

my life & WORK SHAMIKA RAVI



THE PERSON who convinced me to do a PhD in economics was Abhijit Banerjee of MIT, when I worked with him on one of the first randomised controlled trials in the field of economics in the late 1990s.

It is crucial for young girls to have female mentors because research shows that it encourages them to persevere ahead, despite difficulties.

inside TRACK COOMI KAPOOR



SOME UP, SOME DOWN

IS NATIONAL Security Advisor Ajit Doval up or down in the Modi-2 regime? On one hand, with Amit Shah as Home Minister, Doval's wings automatically get clipped in internal security matters.

OM, THANK GOODNESS

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh sent word to the Indian ambassador in France that he wanted a pandit to be present when he landed in Bordeaux for the formal ceremony of officially handing over the first of the 36 Rafale jets manufactured for the Indian Air Force.

Out of MY MIND MEGHNAD DESAI



POLITICAL LANGUAGE follows its own logic. Congress won five general elections in a row in the first 20 years of parliamentary elections.

More women is good economics — economists

Fifth COLUMN TAVLEEN SINGH



training for future leadership role, and therefore, I like to encourage the women to speak up.

It is important, first of all, to remember that there are no silver bullets in economic development. But a massive amount of evidence from the experimentation of three decades in micro-finance has shown that women can be agents of change in the economy and larger society.

I do not see women as equal participants in India's growth today. This is why I think that human capital of women is one of our most under-exploited potentials.



Esther Duflo and Abhijit Banerjee won the Nobel Prize in Economics. AP

port, well-lit streets, targeted policing, scholarships, hospital protocols targeting women patients, awareness programmes etc.) But the larger problem cannot be addressed by governments alone.

One of my simplest studies, yet most powerful in implication, documents the significant rise of women voters in India.

study shows that increase in female voter participation was not an outcome of any concerted policy of the government or the Election Commission of India, but a "silent revolution" of self-empowerment.

I am excited by this year's Nobel award in Economics despite my doubts regarding the RCT approach to poverty reduction. Beyond methodological concerns (external validity etc.), RCTs are great to measure impacts of specific interventions.

Eventually, we must aspire towards equality in opportunity which is much more important than equality in outcomes.

Ravi is Director of Research at Brookings India and teaches economics at the Indian School of Business

ADVICE NOT WANTED

Veteran journalist Ashok Malik's field of expertise is the media. His last job in fact was as press secretary to the President. But in his new position as "policy advisor" in the Ministry of External Affairs, he has reportedly been told not to offer advice on the media.

PREVENTIVE STRIKE

The recent BCCI elections demonstrated that this is yet another sphere in which Amit Shah holds sway. However, it was not Shah alone who rooted for Sourav Ganguly over Brijesh Patel for the president's post.

WAITING FOR COOK

The Garvi Gujarat building, the new Gujarat Bhavan in Delhi inaugurated by PM Modi on September 2, has won plaudits and publicity. But the Bhavan, located on the prestigious Akbar Road, still awaits a resident cook.

history HEADLINE

RAKSHANDA JALIL



In Iqbal's words

MY EARLIEST memories of school are of singing 'Lab pe aati hai dua ban ke tamanna meri...' with a bunch of other kids, all equally earnest, all with hands folded and eyes closed.



When Abba recited 'O Ghafil Afghani', 'Jang-e Yarmooq ka aik Waqeya', 'Naya Shivala', 'Haqiqat-e Husni', 'Gibril-o Iblis' or 'Rohila' in his sonorous voice, he was not simply pouring honey in my ears but also laying the foundation of what would become an enduring love for the eclecticism and Catholicism of Urdu poetry.

It was only years later that I began to read Iqbal (1877-1938) with the intention of understanding his poetry and locating him in the context of his time and age. Marking a radical departure from the moralists of the previous generation, Iqbal (revered as 'Allama' meaning 'scholar') was exhorting the masses to rise against the colonial masters in poems such as 'Punjab ke Dehqaan Se' and 'Farman-e Khuda'.

Iqbal graduated from the prestigious Government College, Lahore in 1899, worked as a lecturer in philosophy at the same college, went on to study philosophy at Trinity College, Cambridge and in Heidelberg and Munich in Germany and

also took the Bar-at-Law from 1905-1908. He returned to teach for two years before quitting government service altogether, earned no more than a modest livelihood as a lawyer and chose to devote himself entirely to reading and writing.

Questioning western enlightenment and English materialism on philosophical and religious grounds, acutely aware of the social undercurrents that conflicted the Muslim intelligentsia, no longer content with the crumbs of lowly employment in the colonial administration or even tokens of recognition and appreciation from the imperial government, Iqbal wanted nothing short of an Islamic Renaissance.

united and free India where Hindus and Muslims could co-exist, this syncretism gave way to a somewhat woolly Unitarianism and Individualism. The Tarana-e-Hind written in 1904 was followed by the Tarana-e-Milli in 1910 showing the progression from Hindi hain hum watan hai Hindostan hamara (We are the people of Hind and Hindustan is our homeland) to Muslim hain hum watan hai sara jahan hamara (We are Muslims and our homeland is the whole world).

Iqbal's romantic nationalism underwent a change in the light of influences as diverse as Friedrich Nietzsche and Henri Bergson and Karl Marx, producing what Surroor has called the 'New Testament of Urdu Poetry'.

Jalil is a Delhi-based author, translator and literary historian

A deluded campaign

THERE IS no genteel way to say this so I am going to spit it out: menacing hyper-nationalism does not win elections. It was menacing hyper-nationalism that defined the BJP's election campaigns in Maharashtra and Haryana and voters rejected it.

As someone who has supported Modi openly in this column, I was horrified to hear him virtually charge his political opponents with treason for opposing the removal of Article 370.

When I asked ordinary people in Maharashtra what they thought of the removal of Article 370, the general response was puzzlement that I should even be asking them this question. Most people seemed unsure what difference it made to their lives and usually, after pausing to think about it, they would remind me that jobs were being lost in the auto industry and banks were failing and it was these things that worried them most.

Speaking of which, has anyone in the Prime Minister's Office noticed that it was only human rights violations in Kashmir that appeared to come up for discussion? Nothing about Balochistan, nothing about the human rights of Shias and Ahmediyas in the Islamic Republic.

These were village-level elections but it is no small achievement that they should have been held. What will matter much more to the world is whether there will be 'exceptional enthusiasm' when elections are held to the legislative Assembly.

In Maharashtra and Haryana there would have been much more support for the BJP if there had been more talk in the campaign of steps being taken to reverse the economic slowdown.

Beware the voter

ity and there were fears expressed that democracy was in danger. That he was populist, authoritarian and majoritarian. Of course, being the BJP, the accusation of fascism was never far behind — to say nothing of the H word.

No local matter was addressed. In Maharashtra, a Bharat Ratna honour for V D Savarkar was given more prominence than recent floods. Haryana has a

car industry in doldrums but did not get a mention.

Certain things are clear. Never take the voters for granted. Voters know not only how to use their vote but also how to lie to pollsters.

There was a report of a BJP नेता telling voters that his party had put a chip in the EVM which told them who had voted for which party. The Election Commission was going to examine him but it is not the first time this has been said.

ocratic rights. It is obvious that such talk does not enhance a party's reputation with voters.

In Haryana, the BJP has fallen short of what was expected of its team, let alone what was being claimed by exit polls. It has lost its majority and the Congress has 31 seats and the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) of Dushyant Chautala has won 10 seats.

The miracle in Maharashtra is of course the tenacity and success of Sharad Pawar. He stuck to local issues as he is deeply rooted in the state and the region to which he belongs.

a third generation Chautala winning seats. Manohar Lal Khattar is a newcomer to Haryana as well as to electoral politics. He failed when the case of Ram Rahim blew up and his followers broke the law with impunity.

The biggest surprise is the comeback for the Congress. Ever since the general election, it has been in serious crisis. It has lost its young president and got an older one back. Still, its performance shows that there is life in the Grand Old Party.

As for the BJP, it has to take local issues and local voters more seriously.