

FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

RISING SEAS IN INDIA & WORLD: THREAT FRESHLY ASSESSED, WHAT CHANGES

AMITABH SINHA PUNE, OCTOBER 30

THE NUMBER of people in India threatened by rising sea-levels is at least seven times more than previously estimated, a new research has revealed. The research, published in *Nature Communications*, has found large areas on the eastern as well as western coastlines under threat of rising sea levels, including Mumbai on the west and Kolkata on the east.

It says 36 million people along the Indian coastlines currently live on land that will fall below the annual flood level by 2050, exposing them to risks of flooding, damage to infrastructure, loss of livelihood, or permanent displacement. The previous estimate was of five million people in these areas being exposed to these risks.



A map of Mumbai based on the new study, and prepared by *The New York Times*, shows a much higher threat projection than earlier. NYT

How the study was done

Researchers Scott Kulp and Benjamin Strauss of Climate Central, an independent organisation of climate scientists, have reported that they have developed a new tool that measures elevation of land from mean sea levels with much greater accuracy than earlier models. Their study claims that previous methods to measure land elevation suffered from large errors in most of the world apart from the US, Australia and parts of Europe. Land elevation data in most of these other areas came from satellite measurements done by a NASA project called Shuttle Radar Topography Mission, or SRTM.

The study says the error in the measurements came from the fact that often the tops of trees or buildings were taken to be the protrusions of earth. Thus, SRTM measurements even in the coastal cities of the US often overestimated land elevations by as much as 15.5 feet on an average. Their new tool, called CoastalDEM (or Coastal Digital Elevation Model), which uses artificial intelligence and machine learning on 51 million data samples, brought down this error to less than 2.5 inches on an average, it says.

The threat projection

The study claims to remove over-estimations in the assessment of land elevations in coastal areas. As a result, it finds that much larger areas of land were threatened by rising sea levels because of climate change. Consequently, a significantly higher population group was at risk.

The study found that 300 million people, and not 80 million as estimated earlier, across the globe were currently living in areas that were below the annual coastal flood line. By the turn of this century, land that is now home to 200 million of these people would be permanently below the high tide line.

Almost 80 per cent of these 300 million people live in China, Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand.

China alone accounted for 43 million.

Vulnerable areas in India

The new tool has found that in particular, the western coastline near Bhuj, Jamnagar, Porbandar, Surat, Bharuch and Mumbai are much more susceptible to rising sea levels than earlier assessments. On the eastern side, almost the entire coastline of West Bengal and Odisha have been found under threat. Except for some areas near Kakinada, the threats to the coastlines of the southern states have not been affected by the new measurements.

The study has serious prediction for India for 2050. "By that year, projected sea level rise could push average annual floods above land currently home to some 36 million people. West Bengal and coastal Odisha are projected to be particularly vulnerable, as is the eastern city of Kolkata," it says.

J&K state to 2 UTs: today, later

Bifurcation comes into effect on October 31, with immediate events including LGs, top bureaucrats, police chiefs taking charge. But reorganisation is a long process; a look at what more will remain to be done.

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 30

THE STATE of Jammu and Kashmir will be officially bifurcated into the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh on Thursday, October 31. This was the date chosen after the bifurcation was announced in Parliament on August 5. Beyond the symbolic importance — October 31 is the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel — the day will mark the beginning of the functioning of the two UTs at a bureaucratic level. The period between August 5 and October 31 has been used by the state administration and the Home Ministry to put a basic bureaucratic structure in place to implement the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act.

What happens on October 31?

In terms of events, the Lieutenant Governors of the two UTs will take oath of office along with the Chief Justice of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court. Last week, the Union government appointed serving IAS officer of Gujarat cadre Girish Chandra Murmu as the LG of Jammu and Kashmir, and retired bureaucrat of Tripura cadre Radha Krishna Mathur as LG of Ladakh.

On the ground, the two UTs will get their own Chief Secretaries and other top bureaucrats, their own police chiefs and key supervisory officers. While Dilbagh Singh will continue to be DG of J&K police, an IG-level officer will head the police in Ladakh. Both forces will remain part of the J&K cadre which will eventually merge with the Union Territory cadre.

For full-fledged bifurcation, the Reorganisation Act gives a period of one year. Reorganisation of states is a slow process that at times can take years; issues relating to reorganisation of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, which was bifurcated into Andhra and Telangana in 2013, are still being brought to the Union Home Ministry for resolution.

What will happen to other officers already posted in the undivided state?

An appointment of posts in both Union Territories has been done. While the bureaucratic structures are in place, the staff of the state administration are yet to be divided. The government had asked all staff to send in applications for their preferred posting between the two UTs. This process is still on. The basic idea is to have minimum shifting between the two UTs, sources in the state administration said, with preference being given to regional affinities. "We would like to give people the posting of their choice between the two UTs. Those from Ladakh prefer being posted in the region and those from Kashmir and Jammu want to stay put. The only issue is there aren't enough Ladakhi staff to fill in all posts there. So some people from Jammu and Kashmir may have to go there. All of that is being worked out. It will take some time," a state administration official said.

As of now, the Home Ministry has issued an interim order to maintain the station of all staff in the lower bureaucracy as it is. "This is to ensure that the two UTs keep on functioning without any hiccups beginning October 31," said the official.

What happens to the laws that governed the state of Jammu & Kashmir?

Legislative restructuring is a work in progress, with a lot remaining to be done.



Villagers of Katrasoo in Kulgam on Wednesday, a day after militants shot dead five labourers from West Bengal. Shuaib Masoodi

LEGAL ISSUES TO WORK OUT

**JUVENILE JUSTICE ACT** Central Act takes those above the age of 16 as adults, existing J&K Act's age limit is 18.

**RESERVATION** Current laws in J&K state do not recognise reservation according to caste, have provisions for region-wise reservation.

**OTHER LAWS** Land issues may need to be looked into, business rules have to be framed for both UTs, Civil Services Decentralisation Act may require changes.

While 153 state laws are to be repealed, 166 have been retained. Then there is the cosmetic exercise of repealing Acts that mention "applicable to all of India but not the state of Jammu and Kashmir".

As of now, the state administration has implemented all that is mentioned in the Reorganisation Act as it is. But it is also saddled with the massive legislative exercise of arriving at and making state-specific insertions into the 108 central laws that would now be applicable to the two Union Territories.

For example, the state used to have its own Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) which would now be replaced by the central CrPC. Unlike the Ranbir Penal Code, which is practically a replica of the Indian Penal Code, Kashmir's CrPC has many provisions different from the Central CrPC. "It will have to be seen if any modification needs to be done to suit the state. But a final decision in all these aspects would be taken by Delhi," an official said.

"Similarly, there are state-specific insertions that may be done in laws relating to the

protection of women and children that have been replaced by the POCSO Act of the Centre. Same is the case with the Juvenile Justice Act. Then there is the law relating to reservations in the state which has been retained. While the quota for economically weaker sections has already been added through an amendment, the Centre may want to make some insertions drawing from central Acts," another state administration official said.

Which are the laws that may require state-specific insertions?

A major bone of contention with regard to the Juvenile Justice Acts of the Centre and the state is the age limit. While the central Act takes those above the age of 16 as adults, the state Act's age limit is 18. The argument has been that given the special situation in Kashmir where teenagers are often found to be part of violent protests, the central Act could jeopardise the future of many.

As far as the state's reservation laws are concerned, they do not recognise reservation according to caste. The state has provision for region-wise reservation such as quota for those living near the LoC and the International Border and a quota for backward regions. While the state population includes 8% SCs and 10% STs, there are regional differences such as Ladakh having no SC population but a high tribal population.

"Then there are laws relating to land which may need to be looked into. There are issues relating to business rules which have to be framed for both Union Territories. There are also issues relating to employment as anyone can now apply for a job here. The Civil Services Decentralisation Act may require changes," the official said.

Section 96 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act facilitates this: "For the purpose of facilitating the application in relation to the successor Union Territories, of any law made before the appointed day, as detailed in Fifth Schedule, the Central

Government may, before the expiration of one year from that day, by order, make such adaptations and modification of the law, whether by way of repeal or amendment, as may be necessary or expedient, and thereupon every such law shall have effect subject to the adaptations and modifications so made until altered, repealed or amended by a competent Legislature or other competent authority."

Sources said though all central laws have been extended to Ladakh, regulations have to be framed.

The Act also provides for an increase of seats in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly to 114. Given that the Act also provides for delimitation, the process for which has not yet begun, this may take more time.

How will assets be shared?

On September 9, the government constituted a three-member advisory committee under the chairmanship of former Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra to divide the assets and liabilities of the state between the two Union Territories. The committee is yet to submit its report.

Three more committees — on personnel, finance and administrative matters — were constituted at the state level for the purpose of reorganisation. The three committees are learnt to have completed their work but their recommendations have not been made public yet.

A far more complicated task than sharing of assets is financial restructuring. "Because of the decision coming in August, the administration is saddled with a middle-of-the-year financial restructuring which is proving to be a massive bureaucratic exercise. It is going to take some more time to fully put things in place," an official said.

Notably, while the total budget for Union Territories is Rs 7,500 crore, the budget for Jammu and Kashmir is in excess of Rs 90,000 crore. This could also necessitate continuance of the Kashmir division in the Home Ministry, sources said.

Who are Kerala's Maoists, how they differ from their comrades elsewhere

SHAJU PHILIP THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCTOBER 30

THUNDERBOLT commandos of the Kerala Police killed four alleged Maoists in back-to-back encounters over Monday and Tuesday in the Attappadi forests of the state's Palakkad district. The four individuals, including a woman, belonged to Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, police said.

This was the third encounter between police and Maoists in Kerala in almost three years. In March this year, police shot dead a Maoist activist who had allegedly gone to extort money at a resort in Wayanad district. In November 2016, two Maoists were killed in an encounter in the Nilambur forests in Malappuram district.

Over the last decade or so, Kerala has seen overt and covert Maoist activities in the northern districts of Kannur, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Palakkad, and Malappuram. In 2018, Wayanad, Malappuram, and Palakkad joined the Centre's list of 90 leftwing extremism (LWE) affected districts across the country.

Beginnings of Naxalism

The ripples of the Naxalbari uprising in North Bengal in the late 1960s reached Kerala as well. North Kerala, including Wayanad, was a hotbed of the ultra-Left movement, and A Varghese, a CPM leader who turned to Naxalism, and K Ajitha, who

is now a prominent feminist activist, inspired a series of revolts against landlords. The so-called 'Spring Thunder', however, suffered a blow when Varghese, who had won the hearts of tribals, was killed in an encounter — which was subsequently revealed to have been fake — in 1970.

Leaflets and addresses

The nature of Maoist operations in Kerala is different from that in other LWE-affected states. They have never targeted civilians or caused human casualties, and use the trjunction of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka — where a seamless forest cover and difficult terrain hamper policing — as a safe organisational and transit hub. Forest patches in Palakkad, Malappuram, and Wayanad are part of this trjunction.

Over the past several years, the Maoists set up three squads (dalams) in this area — the Kabani, Nadukani, and Bhavani dalams — and added a fourth, the Varahini dalam, in 2017. They typically enter villages or tribal hamlets bordering forests, address the local people, and distribute leaflets in an attempt to drive home the argument for an armed struggle against the state.

They have not, however, had any significant success in winning over youths in the tribal hamlets, for which several factors are responsible: the socio-economic profile and standard of living of tribals in Kerala is far better than elsewhere, and improved polic-



After the encounter in Attappadi forest of Palakkad district. Express

ing and greater socialisation of tribal youths make recruitment difficult.

The Maoists mostly return to the jungles after collecting provisions from the villages.

Some stray activities

There have been stray cases of Maoist attacks on resorts and stone quarrying units alleged to be operating illegally or encroaching

on lands of tribals. Forest outposts too, have been occasionally targeted. Police sometimes register cases against identifiable Maoists, based on complaints from local people.

In 2014, Maoists strayed from the villages and forest fringes to attack a KFC outlet in Palakkad. That same year, the Kochi corporate office of Nitta Gelatin India Limited (NGIL), a prominent Indo-Japanese industrial venture, was vandalised. After playing cat and mouse for several years, Maoists and the Kerala Police exchanged fire in December 2014 in a reserve forest in Wayanad. The deaths in the encounters over the last three years have not deterred the Maoists, who have been spotted at several places in North Kerala.

Big Maoist names

A prominent leader is R Roopesh, 50, of Thrissur district. At the time of his arrest in Tamil Nadu in 2015, Roopesh had been heading the Western Ghats Zone of the Maoist movement for several years, and faced some 30 cases in Kerala. His wife P A Shyna, who worked alongside him, was arrested, too. Shyna has been released on bail; Roopesh remains in judicial custody.

Murali Kannampilly, now 67, was arrested by the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad in 2015. The son of Kannampilly Karunakara Menon, a former diplomat who served as India's High Commissioner and Ambassador to several countries, Murali

Kannampilly was for long a key figure in the Maoist movement in Kerala. He was recently released on bail from jail in Pune.

The Cherukara Palli family of Pandikkadu in Malappuram is one of Kerala's prominent Maoist families. CP Jaleel, who was killed in Wayanad in March this year, belonged to this family. Jaleel's brother, CP Ismail, had been arrested in Pune along with Murali Kannampilly. A third brother, CPMoithen, operates in forests in Kerala, while a fourth, CP Rasheed, is a human rights activist associated with the Maoist front Porattam.

The brothers started out on an activist path with issues concerning Dalits and the environment, and subsequently embraced Maoism.

The lone target of the second of this week's double encounter in Palakkad, Manivasakam, was also a senior Maoist leader, and a member of the CPI (Maoist) Tamil Nadu State Committee. Manivasakam had been allegedly leading the Attappadi camp since the 2016 encounter in Malappuram, in which Kuppu Devaraj alias Ravanna, a member of the CPI (Maoist) central committee, was killed.

In Kerala from other states

According to intelligence sources, most of the Maoists operating in Kerala belong to other states. There may be some three dozen of them in number, along with a handful from Kerala. Several top Maoists

from other states, such as Vikram Gowda, have been spotted in the state. Six of the seven Maoists killed in the last three years (including in this week's encounters) were from other states. The presence of these Maoists is usually attributed to the intensified police action in other LWE states, which drives them to seek refuge in Kerala.

Sympathy and support

As Maoists have not shed civilian blood in Kerala, their movement enjoys significant support. Kerala Maoists get logistic and ideological backing from organisations such as Porattam and Ayyankalipada, as well as from human rights activists. Police killings of alleged Maoists and cases against them are invariably questioned, and human rights activists often conduct a parallel probe into encounter killings.

The CPI, an ally of the ruling CPI (M), has always questioned police action against Maoists. Senior CPI leaders attended the wedding of the daughter of Roopesh and Shyna. In 2015, Kerala High Court said that being a Maoist is not a crime, and no one could be arrested merely for being one. After this week's killings, CPI state secretary Kanam Rajendran took strong exception to the police action, and retired HC judge Kemal Pasha said the police might have been trying to divert attention from other issues. Human rights activists marched in protest in Kozhikode on Tuesday, and were arrested.





## The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY  
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

### TASK IN THE VALLEY

As J&K map is redrawn, need to lift curbs on people, leaders grows more urgent. Till then, no new beginning is possible

AS THE DECISION to divide Jammu & Kashmir into two Union Territories takes effect, much remains to be done. The work of dividing the manpower and material resources of the state is far from over even as the two newly-created territories of the state which will now pass into history as the “erstwhile state of J&K” set off on different paths. Most importantly, there is no papering over the stark ground reality that the government is yet to allow the people of the Valley to speak out, and be heard, on decisions that affect them the most. In various domestic and international forums, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and a host of other senior government functionaries have described and defended the August 5 decisions as necessitated by the need to “develop” a state that had ostensibly lagged behind the rest of the country on economic and social fronts due to its special status. The government’s plans to bring J&K up to speed are not yet known. But clearly, any efforts in this direction would, crucially, need the participation of the people for whom this development is meant. Sooner rather than later, the government needs to free the political leaders and workers who have been detained, and allow people to freely express their views in the Valley.

The Block Development Council election has shown that wiping the slate clean and creating a new leadership is difficult, if not impossible, in situations as fraught as those that exist in the Valley. The BDC is elected indirectly, that is, elected panchs and sarpanchs of a particular block of villages vote to elect one among them as the head of that block council. But almost a year after the last round of J&K panchayat polls, many of these representatives of the people at the bottom-most tier of electoral democracy continue to seek refuge in a hotel in uptown Srinagar, away from their villages. The persistence of fear has only underlined the questions of legitimacy about an electoral exercise at the end of which many seats of panch and sapanch in the Valley lay vacant, and most of those elected were elected unopposed.

It remains to be seen whether and how the conversion of a state into two Union Territories resolves the 70-year-long troubled relationship between Kashmir and the rest of India, and between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. The killing of five migrant workers in Kulgam on Tuesday, the targeting of the most vulnerable in the Valley, coming on the heels of several other deadly attacks on non-residents, shows that peace may remain elusive even after the momentous changes bring the state directly under the control of the Union Home Ministry. It is easy to lose sight of this in the din and rhetoric on Kashmir, but the first step towards resolving a problem is to acknowledge it. Political alienation that has spread and deepened over generations is a large part of the crisis in Kashmir. Unless it is addressed politically, it will persist and continue to impose a heavy toll in the Valley, and the country.

### THE RISING INSECURITY

Not enough jobs are being created. Those created are of questionable quality

THERE ARE SEVERAL pointers to the jobs crisis in India: One, the number of workers in the age-group of 18-30 employed under the MGNREGA rose to 7.07 million in 2018-19, up from 5.8 million in 2017-18 — signaling the lack of employment opportunities. Two, a study commissioned by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister says that even in the organised sector in India there was a preference in favour of “non-contractual” jobs between 2011-12 and 2017-18. Thus, not only are enough employment opportunities not being created for the millions entering the labour market and for those shifting out of agriculture, but even the jobs that are being added are of the “non-contractual” kind, calling into question the quality of jobs created.

Much of the labour force shifting out of agriculture between 2004-05 and 2011-12 found its way into the construction sector. But with the sector in the midst of a multi-year slowdown, employment opportunities are likely to have severely diminished. It is thus possible that the slowdown in economic activity, especially in the non-farm labour intensive sectors in both rural and urban areas, coupled with the terms of trade shifting against agriculture, would have pushed workers to seek employment under the employment guarantee scheme. The NSSO PLFS report also shows that youth unemployment (age group of 15 to 29) surged from 6.1 per cent in 2011-12 to 17.8 per cent in 2017-18, indicating that not enough employment opportunities exist. This slack in the labour market also reflects in the subdued wage growth. On the other hand, the jobs report indicates a shift towards informalisation of work relations even in the organised sector during this period. And as these “non-contractual” jobs are unlikely to provide any form of social security benefits, it raises questions over the quality of these jobs.

The Mudra programme was meant to help tackle the jobs crisis in India. As reported in this paper, Rs 5.71 lakh crore was sanctioned during the first three years of this programme through 12.27 crore loan accounts. Yet, only 1.12 crore additional jobs were created during this period, implying that every new loan did not create an additional employment opportunity. This inability to create enough quality jobs will have long-term repercussions for the Indian economy. India is in the midst of a demographic transition, but the data so far suggests that it has not been able to take advantage of it.

### PINK BALL CRICKET

A new game is here. It must be played and consumed in moderation

ON NOVEMBER 22 at the Eden Gardens, Indian cricket will step into the unknown. The Test against Bangladesh will see the country embrace Test cricket under the floodlights, that many think is a cure for poor turnouts. Eden’s spectacular backdrop will come in handy to those tasked with re-advertising the game’s oldest format. With the sun slipping into the clouds, and as the Kolkata fans throng the stands, Eden will be the place to be.

The day and night format, many including the newly coronated Indian cricket board president Sourav Ganguly believe, is the way forward. Certainly, the afternoon start will be more convenient to the fans — students needn’t bunk schools and office-goers needn’t think of excuses to watch some of the game. Yet the move could hold some of the game’s intrinsic charm hostage. It also throws up an important question: Does cricket have room for a fourth format, another mutant wherein the tactics and strategies are vastly different? For instance, there would be less of the fabled first-hour intrigue and more of twilight mystery. It’s at dusk that the pink ball is said to begin showing its true nature. It’s the time when the floodlights merge with the twilight sun, forming a spectrum that begins to play tricks with the batsmen’s vision. Besides, the pink ball, with its extra lacquer, could assist more swing, and even on the subcontinent, batting first would not be the obvious choice for captains winning the toss. With batting becoming difficult, matches wouldn’t last till the fifth day. The joy of watching the ball exploding off the cracks or fleet-footed batsmen dousing them with supremely soft hands and cool heads might be a thing of the past.

For the sake of cricket’s heterogeneity and tradition, pink-ball cricket is best consumed in moderation. It shouldn’t be the staple — rather, the odd night out. While cricket officials must be concerned about dwindling Test crowds, and they need to devise counter-measures, the intrinsic joys of the game must be protected. The future of Test cricket shouldn’t call for an erasing of its past.



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

# It’s credibility, stupid

On the Indian economy, no one knows what to believe. This makes the uncertainty of our moment more endemic

DESPITE THE PANTOMIME optimism that government functionaries and the media have to display, it is becoming impossible to disguise the sense of gloom surrounding the Indian economy. All agencies, from the Economist Intelligence Unit to the IMF are downwardly revising growth figures; the RBI’s consumer confidence index is at a new low. There are learned debates about whether this slowdown is structural or cyclical. There are debates over demand side or supply side solutions. There is general global uncertainty: The global economy is slowing, the possibility of geopolitical and trade shocks is still high. But there is one obvious fact we are paying less attention to: The pervasive loss of credibility in the Indian system.

UPA 2 undoubtedly left a mess. This government has tried a few things, some even laudable. But at the end of the day, it has to take responsibility for the fact that it has sustained an economy whose numbers are more of a mystery, whose critical sectors (real estate, banking and telecom) are in crisis, where tax cuts are confused with tax reforms, where the pressures on the fiscal deficit are immense, where reform is a knee-jerk handout to one constituency or the other, where regulatory capture is still a possibility, where no one quite knows what the systemic effects of corporate malfeasance are, where income growth is near stagnant for most people, where there are uncertainties about what trade and RCEP might mean for India, and you don’t have much of a mystery for why India is not growing.

But our credibility is not undermined by the crisis, as it is by the systemic denial this government has produced. It does not help when economic titans like Mukesh Ambani want us to take a bet on what they call “the leadership accelerator”. It is the case that the more you need to trust a leader, the less likely you trust other institutions. But this metaphor is doubly odd. It does not contemplate the possibility that a leader can accelerate a car and crash it into a wall, or if the car is stuck in quicksand, can suck it in even further. Privately, almost no one believes our growth is more than two to three per cent. Any society with a gap between what peo-

ple, and even professionals, say about the economy in private and what they are willing to say in public, will face a credibility crisis. Part of the problem with the Indian economy is that no one knows what to believe. This makes the uncertainty of our moment, more endemic and self-fulfilling.

The second credibility gap is baked in our political economy. Because the ideological mystification is so deep it has to be said over and over again. If Indian capitalism is stalling, it is not because the government gives in to populist pressures from below — you can always cite this or that relief for farmers or consumers as examples. But the impact of that pales into insignificance with the undue power exercised by the rich and the powerful to distort the system. As Adam Smith always pointed out, the biggest challenge is not saving the market from the state, it is saving the state’s credibility from being decimated by the privileged.

The credibility-undermining influence of the privileged can be seen in many ways. The rich can disproportionately claim exemptions from the state. At the moment when everyone agrees that rural India bore the brunt of demonetisation, when the fiscal deficit and inequality are both high, corporate tax cuts and tax cuts for upper income brackets more generally are a crazy idea. If the structural diagnosis of our malaise made by Rathin Roy is correct, that this is a system largely geared to the consumption and investment needs of a hundred million, leaving the rest of the billion in the lurch, then all measures that reinforce the privilege at the top will be counter-productive. The other unintended consequence of undue tax cuts for the rich is that the political pressure for populist compensations increases rather than decreases as a result.

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The second credibility gap is baked in our political economy. Because the ideological mystification is so deep it has to be said over and over again. If Indian capitalism is stalling, it is not because the government gives in to populist pressures from below — you can always cite this or that relief for farmers or consumers as examples. But the impact of that pales into insignificance with the undue power exercised by the rich and the powerful to distort the system. As Adam Smith always pointed out, the biggest challenge is not saving the market from the state, it is saving the state’s credibility from being decimated by the privileged.

posed trends are creating a credibility crisis simultaneously. On the one hand, there have been attempts to “clean up the system” as it were and in some cases, create mechanisms for an orderly exit. Some of the uncertainty is the result of this process, whether it is in banking, real estate or the creation of the bankruptcy process. But the confidence is diminishing whether the government has the bandwidth to create a legal and regulatory culture that can bring this process to fruition. Or will we end up in half measures, where the poison is revealed but no mechanisms to absorb it? More than economists, what the government needs is to train a critical mass of people across all institutions of economic governance — legal drafting, taxation, regulatory bodies, banking — who can create a credible regulatory culture. On the other hand, there is a perception that the system as whole is moving in a direction where a couple of groups will exercise disproportionate influence on the political system. We are at the risk of moving from decentralised to centralised and concentrated cronyism (centralised both in terms of givers and recipients of benefits). The combination of half-done clean-up of the old, and new cronyism at the top is not a recipe for credibility.

The third credibility gap is the private sector itself. We can rail against the government all we want, but the fact is that episodes like Ranbaxy, IL&FS, DHFL, shake the credibility of the entire system. The issue is not the number of companies that might have engaged in creative accounting; maybe that number is still small. But can you now tell what is kosher and what is not? What these episodes exposed was the fragility of accountability systems in the private sector: Whether it is the reputation of the big accounting firms, who are still getting off lightly, or of corporate governance. Failures in many of these firms have systemic consequences. So, risk aversion will increase and no one will bet on the future. Economies, as Keynes knew, turn on structures of credibility. We are frittering that away at every level, even in economics.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express



ALOK KUMAR AND RONALD ABRAHAM

## A NEW KIND OF GOVERNMENT

Niti Aayog’s Aspirational Districts Programme is a laboratory for governance reform

THE ASPIRATIONAL Districts Programme (ADP) is one of the largest experiments on outcomes-focused governance in the world. Spread across 112 of India’s socio-economically challenged districts, the ADP is Niti Aayog’s flagship initiative to improve health, nutrition, education, and economic outcomes. Initial evidence suggests that the ADP has already contributed towards improving lakhs of lives. If successful, the ADP can present a new template for governance. It is therefore critical to try and get it right.

The ADP’s theory of change rests on three pillars: Competition, convergence, and collaboration. Competition fosters accountability on district governments for final outcomes (instead of inputs) using high-quality data. Convergence creatively brings together the horizontal and vertical tiers of the government. Collaboration enables impactful partnerships between government, philanthropy and civil society. Of the Aspirational Districts, Niti Aayog plays a mentoring role in 27 districts in eight states, home to about 60 million people. Twelve central government ministries have similarly adopted the remaining districts.

Health outcomes in the mentored districts reveal significant improvements between the first and second third-party household surveys (in June-August 2018 and January-March 2019). We see increases in registering pregnant women into the health system (from 73 per cent to 86 per cent), institutional delivery of babies (66 per cent to 74 per cent), and anti-diarrheal treatment via ORS (51 per cent to 67 per cent) and zinc (34 per cent to 53 per cent). These rates are significantly faster than the

usual trajectory for these indicators.

While a deeper mixed-methods analysis is required to clearly understand what explains these results, we hypothesise the following four factors play a role. One, pioneering state and district-level initiatives in both the ADP and non-ADP districts in areas prioritised under the programme. Two, spurred by competition on outcomes, local governments target their efforts and improve programme implementation and design. Three, the focus on outcomes enables local experimentation based on a firm appreciation of ground realities. Four, partnerships between various philanthropic and civil society organisations with district governments augment local capacity.

While the initial evidence on the ADP’s impact has been encouraging, as is true of any programme of this scale and scope, there is always room for supplementing our efforts.

As our colleague Karthik Muralidharan has argued, “High-performing organisations are characterised by autonomy to front-level officials on [processes], combined with accountability for outcomes.” The ADP is built precisely on this mantra, and the district-ranking index can be improved further to fully reflect this. Some process-level indicators, such as on-time delivery of textbooks in schools, are part of the ranking index, based on which districts’ socio-economic performance is assessed. Textbook delivery may or may not be a problem in districts, and its role in improving learning outcomes may be tenuous.

A simplified ranking index — with few but carefully chosen output and outcome measures — will more clearly signal national devel-

opment targets, while providing autonomy to local governments.

High quality administrative data is critical to improve programme implementation and design at the local level. The poor quality of administrative data is usually due to capacity issues at the ground level as well as incentives to inflate performance. To help improve data quality, we use independent surveys to validate administrative data. Building each district’s internal capacity to produce reliable and actionable data, and promoting a culture of data use, can be made a priority for the ADP.

ADP is a laboratory of various cutting-edge governance reforms. First and foremost, the programme has shifted focus away from inputs and budgets to outcomes, such as learning and malnutrition, at the highest echelons of the government. It has also introduced non-financial incentives to encourage government officials to deliver results and actively encourages forging partnerships with philanthropies and civil society to create better impact using the same amount of budgetary spends. The programme has also developed a lean data infrastructure that smartly exploits complementary strengths of administrative and survey data.

Each of these initiatives is a radical shift from the status quo in governance today. Therefore, it is critical to carefully document and learn from the ADP’s experiences.

Kumar (IAS) is Health and Education Advisor at NITI Aayog. Abraham is Partner and India lead at IDInsight, a knowledge partner for the ADP. Views are personal



## OCTOBER 31, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

**BANARASI REVOLT**  
CHIEF MINISTER BANARSI Das is virtually raising a banner of revolt against the Lok Dal leadership and preparing for a showdown on the issue of the dissolution of the UP Assembly to which he is totally opposed. As the organisational wing mounted pressure for the dissolution and simultaneous poll to the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabha, the chief minister abstained from the meeting of the party functionaries, which was addressed, amongst others, by Raj Narain, working president of the Lok Dal. To ensure his majority in the cabinet in the event of the CFD ministers pulling out of the government, the Das was busy trying to win over the wa-

vering ministers of the Lok Dal to his side and defeat the move in the cabinet.

**SOVIET BORDER BASE**  
EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN intelligence agencies have reported that the Soviet Union has built an army base near Farah, 65 miles from the Iranian frontier, and expanded the Afghan air base at Shindand, 75 miles from the Iranian frontier. The agencies believe that the Russians want to build positions from which they can apply military pressure on Iran. Under the 1921 Soviet-Iranian treaty, the Russians have the right to intervene in Iran should internal developments appear to them as a threat to Soviet interests.

**NO ASIAN HUSBANDS**  
HUSBANDS AND FIANCES of those not born in Britain will not be allowed to settle here even though they may be British citizens, according to a new proposed legislation. The exact nature of the legislation is not yet known. But the home secretary has privately told a group of Tory MPs that the proposed measure would not only considerably reduce the number of Asian men and women automatically allowed entry into Britain, but it would also, in part, fulfil the pledge contained in the Conservative Party’s election manifesto. Last year, 10,000 Asians from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were allowed to settle in the UK they married British citizens.



# 15 THE IDEAS PAGE

## Neighbour's duty

The current juncture in Pakistan is a good moment for India to speak up on Pakistan's internal developments. Demanding humane treatment for Sharif and Zardari is the least Delhi can do



C RAJA MOHAN

AS HE RATTLES the Pakistani establishment with a big march on Islamabad this week, the Deobandi leader, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, has been accused of fronting for India. Branding political opponents as "agents" of the other county is quite common in Pakistan and India. What is more significant, though, is Delhi's apparent reluctance to exercise India's natural leverage in Pakistan's domestic politics. Could, or should, that change?

But first to Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who heads the dominant faction of the Jamiat ulema-e-Islam in Pakistan. For more than three decades, the Maulana has lent some colour to the drab Pakistani politics. Even more important, he has survived in a political environment where longevity is not assured.

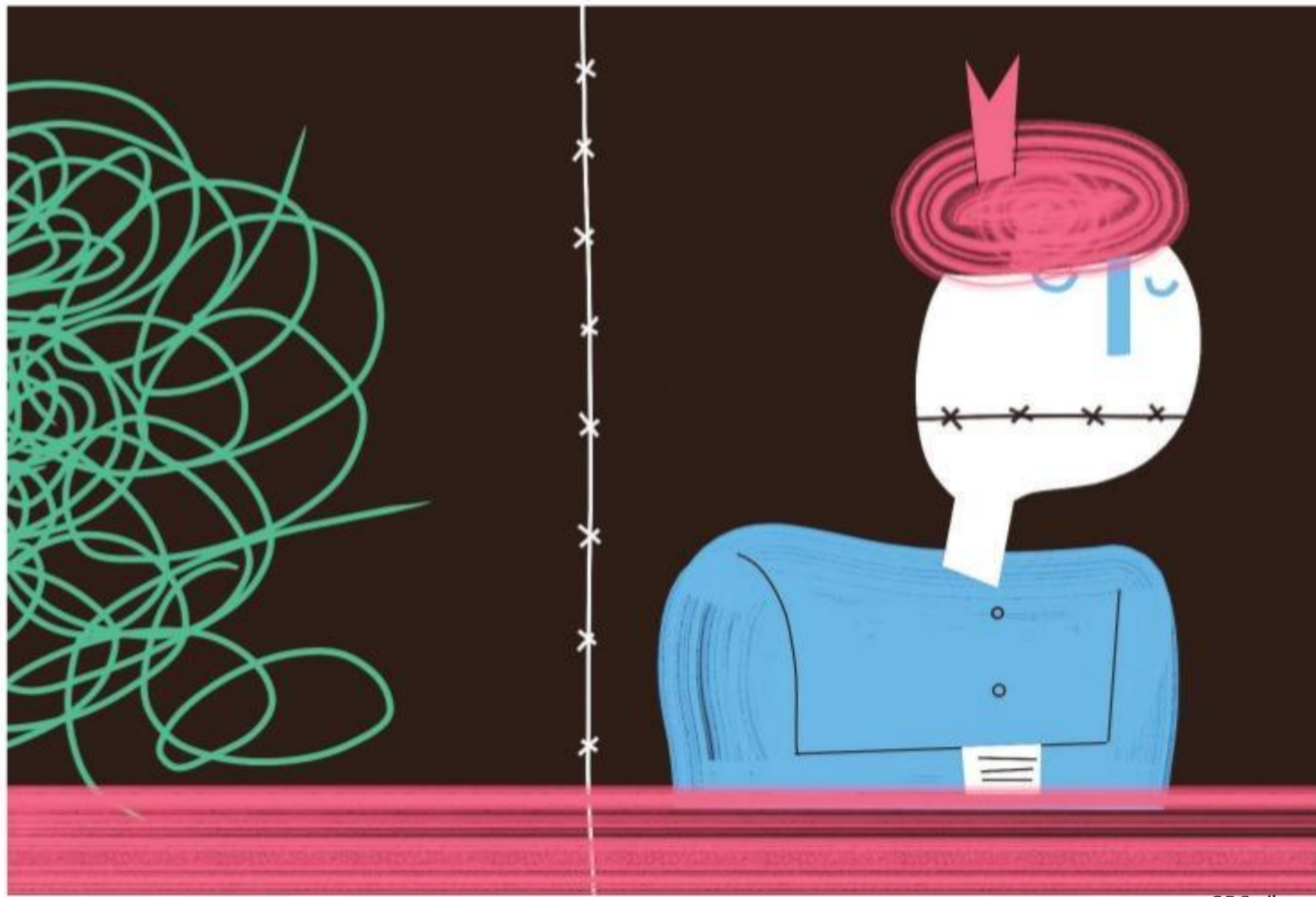
The Maulana is accusing Prime Minister Imran Khan of abject failure on all fronts. He is demanding that the PM resign forthwith and make room for fresh elections. The "deep state" or the military establishment (the miltabishment) was quick to caution him against the march. The Maulana has persisted for now and the big rally in Islamabad is scheduled for Thursday.

The deep state questions the timing of the anti-government protests by pointing to Pakistan's troubled external environment. In the east, Pakistan confronts the surprising Indian decision to change the constitutional status of Kashmir and in the west, Islamabad hopes to shape the political transition in Afghanistan and install the Taliban in power.

The call for political restraint has not had much appeal amid the worsening economic situation, especially after the implementation of the IMF regimen that Pakistan had accepted earlier this year. Meanwhile, the international Financial Action Task Force has warned of additional measures against Pakistan if it does not clean up its act on terror financing over the next few months.

Rehman probably did not intend it this way, but his march has coincided with the rapid deterioration in the health of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif who has been in prison since last year. The three-time prime minister has endured some unbelievably harsh punishment meted out to him by the Pakistan government. If the miltabishment wanted to make a horrible example of Sharif, who had dared to challenge the writ of the army, Imran Khan has been willing to wield the hatchet.

Sharif was convicted by a judge who had been blackmailed into pronouncing the former PM guilty, denying him decent medical care, and preventing him from seeing his wife when she was on the deathbed in London. The government locked up Sharif's daughter and heir-apparent, Maryam, as she sought to mobilise the people against the army. For good measure, the deep state also detained Maryam's husband. Beyond the Sharif family, another leader of the Pakistan Muslim League and former prime minister, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, is also behind bars.



C R Sasikumar

None of this is really remarkable for Pakistan, where falling foul of the army is a crime in itself. Pakistan's deep state has the distinction of hanging one prime minister (Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto) and is widely suspected of organising and covering up the assassination of another (Bhutto's daughter, Benazir).

But the danger that Sharif might die in detention appears to have created a bit of a political panic. He has suddenly been given bail and admitted to hospital. Whether Nawaz Sharif survives or not, his sinking physical condition appears to have galvanised part of the political Opposition. The Pakistan People's Party, whose leader and former President Asif Ali Zardari is also in jail without any trial, is backing the march to Islamabad.

Delhi's official silence, amidst the deepening political and economic crisis next door, seems strange. It is not just the government, none of the main political parties are paying any attention to the unfolding brutalisation of Pakistan's politics or reflecting on its consequences for India.

Three broad reasons might be offered for India's silence on Pakistan's domestic politics. One is India's natural tendency towards self-absorption. Second is the unfortunate current temptation in India to see Pakistan as a black box. The intensification of tensions with Islamabad in recent years appears to have eroded Delhi's ability to differentiate between Pakistan's multiple institutions and political formations.

Third is the argument in Delhi that the dominance of the Pakistan army over its polity is immutable and therefore it is pointless for India to raise its voice against Rawalpindi's domestic transgressions. Associated with this is the proposition that if India wants any settlement with Pakistan, it has no choice but to deal with the army.

India, however, needs to question all the three propositions. On the first, India can't afford to turn its back on the domestic developments in any of its neighbouring countries. What happens inside Pakistan

Delhi certainly owes it to Nawaz Sharif and Zardari. Both leaders had made genuine efforts to improve relations with India when they were in power. They had often talked of putting trade and people-to-people relations above the Kashmir dispute. That they were open to a positive relationship with India is among the reasons that Rawalpindi punishes them today.

should always concern Delhi. Second, in treating Pakistan as a black box, Delhi limits its own policy choices. Delhi can't ignore the fact that even minor shifts in the correlation of Pakistan's domestic forces open at least some tactical space for India's policy.

Third, while the army's dominance over Pakistan's polity is real and unlikely to break down in the near future, India can't abandon all hope of internal change in Pakistan. Rather, Delhi must continuously strive to do what it can to encourage that change. Instead of insisting that the Pakistan army is the only credible interlocutor, Delhi must find ways to engage with all forces in Pakistan. It must keep channels of communication open with whoever in Pakistan is willing to talk.

The main policy question for Delhi is not about having formal talks with Islamabad. It is about leveraging the fact that India looms large over Pakistan's domestic politics. The current juncture in Pakistan is as good a moment as any for India to speak up on Pakistan's internal developments.

Demanding humane treatment for Sharif and Zardari is the least Delhi can do. Delhi certainly owes it to them. Both leaders had made genuine efforts to improve relations with India when they were in power. They had often talked of putting trade and people-to-people relations above the Kashmir dispute. That they were open to a positive relationship with India is among the reasons that Rawalpindi punishes them today.

Beyond the personal and ethical, it is in Delhi's interest to continuously remind itself and the world that India's problem is with the Pakistan army and not its political leaders. Having gotten nowhere with its efforts to engage the army in recent years, Delhi must do what little it can to strengthen the civilian and democratic forces in Pakistan.

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

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The prime minister (Boris Johnson) has tried to manipulate opinion to give the impression that this election is for the benefit of the people, rather than for the benefit of himself and his party."

—THE GUARDIAN

## New turn in the Valley

J&K's transition calls for a break from past political strategies, closer integration of people



J S SANDHU

JAMMU AND KASHMIR is passing through a major disruptive transition. The waves of change are being felt by those who were in power, and hence their unease is understandable. A major factor in Kashmir is the security situation, considering Pakistan's unabated support to anti-national elements. While in Srinagar, as the Chinar Corps Commander, I saw that the political class was falling short in countering the alienation, containing the growing radicalisation, and was not adequately addressing youth anger and consequent street violence. The "physicians" were unable, unwilling, complicit or negligent in treating the cancer. Invariably, the line of treatment involved Central rule, and this was resorted to periodically. But, the mind-set was not being treated, and the cancer remained, curbed at times by potent therapy (security forces' actions). So, the treatment method has been surgically altered.

Was the existing structure adequate to control the increasing anti-Indian voices? In the last two decades, the National Conference and the PDP maintained control over Kashmir, whereas Jammu and Ladakh often tilted towards the national parties. The national parties continue to retain the loyalty of their votebanks in Jammu and Ladakh, with no substantive disillusionment. In Kashmir, election boycott calls of the separatists resulted in low voter turnouts, mainly by party cadres, indirectly facilitating the Abdullahs and the Muftis to retain power. The people's mandate, hence, remained unclear.

Additionally, major faultlines had developed between Kashmir and Jammu-Ladakh. The Jammu region always felt aggrieved due to the Kashmir-centric flow of state resources. And, the special status facilitated Kashmiri patronage-based political controls. Whether the growing radicalisation, unchecked anti-national influences, the security connotation, regional mainstream political hold and dynastic control warranted a "constitutional surgical strike" is worth analysing. My take is that we couldn't have let the cancer grow.

The political space in Kashmir is now being contested by new entrants. Dislodging existing political players is extremely difficult, and there are rare success stories. Sajjad Lone's People's Conference tried to be a viable political alternative, but could only make inroads in the Kupwara-Handwara area. Presently, the political base of NC and PDP is under pressure, due to various reasons. First, they did not contest the panchayat elections openly, hence most sarpanchs/panchs and associated grass root workers have newer affiliations. Second, their governance deficit is understood by Kashmiris fully, and the *awaam* is looking

for alternatives. Third, the administrative machinery is playing to the Centre's tune, and their patrons within the state bureaucracy stand diluted. The dilution of bias and networks with older politicians of the state bureaucracy should enable newer players to expand their following.

What are the likely prospects of these new players? Their major drawback is the lack of a united front. There are several youth brigade leaders, but many of them don't wish to work with other such aspirants. The lack of trust is evident among them — they don't wish to share the same platform even. So, like the proverbial "bundle of twigs" vs "separate twigs", these new entrants may become marginal players. They may merely dilute or denude the Assembly presence of the existing mainstream parties.

And interestingly, herein lies the political opportunity: The marginal presence of new and independent faces from Kashmir, including the People's Conference, can combine with the Jammu region's electoral winner(s) — probably a national party — to form the government. A delimitation exercise is also underway in J&K, and we may see a balance of power emerge between Jammu and Kashmir, in terms of representational mathematics as well. We may finally witness political power shifting to the south of Pir Panjal, for the first time in J&K. Notably, the Jammu region is better integrated with the nation and is largely nationalist, whereas the Kashmir region has nurtured an anti-India stance.

Political power in the erstwhile state rested in the Valley. The shift of political power to the south of Pir Panjal is advantageous to the country, as flow of industry and trade to the new Union Territory would be easier. Better integration would occur and national social welfare schemes can be drawn into J&K smoothly. At the strategic level, Jammu-based political power facilitates better integration of Jammu and Kashmir with the Indian nation.

But this has serious dangers too. Greater alienation would develop in Kashmir, adding fuel to the fear of Kashmiris — of being swamped by "outsiders". The turbulence in Kashmir would possibly aggravate, as they realise that their political power has reduced. It is, therefore, necessary to strike an optimal political balance between the Jammu and Kashmir regions, with sagacious leadership and deft handholding in the coming years. The Kashmiri Pandits (now based near Jammu) can be the bridge between the Kashmiris and the Dogra community of Jammu. It is imperative that existing mistrust between these two regions is assuaged. Possibly, the "people connect" can be developed through trade relationships, student exchange programmes and re-energising Kashmir's famed Sufi outlook. A thorny path, we will have to tread with care, maturity and by nurturing bonds.

The writer was General officer Commanding of the Indian Army's Chinar Corps in Kashmir. Views are personal

## ISIS after Baghdadi

The killing of its 'Caliph' does not reduce the threat from the terror organisation



ANJU GUPTA

ON OCTOBER 26, during a raid by US Special Forces in a small compound in Barisha village in northwestern Syria, the top leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), Abu Bakr-al-Baghdadi blew himself in a dead-end tunnel. While the "reality and success" of the operation are being hailed as well as disputed by countries with boots on the ground in Syria — and the ISIS is yet to react — it is almost certain that Baghdadi is dead. As a "leader on the run" for more than five years, Baghdadi was more of a symbol for a (virtual) Caliphate. Yet, his killing will only be a short-term setback for the network.

Since the ISIS core had been preparing for this eventuality even while fighting to save the Caliphate, Baghdadi's killing is not going to make a difference to the threats posed by ISIS. Soon enough, the ISIS core will anoint a new Caliph, to whom all the wilayas (branches) and extremists and supporters will readily offer allegiance (bayat) to, while paying rich tribute to the "fallen hero". The ISIS network will also make serious efforts to mount "signature" attacks on chosen targets to prove its resilience, while local networks may mount smaller attacks, including lone-wolf attacks.

Within 18 months of the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq in December 2011, the al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) captured large territories across Iraq and Syria and morphed itself into ISIS. On June 29, 2014, the group declared a

Caliphate — a long cherished dream of global jihad and anointed a "descendant" of the Prophet, a doctorate holder, former prisoner at Camp Bucca and leader of AQI, Abu Bakr Baghdadi as the Caliph. Using slick propaganda on social media, the Caliphate attracted thousands of foreign fighters, including over 5,000 from the West.

Soon enough, riding high on bayats of extremists and terrorists from across the globe, ISIS announced "decentralised" wilayas and asked their supporters to join them if they could not travel to the Caliphate. This modus operandi paid rich dividends and has continued to keep the network going despite their losses. The US-led coalition launched Operation Inherent Resolve in October 2014 and cleared the last pocket of the Caliphate in Baghouz, Syria, on March 23.

Within less than a month, the ISIS claimed attacks in Sri Lanka — arguably the deadliest attacks after 9/11. On April 29, ISIS released the second video of Baghdadi. He hailed the revenge for Baghouz by "brothers in Sri Lanka". The rare video of Baghdadi was released to assure the cadres that it could hit their enemies anywhere at will.

Over 25-30,000 ISIS cadres have survived and many foreign fighters have escaped the Iraq-Syria theatre. Thousands of fighters and family members are being held in the Kurdish areas of Syria. ISIS sleeper cells across Syria and Iraq have mounted hundreds of at-

tacks this year. The decentralised wilayas, including in West Africa, the Philippines, Egypt (Sinai), Yemen, Afghanistan, Indonesia and Libya have become more active and are showcasing successes on social media daily. The open propaganda forums have been replaced by "invitation only" links on social media, making detection much harder.

The ISIS core may or may not take time in hailing the "martyrdom" of Caliph I and anointing Caliph II — invoking the Islamic history of martyrdom of Caliphs by "traitors and enemies". This will be much like the Afghan Taliban, which has been anointing their successive supreme leaders as the Amir-ul-Mominin. Since July-Aug 2019, the pro-ISIS social media has been circulating the name of a former Iraqi officer of the Baathist party, Al-Haj Abdullah Qardash, as in charge of day-to-day operations. He may well die or get captured. But it showed long-term planning by ISIS for its cadres. Given that ISIS boasted of Baghdadi's lineage from the Prophet to build his aura, it is quite possible that the group may name a Caliph with similar credentials.

The situation in Syria has become far more complicated with the US changing its rules of engagement to only "guarding" oil fields from ISIS and chasing its counter-terror targets in Syria. The weakening of Syrian Democratic Force's position vis a vis Turkey and the Assad regime will deplete its resources, hindering the capability to defeat ISIS. Coupled with sec-

tarian faultlines, public protests in Iraq and Lebanon, US/Saudi-Iran tensions, the region offers fresh opportunity for recruitment to both the ISIS and al Qaeda networks, which are deeply entrenched.

The ISIS has attracted foreign fighters from South Asia, mainly Pakistanis, Afghans, Malaysians and Bangladeshis. Though not many were known to have gone from Sri Lanka, the Easter attacks showed potential of violence even by a small group of committed cadres with support of the ISIS network. In Bangladesh three years ago, ISIS did create an effective but small network, with active support of western nationals of Bangladeshi origin. The security apparatus has broken up the network, but Bangladesh remains vulnerable.

Though less than 100-200 Indians are believed to have traveled to Syria and Iraq and much less to Afghanistan to join ISIS, this creates potential for more recruitment as well as aiding attacks on Indian soil or interests. The fresh round of radicalisation and recruitment that ISIS will surely embark on under its new leader, will pose further threats to India as well as to South Asia. A few weeks ago, ISIS propaganda has called for jihad pegged on sentiments around Kashmir and has specifically called for attacks on Indian interests in the Arabian Peninsula.

The writer is an IPS officer. Views are personal

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### UNFAIR BAN

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Shakib Al Hasan suspended for two years' (IE, October 30). The ICC's decision to ban Bangladesh's Test and T20 captain for two years from international cricket seems wrong. Al Hasan has been charged rightly for breaching the Article 2.4.4 of the ICC Anti-Corruption Code. But to ban a player for two years just for failing to report to the ICC that he had been approached by a bookie is unfair.

Tushar Anand, Patna

### SECURITY BREACH

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Five West Bengal labourers killed in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam' (IE, October 30). That militants could kill five labourers despite the deployment of heavy security belies the claim of government that all is well in the Valley. It is inconceivable what the fate of the people will be once the security is scaled down. The government is busy in taking cosmetic measures such as inviting EU parliamentarians to gloss over its failures. Until it restores the basic fundamental rights of people, the optics management shall serve no good.

Deepak Singhal, Chennai

### ONE-SIDED DECISION

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A visit, a diversion' (IE, October 30). In the past, the government has resisted attempts to internationalise the Kashmir dispute. This impromptu decision is a major departure in foreign

### 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](mailto:editpage@expressindia.com) or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

policy. The government could be intending to showcase its success but seems oblivious to the downside of internationalisation.

LR Murmu, Delhi

### CORRIDOR OF AMITY

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Journey to a beginning' (IE, October 30). The Kartarpur corridor can help end animosity in Indo-Pak relations if both countries follow Guru Nanak's message. However, religious landmarks alone cannot lead to trust between the two countries. A thaw in relations between Pakistan and India seems optimistic when the Punjab government, the SGP and Akali groups could not find a common ground to celebrate this occasion.

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur