat shorter than the lake side chat in Wuhan. President Xi Jinping will be in Mamallapuram for barely 24 hours. It is no secret that President Xi has reasons to be preoccupied, thanks to the violent turn in the persistent protests in Hong Kong, the escalating trade war with the United States, and its negative impact on the Chinese economy. More broadly, the halo of inevitability around China's rise has begun to fade a bit. If Modi went to Wuhan with an eye on the impending polls last year, he is stronger at home today having returned with a bigger majority. But Modi has problems too. He is struggling to put India back on a high growth path. His bold move on Kashmir has generated considerable international concern. While his diplomacy has managed to put a lid on it for now, Delhi is not yet out of the woods.

Both leaders, then, need to put aside some of the triumphalism that has enveloped the national sentiment in both countries, and look at stabilising bilateral ties at a moment of great political churn in the international system. If the political "spin" about the "Wuhan spirit" far exceeded the results of the first informal summit, the two sides must resist the temptation to hype up the outcomes at Mamallapuram. Instead, they ought to recognise that the problems between the two nations have gotten messier since Wuhan. None of the big issues from the perspective of Delhi — the large trade deficit in favour of China and the consequences of Beijing's deepening alliance with Islamabad — have eased. Meanwhile, the widening power gap between the two nations tilts the balance of power on the disputed boundary and in the region against India. Delhi's efforts to compensate for this imbalance through closer ties with the US, Japan and Australia rile Beijing.

When you find yourself in a hole, as the saying goes, stop digging. Modi and Xi need to reassure each other that they will not allow the relationship to slide further. Second, the two leaders must find ways to advance the dialogue on the boundary dispute. The confidence-building framework agreed at Wuhan to keep peace on the border — after the confrontation in Doklam during the summer of 2017 — must now be followed by an early harvest of practical steps on boundary settlement. Third is to explore avenues for mutually beneficial commercial cooperation. The multiple problems between India and China can't be fixed in a day at Mamallapuram. But small and pragmatic steps can restore a measure of trust between the two governments and carve out a path towards stability that both need so badly at this complex global conjuncture.

PRIVACY RIGHTS & WRONGS

Government is seeking OTT listening posts for security reasons. But the cost to privacy would be immense

AYEAR AGO, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) had commenced a process of consultations to bring over the top (OTT) services like WhatsApp and Telegram under "lawful interception". Now, it is reported to be ready to submit recommendations to the Department of Telecommunications. The objective of the exercise is public security, since criminals and terrorists are known to use the end-to-end encryption offered by such services to fly under the radar. Parity has always been an issue, too, since telecom providers complain that they are regulated and must respond to requests for information from governments and agencies, while the OTT sector is untrammelled. However, the most significant question remains unanswered: Is interception technologically feasible, at all?

Technology companies have always argued that end-to-end encryption is completely private between the correspondents in the conversation, since it is encrypted by a pair of security keys which their devices exchange, and which are available to no one else, not even the OTT provider. Providers are, therefore, unable to provide governments with any communications content, except metadata like the frequency of contact. The US Attorney General's request to Facebook, which owns WhatsApp, suggests that this is correct. Along with his counterparts in Australia and the UK, he has requested Mark Zuckerberg not to deploy systems which "preclude any form of access to content, even for preventing or investigating the most serious crimes." TRAI has said that it is looking at practices worldwide, but it is probably rediscovering this blank wall for itself.

Concerns about crime, terrorism and lethal mischief-making using encrypted communications are legitimate and, worldwide, pressure is developing on providers and platforms to make content available for inspection. However, privacy concerns are equally legitimate, because compromising security would degrade privacy across platforms. Blackberry, the pathbreaker in the secure communications sector, had kept a copy of encrypted communications and provided it to the governments of India, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. As a consequence, the former smartphone giant is now an inconsequential player. Governments are asking OTT providers to go the Blackberry way, but it is insupportable. The cost to privacy, now recognised as a right, would be immense. It would open the door to situations like the NSA mass surveillance scandal. Governments should be careful what they wish for.

SHAMAN VS STRONGMAN

An exorcism may seem an odd way to stand up against Vladimir Putin. But larger-than-life figures leave few avenues of protest

IT IS EASY to ridicule Aleksandr Gabyshev, or to simply cast aside his protest as an anachronistic novelty. Russia's Federal Security Service, the successor to the KGB, has even reportedly suggested that Gabyshev be committed to a psychiatric facility. The 51-year-old shaman's plan was fairly simple — to walk about 8,300 kilometres from his native Siberia to Moscow, create a large bonfire at the Red Square and feed it fermented horse milk and hair, while beating a drum and chanting. The ritual had a singular purpose — to exorcise the demons from Russian President Vladimir Putin. Gabyshev was, predictably, intercepted by Russian police and sent back to Siberia. But his articulation of despair cannot so easily be ignored.

The shaman's long march has, by most accounts, galvanised the opposition to Putin's rule. As organised opposition activity and protest has become increasingly difficult in Russia with the state cracking down on dissent, social media has become the vehicle to express disagreement. At first glance, Gabyshev's narrative, which gives an almost magical, larger-than-life status to Putin might seem at odds with his becoming a symbol on social media. But look closer and that contradiction resolves itself.

"Strong" leaders, saviours of the nation-state, encourage and deploy a mixture of pre-modern worship — an almost mystical belief in the power of one man over institutions and systems — and contemporary systems of information dissemination and surveillance to further that image. This makes them loom large, their image and stamp imprinted across social and political life. Since the institutions of state are themselves subverted to the magical charisma of the politician, the shaman may be a logical recourse for the disaffected.

THAT INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP with China is passing through a difficult moment is not hard to see, even amidst the usual hype that surrounds meetings between leaders of the two countries. The rhetoric about India and China changing the world has always masked the persistent structural problems that hobbled their ties. If managing the relationship with China has become the biggest test for Indian foreign policy, the second informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping is a good occasion to reflect on the trends in Delhi's diplomacy towards Beijing.

First is the danger of putting form above substance and betting that the higher the level of engagement, the more significant the results. The novelty of the "informal summit" that dazzled everyone when Modi traveled to Wuhan to spend two days in a relaxed setting with Xi last year has worn off. Like so many other mechanisms before it, the informal summit, too, is proving to be inadequate to cope with the range of structural tensions that have enveloped the bilateral relationship — from Kashmir to trade and multilateral challenges.

Since they sought to normalise relations more than three decades ago, when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi traveled to Beijing, the two sides have experimented with different mechanisms to address the basic differences. They started with a dialogue at the level of foreign secretaries in 1988, elevated it to empowered special representatives in 2003, and most recently, the informal summits. None of these have been able to resolve the boundary dispute, trade deficit and China's growing support to Pakistan in Islamabad's contestation with Delhi.

Second, the lack of enough contact at the highest levels is no longer a problem. In the 20th century it was but rare when leaders of India or China traveled to the other country. In the 21st century, the Indian Prime Minister runs often into the PM or President of China and has talks on the margins of such regional and international settings as the East Asia Summit (EAS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Russia-India-China Forum, BRICS and the G-20. Frequency of talks has not improved the ability to re-

solve the problems facing the relationship. Third, the current difficulties between India and China are not due to lack of mutual understanding. The problem is the widening gap in the comprehensive national power of the two Asian giants. China's aggregate GDP, now at about \$14 trillion, is nearly five times larger than that of India, hovering at \$2.8 trillion. China's annual defence spending at \$250 billion is four times larger than that of India. More than the size of the spending, China has outpaced India in the much needed modernisation of its armed forces and higher defence organisation.

This power imbalance translates into an unpleasant fact on the diplomatic front. That China is under no pressure to please India. Or, more precisely, it can afford to displease India — whether it is the question of blocking India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group or opposing India's Kashmir move and taking it to the UNSC. That did not change at Wuhan nor will it alter in a big way at Chennai.

Fourth, is the persistent belief in Delhi that current tensions in US-China relations might encourage Beijing to make nice to India. That expectation has turned out to be wrong. The deepening crisis in US-China relations has made little difference to Beijing's approach to Delhi. The movement has apparently been in the opposite direction.

For China, the foremost strategic priority today is to cut a deal with the US. If Xi Jinping can't fix the problem with President Donald Trump in the next year, he would hope that Trump will be defeated in the elections at the end of 2020 and his potential Democrat successor would be a lot easier to deal with in 2021. That the Chinese priority is the US should not be surprising given the scale and intensity of the stakes involved in Beijing's ties with Washington.

Delhi's overestimation of its leverage with Beijing in the triangular relationship with Washington has unfortunately meant India often chose to voluntarily limit its partnership with the US and its allies. That has not led to any strategic appreciation in Beijing of Delhi's restraint or the need for neutrality in the disputes between India and Pakistan. Viewed strictly in terms of power hierarchy, China's strategy does look logical — to keep India in play without giving up on any of its

positions of concern for India.

Fifth is the long-standing presumption in Delhi that cooperation with China on global issues will create the conditions for ameliorating bilateral contentions. This turned out to be wrong on three counts. India's support to China on global issues has not led to Beijing's reciprocation on multilateral issues, such as Pakistan's cross-border terrorism, of interest to India, nor has it made it easier to resolve bilateral disputes. Worse still, grandstanding on global issues with Beijing may have made India oblivious to China's rapid regional advance in the Subcontinent and the Indian Ocean.

Finally, if there is one thing that distinguishes Modi's diplomacy from that of his predecessors, it is the appreciation of power and its centrality in international relations. When he took charge as PM, Modi seemed confident about his ability to arrive at some kind of understanding with the Chinese leadership. His expansive engagement with the Chinese during his tenure as the chief minister of Gujarat had warmed him to China.

In the last five years, much water has flowed under the bridge and has probably convinced Modi of the difficulty of persuading Xi to demonstrate any significant flexibility towards India. Delhi's new realism makes it possible to approach the challenge of China without sentimentalism or unrealistic expectations. It should also help prepare India to wrestle intelligently with a China that is in a higher weight class.

Recognising the power imbalance with Beijing should liberate Delhi from the prolonged illusions about strategic parity with China and false hopes about building a new global order with it. That, in turn, should help focus India's effort at Chennai on small and pragmatic steps to narrow differences with China on bilateral issues — especially the boundary dispute, trade deficit and the development of regional infrastructure. Thinking small might offer a long overdue corrective to India's diplomatic tradition of putting the China relationship in a grandiose framework.

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SANJAY PASWAN

TO RESTORE DIGNITY

A constructive approach, not polemic, is needed to address Dalit concerns

LAST YEAR, IN March, India witnessed massive protests by Dalit organisations over the dilution of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. The protests were a response to the Supreme Court's direction barring automatic arrests and the provision of anticipatory bail for the accused in cases of atrocities against Dalits and tribal communities. It also ruled that public servants will not be prosecuted without the approval of the appointing authority. The apex court recently overturned the verdict, acknowledging the unimaginable levels of oppression faced by the socially disadvantaged sections of the society.

The National Crime Records Bureau mentions that there is a 66 per cent increase in cases of atrocities against Dalits and tribal communities from 2007 to 2017. Looking at the Dalit issue through a political lens has caused great disservice to our cause. There is an urgent need to depoliticise the Dalit issue and analyse it from a fresh perspective. The government had the foresight to preempt the implications of the previous order. The SC's move to reinstate the previous provision also vindicates the original law.

Any Act of Parliament represents the vision of the elected representatives in whom sovereignty rests. The Prevention of Atrocities Act was premised on the objective

of the delivery of justice to marginalised communities, thereby ending social disability. The conversation on caste-based discrimination has multiple layers. With the advent of globalisation, growth and modernisation, the location of caste prejudice has also undergone a major shift. There is a glaring absence of Dalits in critical decision-making positions, both in the government and private institutions. Lack of representation automatically leads to lack of empathy and a sense of ownership. The numbers of Dalit vice chancellors and professors in academia, editors in the media and senior officers in the bureaucracy is dismally low. A Dalit, after facing persecution, is left with no alternative than to take shelter under the shadow of the Prevention of Atrocities Act.

R Vaidyanathan, a retired professor of finance at IIM, Bangalore, in his book *Caste as Social Capital*, observed that, "many consider caste as an outdated institution, but it thrives in post-liberalisation India. The establishment and running of businesses tap into caste networks, both in terms of arranging finance and providing access to [a] ready workforce". Caste has not become redundant; it has merely relocated itself. The nature of institutional support in terms of mentorship available to privileged communities is missing for Dalits.

There is a widespread conviction among the community's leaders that the assault on

the interests of Dalits has been spearheaded by the judiciary in recent times. The attitude of the higher judiciary stems from the absence of empathy. There is, unfortunately, little social diversity in the Indian judicial system.

The Supreme Court has only once seen, to my knowledge, a Dalit Chief Justice — K G Balakrishnan. Although now, with Justice BR Gavai, we hope the court will be more sensitive to the concerns of the community.

There is a need to redefine the contours of social justice in our country. More nuanced conversations on the representation of the socially vulnerable sections is needed. Industry, media and civil society should take the discussion on social diversity at leadership positions ahead. Political parties premised on social justice have lost relevance, failing to capture the imagination of young Dalits.

There are enough polemics on caste already. We need a more constructive conversation. Outdated outreach methods like coding and co-bathing will not be accepted anymore. The new Dalit seeks a permanent place at the table. I am reminded of what Martin Luther King Jr said: "Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle."

The writer is a professor at Patna University and BJP MLC in Bihar



OCTOBER 11, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

NO AIR AUTONOMY
THE SCHEME TO confer a degree of autonomy to AIR and Doordarshan has been dropped by the government. The bill to create a corporation, "Prasar Bharati", has lapsed with the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. The Verghese Committee's report to constitute a single authority for the two separate autonomous bodies — Akashvani and Doordarshan — has been put on the shelf. A group was set up in 1977 under George Verghese, eminent journalist, to prepare a scheme to implement the poll promise. However, the government diluted the committee's recommendations before introducing the Prasar Bharati Bill in the Lok Sabha.

The explanation was that the broadcasting system had to balance the importance of public accountability and the ideal of autonomy.

RECOGNISING ISRAEL
PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER said the United States will not shift policy and recognise the Palestine Liberation Organisation until the PLO agrees that Israel has a right to exist. "We will not negotiate with the PLO. We will not recognise the PLO until after the PLO recognises Israel's right to exist," President Carter told a Washington news conference. He also said the Soviet decision to withdraw 20,000 troops and 1,000 tanks from East Germany merited careful study.

DELHI BANDH
THE DELHI BANDH is unlikely to affect essential services like water supply, electricity and hospitals. The bandh call has been given by the central trade unions comprising AITUC, INTUC, HMS, BMS, UTUC and the DESU Employees Union to express solidarity with the striking textile workers. However, the civic authorities, not taking any chances, have made alternative arrangements for uninterrupted supply of water and power. The Delhi Transport Corporation authorities have made no alternative arrangements. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 have been clamped in most parts of the city.

15 THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"There are many things in the Chinese model that are worthy of emulation. But frequent executions and purges -- the horrors of the Cultural Revolution should not be forgotten -- should not be among them." —DAWN

India, China must look to the future

They can help build a more inclusive global governance. But first, they must work past their differences



WANG HUIYAO

THIS WEEK, CHINESE President Xi Jinping and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi will seek to reinforce Sino-Indian ties as they wander among the ancient structures of Mamallapuram. Local sites have been spruced up ahead of the summit, with roads repaved and gates repainted. However, recent events are a reminder that it will take more than a fresh lick of paint to cover cracks in the relationship between the two countries.

Since the Doklam standoff in 2017, sustained engagement between Xi and Modi has brought Beijing and Delhi closer. More work remains if both sides are to overcome the bilateral "trust deficit" that hampers deeper cooperation. If they can do this, in the long-term, China and India have the potential to help revive global governance and forge a new framework for Asian integration.

Xi and Modi's move to cultivate closer ties over the past two years has come amidst a turbulent global context. President Donald Trump's unpredictable "America First" politics has presented challenges for policymakers in Beijing and Delhi, undermining the liberal order that has benefitted both countries. However, the Sino-Indian rapprochement is much more than temporary expediency. It is also a recognition that we live in an increasingly multipolar century, one in which no country can dictate global rules or solve its challenges alone.

Asia will be central to this story. Next year, Asian economies will become larger than the rest of the world combined in PPP terms, for the first time since the 19th century. Not only is Asia growing richer, as it becomes more integrated, it is also coalescing as a constructive force for global governance. While a lack of leadership or consensus hampers badly-needed reform of global institutions, Asia has become the locus for new multilateral initiatives. This is evident in new trade pacts like the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), as well as new institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

China and India are destined to play pivotal roles in the "Asian century." Both share interests in promoting a fairer, more inclusive form of globalisation. Together, they constitute 35 per cent of the world's population and their economies constitute 45 per cent of global growth. Jointly, China and India have the critical mass to galvanise reform of institutions such as the WTO, IMF and UN so that developing countries get more say. A robust Sino-Indian relationship would also be an anchor for regional stability, paving the way for a more integrated, prosperous Asian community.

Recent events in disputed regions reflect the challenges in fulfilling this collective promise. In particular, unresolved border issues and regional politics have left lingering suspicions between the two countries. Turning this trust deficit into a "cooperation dividend" means forging a new paradigm

for Sino-Indian relations — one that ringfences thorny issues of contention while cultivating mutual benefits. In particular, there is great scope for deeper cooperation in areas such as economy, connectivity, culture, and environmental protection.

Economically, China and India have huge complementarities given their strengths in manufacturing and services, respectively. IT is another promising area for collaboration — China is a leading investor in AI and quantum communications, while India is a world-leader in software outsourcing and IT consulting. These synergies could be unlocked through deeper cooperation in trade and investment. To this end, China and India should redouble efforts to complete the RCEP. This free trade agreement would not only boost economic ties between China and India; it would also be a gamechanger for integration in Asia.

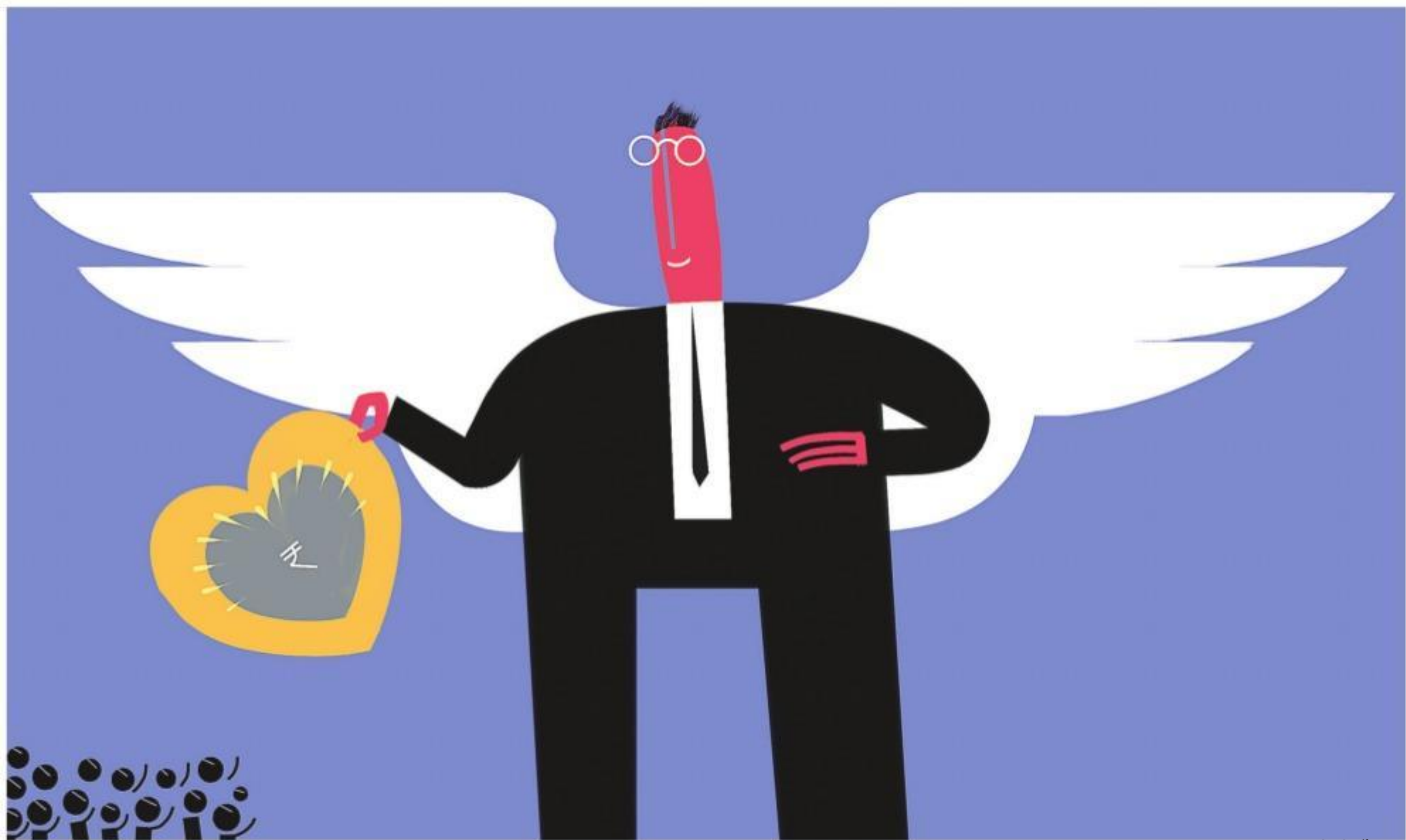
Connectivity cooperation between China and India would further catalyse this integration process, helping to cut transport costs and spur trade. Delhi retains reservations about the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). However, if carried out in an open, consultative manner, connectivity initiatives by China and India should be seen as complementary, not competing. To enhance trust and facilitate genuine participation by all stakeholders, China should take concrete steps to multilateralise the BRI. The AIIB, of which India is the largest recipient to date, offers a useful model. For example, establishing a BRI International Cooperation Committee would enable active involvement by all countries, including India, if and when it is willing.

Alongside the movement of goods and capital, flows of people are a vital component of Asia's integration. Inter-Asian tourism and talent flows are booming. However, cultural ties between China and India remain thinner than might be expected. Just a tiny fraction of the millions of Chinese and Indian tourists and students going abroad is between the two countries. More can be done to build friendships between Chinese and Indians, such as improving visa processes and creating programmes for talent and academic exchange.

The last area to highlight — arguably the most important for long-term cooperation — is environmental protection. As the most populous countries on earth, joint efforts between China and India will be crucial to tackle environmental challenges like climate change. The destinies of China and India are inextricably linked through a shared atmosphere, water resources, and the Himalayan ecology. Both countries face ecological crises. But together, they can provide new impetus for environmental governance, promoting solutions that balance sustainability and development.

The Xi-Modi summit will no doubt be peppered with references to ancient ties between China and India's great civilisations. But the two leaders should focus firmly on the future if they are to lay the foundations for a lasting bilateral relationship. Over the coming century, cooperation between China and India can play a crucial role in reviving multilateralism and building a more united Asia. The obstacles which must be overcome to achieve this are truly Himalayan. Yet, the potential gains are even greater.

The writer is founder and president, Center for China and Globalization (CCG), a non-governmental think tank in China



C.R. Sasikumar

The privilege of wealth

Mahatma's idea of the rich as trustees can make an effective and sustainable difference



AZIM PREMJI

IT WAS MAHATMA GANDHI who, after my mother, most strongly influenced my thinking and actions on what I should do with the privilege of my wealth. My mother was one of the founder members of a charitable orthopaedic hospital for disabled children — one of the first in the country after Independence — which she ran for 50 years as the executive chairperson. I observed, through my childhood, what it took to do that, and the difference it made in the lives of people.

The Mahatma's idea that the wealthy must be trustees of their wealth for the larger good of the people has resonated with me from much before I became a wealthy man. To quote him, "supposing I have come by a fair amount of wealth — either by way of legacy, or by means of trade and industry — I must know that all that wealth does not belong to me; what belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than that enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community."

There are multiple quintessentially Gandhian views and ideas embedded in the idea of trusteeship. The first is a clear-eyed understanding of the reality that the enormous inequities of wealth, while unacceptable, are not illegitimate. This is a positive approach. It does not put those with wealth in the dock just for the possession of wealth, unlike a few other economic ideologies. Second, it is clear and definitive that wealth and resources, irrespective of who "owns" these, must help with the betterment of society and all its people. Third, it puts the onus

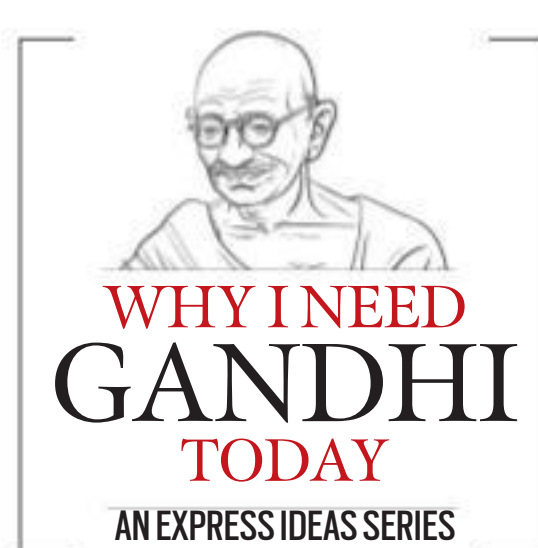
of making this happen on those who have wealth. This is a direct manifestation of his philosophy of non-violence — the wealthy must do it of their own accord, unforced by external pressure. Fourth, it puts faith in human nature, that eventually people will do the right thing, if you trust them.

Unsurprisingly, many people will be sceptical of the effectiveness of this approach to build an egalitarian society. And that would be for good reason. But I believe that over the long term, in the reality of the world we live in, this approach will be more sustainably effective.

In addition to the idea of trusteeship, I think business and industry leaders can learn a lot more from the life of the Mahatma. Let us take just one aspect, which I will call "moral leadership". How is it that this man could sway and influence hundreds of millions of people to action, while holding no formal power over them? Part of the answer lies in the Mahatma's moral leadership which millions followed, not requiring any power to sway them. This moral leadership was a result of three interlinked aspects of his behaviour.

First, was his relentless and uncompromising pursuit of truth. His own discomfort never deterred him, neither did fear. Discovering new aspects of truth that challenged his previous beliefs, he was ever ready to change his mind and had the courage to share this journey of learning publicly. It takes a truly great man to openly accept that he was wrong and to stand corrected.

Second, was the importance he gave to means over ends. We have witnessed this again and again through his life, that even the most cherished end of "purna swaraj" could not justify means that were at odds with the Mahatma's unshakeable belief in non-violence. The suspension of the non-cooperation movement after the incident at Chaura Chauri is perhaps the most well known of these, and is controversial too. However, it did cement the public understanding of the importance of his approach, the importance



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of ethics, of weighing means over ends, and of doing the right thing the right way, always.

Third, was, quite simply, his innate empathy and humaneness. His devotion to the weak and poor is too well known to bear any repetition. His efforts to unite India, cutting across every category of people possible, was one his three great quests. But even more telling was his ability and commitment to see and draw the best from even his adversaries. At the core of all this was his empathy towards all — not only to all fellow human beings, but also to animals and nature, to all that emanated from the universal life force.

With this trinity of the pursuit of truth, the importance of means over ends, and empathy for all living matter embodied in his person, and lived every day in the public eye, he did not need any other power over people, for it was this that gave him moral leadership. The people saw in him a beacon, an ideal, and a leader whom they were inspired to follow. Those of us who are privileged to be in leadership roles will realise that the power of position diminishes with time, whereas moral leadership endures.

There are some words of timeless truth whose power only increases every time they are repeated because they are an invocation of moral leadership. Let me end this brief personal tribute to the Mahatma with his own oft-repeated words: "I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man (woman) whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him or her. Will he or she gain anything by it? Will it restore him (her) to control over his (her) own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and your self melt away"

The writer is founder chairman Wipro Limited



VIKSIT GAUR AND AKRITI GAUR

Too many cooks

On AI, various government agencies have conflicting and confusing strategies

TO BE A \$5-trillion economy by 2025, India needs to build a cohesive national strategy around artificial intelligence (AI). While the government has been vocal about its intention to mainstream AI applications for social good, and ensure that AI research in India keeps pace with global developments, there is little evidence to show that even the basic building blocks to achieve this have been put in place.

Multiple calls taken by various governmental agencies have led to seemingly independent and often confusing strategies, resulting in conflict and a very real danger of ineffective execution. Till date, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY), the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), and the Niti Aayog have all released national strategy documents, each of them containing recommendations on governing structures, policy, as well as proposals on creation of new agencies. Surprisingly — and worryingly — there is no mention of how (and if) these structures will co-exist towards the goal of a unified AI strategy for the country.

For instance, the Niti Aayog's "National Strategy for AI" report allocates a budget of Rs 7,500 crore and recommends setting up

Centers for Research Excellence (COREs) in conjunction with academic institutions. It also recommends setting up International Centers for Transformational AI (ICTAIs) in association with leading industry players. It falls short, however, of clearly recommending the governance framework under which this should happen. The DIPP is next, with a budget of Rs 1,200 crore towards setting up the National AI Mission (N-AIM). The N-AIM is supposed to be the nodal agency for all "AI related activities" in India which will also set up their own "centers of excellence" to promote interdisciplinary research, and assess the performance of various AI-based products in India.

The MEITY on the other hand plans to allocate a Rs 400-crore budget for new technology initiatives as part of the Digital India Programme, including working with the Digital India Corporation to set up yet another apex body for AI called the National Center for Artificial Intelligence (NCAI). While details on this are sparse, it has recently emerged that the ministry is at loggerheads with the Niti Aayog in terms of who ought to ultimately spearhead this movement. While the Union finance ministry appears to have weighed in to resolve the tus-

le, the final policy call on who gets to lead the charge is shrouded in controversy and uncertainty.

Moreover, sector-specific AI applications, as diverse as facial recognition and crop classification, are being supervised by different state and central-level ministries with seemingly no consolidation around these national AI strategies. This can lead to fragmented adoption of technology, duplication of effort, and a wasteful use of financial resources.

While it is clear that India is heading in a direction where both the private and public sectors are unified in their commitment to promote and upscale AI, most of these commitments have been made on paper, in budget speeches, proposals and heavily researched reports. In fact, none of the recommendations highlighted earlier have yet been implemented in any useful form — this is in stark contrast to countries like Taiwan, which went from announcing a \$36-million project to build a supercomputing platform to boost AI research in June 2018, to launching the National Public Cloud Computing platform, based on the Taiwan 2 supercomputer, in June 2019.

It is important that policy-makers and agencies converge their ideas around the

groundwork that has been laid to streamline the effective creation and implementation of the country's national AI strategy. There is also a need for greater transparency in the timelines and roadmaps associated with these announcements, so that startups, non-governmental organisations and researchers can not only provide their input, but also understand when they can use some of this promised infrastructure if they are to compete at the international level.

Ultimately, India's AI strategy narrative needs to change from being a reactionary step to "counter the charge" of countries like China, to a proactive one where policies and infrastructure made in the country serve as "a beacon of inspiration" to other countries that are further behind. As the DIPP policy recognises, "people, process and technology" are non-negotiable for AI to proliferate in India, but in the absence of the first two, much will still left to be achieved in the third.

Viksiti Gaur is an entrepreneur based in San Francisco with an engineering background in artificial intelligence and Akriti Gaur is a lawyer working on issues at the intersection of law and technology in India. Views are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THEY DO SPEND

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Just blame it on millennials', (IE, October 10). The spending priorities of the millennials are different from that of the earlier generations. They do not like to invest in real estate or automobiles unless there is a dire need. But millennials are also known to spend on a range of products and services. India, in fact, could realise the visible benefit of the economic reforms only after the first batch of millennials entered the job market.

Sudip Kumar Dey, Kolkata

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Just blame it on the millennials' (IE, October 10). Since less than 5 per cent of the workforce has the necessary formal training, skill development is the need of the hour. Programmes such as the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana should also assess employment opportunities for the skilled youth.

Arpita Mary Abraham, Faridabad

DENYING A CM

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Denying Denmark' (IE, October 10). It is incomprehensible that the CM of a state has to seek permission from Centre for an official visit overseas. The Centre refus-

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

ing the Delhi to visit Denmark is equally unacceptable. The CM who has a mandate to run a state cannot take the call to attend an official seminar outside the country. It is akin to treating the CM of a state like a kindergarten student.

Deepak Singhal, Chennai