



## The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## BEYOND PAKISTAN

India and Saudi Arabia are finally consolidating a partnership on the basis of shared interests

**T**HE EXPANSION AND institutionalisation of strategic cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Riyadh, the second in three years, marks the consolidation of a partnership that has long struggled to realise its full potential. Efforts to end the prolonged mutual indifference began during the tenure of Atal Bihari Vajpayee when his foreign minister, Jaswant Singh, traveled to the Kingdom in early 2001. Five years later, King Abdullah visited Delhi, the first visit to India by a Saudi monarch in half a century, to announce a new phase in bilateral relations. Progress in building the partnership, however, remained elusive. It seemed confined to India buying oil from the Kingdom and exporting manpower. There were the beginnings of counter-terror cooperation but the Pakistan factor continued to cast a shadow over the relationship — until recently.

The Saudis sought to maintain a balance in their relations with India and Pakistan, which has long demanded religious solidarity and unending financial support from Riyadh. India, in turn, seemed hesitant to adopt a bolder approach towards Saudi Arabia amidst the lingering obsession with the Pakistan question in engagement with the Kingdom. As recently as in February, when the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman, visited Delhi, the question of India's tensions with Pakistan figured quite prominently. This time around, the joint statement issued at the end of PM Modi's visit made no reference to Pakistan. This was long overdue. It is rooted in Delhi's long overdue realist appreciation that Saudi Arabia has a lot more on its mind than protecting Pakistan in the name of religious solidarity; and that it is possible to build a solid partnership with Saudi Arabia on the basis of shared interests.

Within its immediate neighbourhood, Saudi Arabia has been struggling to cope with an assertive Iran and Turkey, both of whom seek to undermine the authority of the Saudi monarchy within the Kingdom and the region. If Iran mobilises the Shia militancy against the Kingdom, Turkey chips in with its support to Sunni radicals threatening the House of Saud. To make matters worse, the long-standing ally of the Saudis — Washington — increasingly looks unreliable. Meanwhile, the rapidly growing Saudi population can no longer be kept pliable with a rigorous diet of religious orthodoxy and generous subsidies from oil revenues, no longer the source of perennial comfort. To cope with these challenges, Saudi Arabia has begun serious social and economic reforms at home and diversification of its security and commercial partnerships abroad. Delhi has recognised the urgency of seizing this moment and building a strong security and economic partnership. The agreements signed during the PM's visit include the establishment of a strategic partnership council, deepening energy interdependence, and expanding defence and security cooperation bilaterally as well as in the Indian Ocean region. The challenge for Delhi now is to translate this bold new agenda with Saudi Arabia into quick and tangible results.

## BATTLE ON AIR

Confrontation between Delhi and its neighbours is unfortunate. Local and regional sources of pollution must be acknowledged

**I**N THE RUN-UP to Diwali, the Delhi government gave the impression that it was alert to the pollution concerns associated with the festival. It ran awareness campaigns to wean people off fire crackers, arranged cleanliness drives and organised a laser show. Yet the post-Diwali smog has kept its date with Delhi. On Wednesday, two days after the festival, the city's Air Quality Index exceeded the "severe level". Delhi's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal seems to believe that the bad air this year is due to reasons beyond his government's control. "The people of Delhi are doing what they can to control pollution. I request the BJP to talk to their governments in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana and the Congress to speak to their government in Punjab to ensure that they don't burn stubble," he said. The Delhi CM's statement has drawn an angry reaction from his Punjab counterpart, who accused Kejriwal "of blaming others for his lapses". "Delhi's air pollution is directly related to construction activity, industrialisation and mismanagement of traffic," says Amarinder Singh

The jury is still out on the prime source of the capital's pollution. But by all accounts, Delhi's air quality is the outcome of the complex interplay of the pollution footprints of local activities and pollutants from upwind states. It would be facetious, therefore, to rule out the impact of stubble burning on the city's air. Data from the Punjab Remote Sensing Centre shows that the state recorded more than 15,000 stubble burning incidents between September 23 and October 28. The Centre-run System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research estimates that more than 35 per cent of Delhi's pollution on Wednesday was a fallout of stubble burning in the city's neighbourhood. Governments in Punjab and Haryana have been providing subsidies to farmers to buy modern farm equipment for management of paddy straw. But, as a report in this paper shows, many farmers in Punjab do not want to invest in these machines because they lie idle for most of the year — unlike tractors.

It would be unfortunate if the battle for clear skies in Delhi and its neighbourhood is reduced to a confrontation between the national capital and its neighbouring states. At "very poor", the post-Diwali AQI in Ludhiana and Jalandhar in Punjab, and Ambala, Kurukshetra and Sirsa in Haryana is only a notch better than that of Delhi. It is imperative, therefore, that Delhi and its neighbouring governments acknowledge the local and regional sources of the problem — and cooperate to resolve it.

## LOOK WHO'S JOKING

A study claims that most people believe men are funnier than women. They don't tell you why

**S**CIENCE, IF THERE is such an over-arching activity, should have better things to do than try and provide an empirical basis for stereotypes. "Are men really funnier than women?" is the title of an article by Gil Greengross in Psychology Today, where he discusses the findings of a study he conducted which shows that most people believe so. Greengross clarifies: "This stereotype is shared by both men and women — but of course, just because it exists does not mean it is true." The study, according to the author, "means that to the best of our knowledge, on average, men appear to have higher humour production ability than women".

After it was reported widely in the media this week, the study has unsurprisingly annoyed women, and women comedians. And, given the fact that there is an increasing number of professionally funny women, it is pointedly provocative. Here's how you find out if someone is funny, male or female. They make you laugh. For far too long, women have been told that they must laugh with others, boost the male ego, but never make themselves the centre of attention. And it is in this socially constructed constraint that the roots of measuring "humour production" likely lie.

When women fake a laugh — giggle at the bad pun from their friends, family or parameours — the joke, in fact, is on men. There are enough studies to show that most men overestimate their own sense of humour. Like the emperor in his new clothes, they stare expectantly at their captive audience, feeling entitled to a polite laugh. And for too long, too many have been obliged. Perhaps the best way to break the stereotype that men are funny, and women less so, is to stop this charitable massaging of male egos.



SYED ATA HASNAIN

**T**HE TARGETING OF non-Kashmiris by terrorists in South Kashmir and the killing of 11 persons in less than two weeks could seem puzzling to observers. However, this is nothing new. It just revisits a tactical method that terror groups, under the guidance of Pakistan's ISI, employ to remain relevant and promote Pakistan's interests. It has happened many times in the past too. So, the question should be: Why should it be allowed to happen today?

In the late Nineties, while I coordinated operations in South Kashmir from Avantipur's Rashtriya Rifles headquarters, we were suddenly hit by a spate of two kinds of incidents — minority killings and targeting of non-Kashmiri labour. The two prominent minorities in Kashmir — Kashmiri Hindus and Sikhs — live in pockets of both urban and rural areas. The urban areas are relatively safe, it's the rural pockets that pose a challenge. While there may have been an exodus of Kashmiri Hindus in 1990 under a focused Pakistani strategy, some of them did stay back, and the Sikhs hardly migrated. Both communities became the target of attacks by Pakistani terror groups from time to time. Who can forget the Nandimarg (2003) and Wandhama (1998) killings of Kashmiri Pandits and the Chittisinghpura massacre of the Sikhs in 2000. Since the latter occurred just as the then US President Bill Clinton was to address India's Parliament, the motive behind the attack was obvious. In 1999, just as the army was redeploying troops from Kashmir to Kargil to meet the sudden occupation of winter-vacated areas, labour from Bihar working at brick kilns and in the construction industry were targeted with mass killing, leading to their exodus.

A careful analysis of the trends at that time led to the conclusion that the Pakistani terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) had decided to execute a high-profile attack against soft targets in certain areas to announce its arrival and demonstrate its domination of the terror scene. It was almost akin to an unfurling of the LeT flag in areas of its choosing and became a signature method.

Migrant non-Kashmiri labour in those days, too, were accommodated in small

camps but the security for them was always insufficient. Security could have been strengthened by recognising that there was a major threat to them and gathering them into camps which were well protected and organising their secure movement to orchards or construction sites. Yet, the nature of the terror threat at that time — with more terrorists and lesser number of troops on the ground — prevented any such counter measures. The J&K Police (JKP) on its own could not provide the necessary security. Minority killings and targeting of non-Kashmiri labour tapered off in the early part of the first decade of the millennium and did not come to the fore despite the obvious soft nature of targets available. I, however, continued to harbour fears that the tactic would be used again when the levels of frustration of the Pakistani terror groups or the more radical of the Kashmiri terror elements would cross limits.

The recent targeting of non-Kashmiri labour and others such as truck drivers took place just when the curbs on postpaid mobile telephony were lifted. There really is no connection between the two occurrences in this case, as some are attempting to deduce. What Pakistan, through its proxies, wants to try and propagate is the idea that return of normalcy in Kashmir is yet very far away and that the security space is in their hands even with a limited number of terrorists. It wants to send the broad signal that the abrogation of the special constitutional provisions for J&K is meaningless and changes nothing in the state.

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With the numbers of terrorists down but some quantum of successful infiltration, as admitted by the JKP, the terrorists have had some time to reorganise, recalibrate and reselect their targets. Intelligence during the last three months has been of a lower order with a not-so-free movement of sources and non-availability of mobile communication. What we are witnessing in South Kashmir is a manifestation of this.

The focus of the security establishment would unmistakably have shifted towards the prevention of street agitation and mass protests. This was the correct response, as it responded to what was the bigger threat from 2008 onwards. Thereafter, the focus has

been on counter infiltration — not that the army and police cannot perform multiple tasks and they have done so creditably in the past. However, such situations do result in a shift of priorities and balancing them is a challenge. Much of this happened in 1999-2000 when the counter terror space was severely challenged after the shift of the army's focus to Kargil. Countering an aggressive terrorist phase involving so called "fidayeen" suicide attacks on government and other security targets proved more than challenging. The security establishment bounced back very quickly to neutralise 2,100 terrorists in 2001, the highest number ever. I have no doubt that with a little recalibration, the same will happen this time too. However, what has to be realised is that this takes away the larger focus from the more important factor of comprehensively neutralising the general ecosystem which enables the Pakistan-sponsored proxies and separatists to challenge the Indian nation's will.

The "tactical pause", so to say, must not allow for a return to the situation at the end of 2016 when the army and the police jointly launched Operation All Out. The latter was a very successful operation but we must not be drawn once again into the game of just neutralising terrorists. What the government had correctly done was to pay equal attention to dismantling financial networks and high-profile over-ground worker's networks. That is still a work in progress as it cannot be an overnight affair. Any slippage in this is bound to embolden the Pakistani sponsors and give a boost to their capability.

India goes beyond just neutralising terrorists. It's the elusive "terrorism", which we have rarely targeted, that should be the priority. By giving leeway on potential minority and current non-Kashmiri targeting, we may hand the initiative back to the other side. The security establishment should heed the warning that not only migrant non-Kashmiri labour but also minority elements in Kashmir are currently vulnerable.

*The writer, a former corps commander of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps, is chancellor, Central University of Kashmir*



D RAJA

**C**OMRADE GURUDAS Dasgupta, who passed away on October 31, remained a fighter for the causes of the working class till the end of his days. From the beginning of his active political life as a student, to his leadership of both organised and unorganised labour, his career as a preeminent parliamentarian, and in the leadership of the Communist Party of India (CPI), he remained an uncompromising champion of people's rights.

Dasgupta made his mark in politics in 1957, when he became the general secretary of the students' union of the Asutosh College in Calcutta. Thereafter, he continued to be associated with student and youth politics for some time. He served as general secretary of the All India Students' Federation (AISF), the students wing of the CPI, and was one of the party's most prominent youth leaders in West Bengal. From the 1970s onwards, he was known on the national stage.

In 1985, Dasgupta was elected to the Rajya Sabha, where he served three terms. He was also elected to the Lok Sabha twice. In his time in Parliament, Dasgupta was a ferocious debater. He was outspoken on critical issues, holding the governments of the day to account. Using his considerable oratorical skill, he championed the rights of labour, farmers and the people of India as a whole. His work on multiple parliamentary committees earned him the respect of his colleagues across the political spectrum. He was a member of the parliamentary com-

mittee on finance as well as the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the securities scam. The latter involved investigating the infamous criminal manipulations of Harshad Mehta. Dasgupta's role in the committee, his vociferous and comprehensive questioning of witnesses was appreciated far and wide. He even received awards for his work in the JPC, but gave away the proceeds to organisations like the Punjab Stree Sabha.

Comrade Dasgupta also served as general secretary of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC). The AITUC, a premier Indian trade union, has worked for the welfare of the working classes since 1920, when the communists stood against imperialist rule. Stalwarts such as Indrajit Gupta and A B Bardhan have also served as its past general secretaries. It is a bitter-sweet irony that on the day of Dasgupta's passing, the centenary commemorations of the AITUC have commenced.

Dasgupta served as the deputy general secretary of the CPI, a position he held till the last party Congress in 2018, in Kollam, Kerala. I have had the pleasure of serving with him both in Parliament and as a colleague in the CPI leadership. His commitment to egalitarian principles remained steadfast in every form.

When the Congress government in the 1990s introduced the neoliberal economic agenda and implemented it through policy and law, Dasgupta was uncompromising in his opposition. Inside the House, he passion-

ately argued against moves that would go against the peasantry, labour and other sections of society who have suffered as a result. But Dasgupta's inspiring presence was not limited to Parliament. As a trade union leader, he organised numerous agitations of the working class. Throughout his long life of political and public service, Dasgupta stood against corporate forces and those that further ideas and policies of exclusion and religious bigotry. He had the unique ability to organise and mobilise, as well as motivate the people to fight the status quo, and recognise the fact that such a battle was in their own interest as well as for the benefit of the nation as a whole.

India, today, faces grave challenges. There is a disturbing economic slowdown, which is putting question marks on the fundamentals of the economy. Under the current ruling dispensation, the country is facing an onslaught of communal forces. At a time when we all must stand against these phenomena and those who have unleashed them, we have lost a comrade who has been at the forefront of such battles.

The passing of Gurudas Dasgupta is not merely a loss for the CPI. It is a loss for the communist parties as a whole and all the other socialist and progressive forces. It is a loss for India.

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## THE UNCOMPROMISING COMRADE

Gurudas Dasgupta fought for the rights of working people throughout his life

## NOVEMBER 1, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO



**ARUNACHAL CM QUILTS**  
THE 43-DAY-OLD ARUNACHAL Pradesh Ministry, headed by Tomo Riba, resigned after five party legislators defected to the Congress (I), reducing it to a minority status. In his resignation letter to Lt Governor R N Haldipur, the chief minister said that in view of the political turmoil that had developed since October 30, the cabinet rmd decided to tender its resignation forthwith. Riba also conveyed to the LG his cabinet's decision to recommend the dissolution of the Assembly and holding of fresh elections. Mr Haldipur, while accepting the resignation of the Riba Ministry, has asked it to continue in office till alternative arrangements are made.

**MP JANATA CRISIS**  
THINGS ARE HOTTING up in Madhya Pradesh. The dissidents in the ruling party are making a determined bid to dislodge chief minister V K Saklecha from power. Some senior ministers and dissident MLAs are learnt to have met the state Janata party chief, Kushabhau Thakre and threatened to resign if the leadership was not changed, ignoring the wishes of the majority of party members. The dissident ministers, all of whom, interestingly, belong to the erstwhile Jana Sangh constituent, reportedly met at a dinner at the house of Jagdish Gupta, state minister for labour and resolved to submit their resignations en masse if the leadership

was not changed before the Lok Sabha elections.

**HUA MEETS THATCHER**  
FROM ALL ACCOUNTS, Chinese leader Hua Guofeng's visit to London so far has been successful. While it is too early to say what exactly transpired between him and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Chinese sources have not tried to hide their admiration for the latter's understanding of international politics and to say that there were "similarities of views on many matters between the two leaders". Hua and Mrs Thatcher, according to British sources, discussed east-west relations and the overall world situation.

# The remaking of Ladakh

As attention remains focused on the Valley, the other newly carved out Union Territory grapples with its own set of concerns



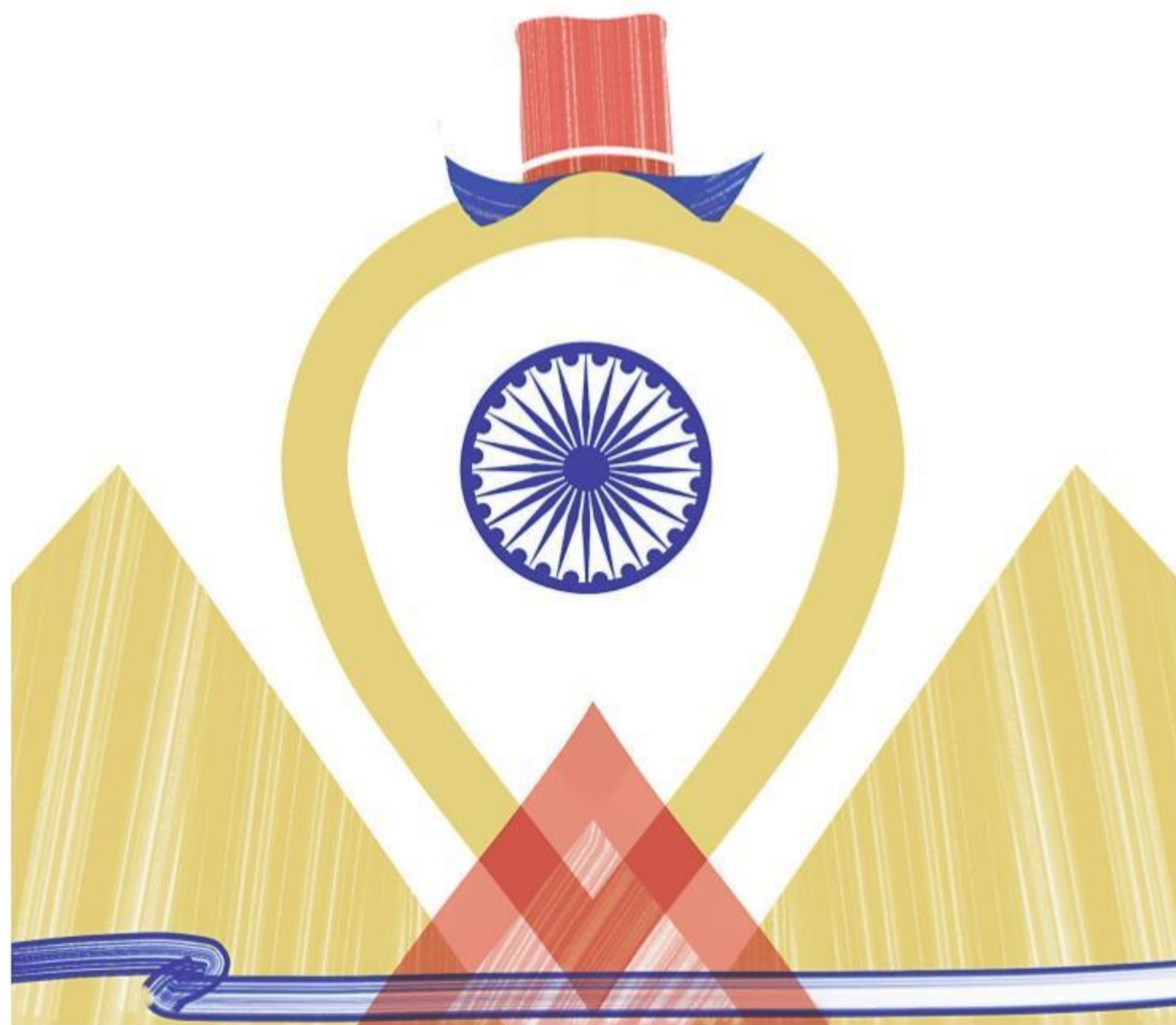
ASHOK THAKUR

LITTLE DID THE people of Ladakh realise that they would be caught in a bubble of history which would last for 185 long years when the forces of Zorawar Singh overran Ladakh and made it part of Gulab Singh's fiefdom in 1835. Ladakhis struggled with their identity, having nothing in common with their rulers, neither the Dogras nor the Kashmiris, in terms of language, religion, food, dress or even physical features. It was a gunshot marriage which ended on October 31 when Ladakh finally became a Union Territory. This historic moment will be celebrated by all Ladakhis, and specially by its architect, former MP Thupstan Tsewang, whose life-time goal will see fruition.

Had it not been for Zorawar's adventurism, Ladakh's trajectory in history could have been quite different and more akin to the other Himalayan kingdoms of Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. It had been an independent kingdom with a glorious history. It peaked during the reign of Gyalpo Singhe Namgyal (1616-1642) with its borders stretching up to Nepal and Tibet in the east and north and included the present district of Lahaul Spiti in Himachal to the south. The Gyalpos of Ladakh had defeated the Tibetans and even annexed the rich and fabled kingdom of Guge in Western Tibet for some time. The historic and strategic importance of Ladakh, linking the rich plains of India and Punjab through Mandi, Kullu, Lahaul and Leh with the Silk Route through Karakoram was very critical to the British for its shawl wool trade as well as success of the Great Game.

This jubilation amongst Ladakhis about its newfound status as a UT is not difficult to understand. In 1990, on visiting Ladakh, people voiced their deep sense of alienation vis a vis their government in Srinagar. Apart from a diesel genset, there was no electricity supply while at the same time in neighbouring Himachal Pradesh electricity had reached every nook and cranny. Also, many villages remained unconnected by road and the existing pukka roads were mostly courtesy the Indian Army. Since then many changes have taken place, especially after the creation of the Autonomous Hill Council and the boom in tourism. Budget allocation remained a sore point throughout, about which, Jamyang Namgyal, the young MP from Ladakh, effectively spoke in his maiden speech before the Parliament.

Till now Ladakh's communication route remained principally through Srinagar and Jammu. All this is set to change. The Manali-Leh axis will become more important since it will not only be shorter but safer as well in comparison to the Kargil-Srinagar road. With the tunnel below Rohtang being commissioned shortly and another one being planned under the Shinkun La, travel time and distance between Manali and Leh will reduce substantially. In the foreseeable future, journey by road from Chandigarh to Leh could be a



CR Sasikumar

day's affair. The proposed 365 km Bilaspur-Manali-Leh railway line will not only strengthen the country's defence requirements but will also enhance people to people contact between Ladakh and Himachal in an unprecedented way. For this to materialise, the Government of India will have to up its game to match with that of China's which has deployed Fortune 500 Companies to build road and other infrastructure on the other side of the border.

Ladakh and Himachal have a shared past. Many of the Gyalpos, erstwhile rulers of Ladakh, married to the ruling families of Lahaul and Spiti. Several important Gompas (monasteries) in Lahaul are affiliated even today to Hemis and other Gompas in Ladakh. Ladakh is indebted to Himachal for coming to its rescue in 1948 when two of Himachal's brave officers Major Prithi Chand (MVC) and his cousin Major Khushal Chand (MVC) and 16 other soldiers of the 2nd DOGRAS, mostly from Lahaul, Kinnaur and Kangra crossed the formidable Zoji La in the dead of winter and repulsed the armed Pakistani and tribal intruders. The local militia they motivated and trained later metamorphosed into the famous Ladakh Scouts which played a stellar role in defence of Ladakh in 1962 and in the Kargil operation of 1999. An ornate Chorten standing next to the Khalatse bridge which Major Khushal Chand destroyed in 1948 stands today as a joint symbol of solidarity and courage of the people of Lahaul and Ladakh.

There are other areas as well where

As the initial euphoria dies down, the realities of a UT have already started to sink in. The most important aspect is working out a harmonious working relationship between the two constituents of the UT, that is, the Shia Muslim majority in Kargil and the Buddhist majority in Leh. The realisation that now outsiders can buy land in Ladakh has sent alarm bells ringing and there is already talk of putting in place mechanisms as in Himachal Pradesh which hinder outsiders from buying land whether as agricultural or tribal lands.

Ladakh and Himachal can collaborate and learn from each other. Tourism is one such area where the Ladakhis would do well to avoid the mistakes committed in Shimla and Manali. The recognition of Bhoti as a scheduled language by the Government of India is another important area which both can help galvanise along with other Himalayan states like Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. This will not only lead to the emotional integration of borderland people with the rest of the country but also strengthen our claim to these areas as an integral part of India vis a vis that of China.

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The writer is former Secretary Gol, Ministry of Human Resource Development

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"No country in the world is willing to become a real enemy of China, including the US, which just declared that China is its strategic competitor —GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

# Most marginalised of them all

On socio-economic indicators, Muslim youth fare worse than SCs and OBCs. Is this linked to community's political marginalisation?



CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT AND KALAIYARASAN A

THE 2019 Lok Sabha elections have recon- firmed the political marginalisation of Muslims — MPs from the community are very few in Parliament's lower house. This process is converging with the equally pronounced socio-economic marginalisation of the community. Muslims have been losing out to Dalits and Hindu OBCs since the Sachar committee submitted its report in 2005.

Using the recent "suppressed" NSSO report (PLFS-2018) and the NSS-EUS (2011-12), examine the socioeconomic status of Muslim youth vis-à-vis other social groups in India. We use the same set of 13 states covering 89 per cent of the 170 million Muslims enumerated in 2011. We use three variables: Percentage of Muslim educated youth (21-29 age) who have completed graduation, percentage of the community's youth (15 to 24 age) in educational institutions and the percentage of Muslim youth who are in the NEET category (not in employment, education or training). These variables together reflect pathways of educational mobility for the country's youth.

The proportion of the youth who have completed graduation — we call this, "educational attainment" — among Muslims in 2017-18 is 14 per cent as against 18 per cent among the Dalits, 25 per cent among the Hindu OBCs, and 37 per cent among the Hindu upper castes. The gap between the SCs and Muslims is 4 percentage points (ppt) in 2017-18. Six years earlier (2011-12), the SC youth were just one ppt above Muslims in educational attainment. The gap between the Muslims and Hindu OBCs was 7 ppt in 2011-12 and has gone up to 11 ppt now. The gap between all Hindus and Muslims widened from 9 ppt in 2011-12 to 11 ppt in 2017-18.

Muslim youth in the Hindi heartland fare the worst. Their educational attainment is the lowest in Haryana, 3 per cent in 2017-18; in Rajasthan, this figure is 7 per cent; it is 11 per cent in Uttar Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh is the only north Indian state where the Muslims are doing relatively better in education — their educational attainment is 17 per cent. In all these states, except MP, SCs fare better than Muslims. The gap between SCs and Muslims with respect to educational attainment is 12 ppt Haryana and Rajasthan and 7 ppt in UP. In 2011-12, in all these states, SCs were slightly above the Muslims on this parameter.

In eastern India, the educational attainment among the Muslim youth in Bihar is 8 per cent, as against 7 per cent among SCs, in West Bengal it is 8 per cent, as against 9 per cent for SCs, and in Assam it is 7 per cent as against 8 per cent for SCs. While the gap between Muslims and SCs has narrowed in the last six years, the latter still fare better.

In western India, the educational attainment figures for Muslims are better compared to 2011-12. But they do not necessarily reflect a significant educational improvement when compared to the SCs and Hindu OBCs. In Gujarat, the gap in educational attainment between the Muslims and SCs is 14 ppt in 2017-18; six years ago, it was just 8 ppt. In Maharashtra, the Muslims were marginally — by 2 ppt — better off than SCs in 2011-12, they have now not only lost to SCs but the latter has now overtaken them by 8 ppt.

With 36 per cent graduate Muslim youth, Tamil Nadu tops the educational attainment parameter with respect to the community in the country. In Kerala, this figure is 28 per cent, in Andhra Pradesh, it is 21 per cent and in Karnataka, 18 per cent of the Muslim youth are graduate. While the community is giving a close competition to SCs in Tamil Nadu and AP, it is losing out in Kerala. The developments in South India have more to do with the relatively faster mobility of SCs than the marginalisation of Muslims. The community's achievements also have to be seen in the context of positive discrimination Muslims enjoy in these states — Dalit and OBC Muslims are given reservations under the OBC quota.

The marginalisation of Muslims on socio-economic indicators becomes clear when we evaluate the statistics related to youth currently in educational institutions. The percentage of youth who are currently enrolled in educational institutions is the lowest among Muslims. Only 39 per cent of the community in the age group of 15-24 are in educational institutions as against 44 per cent for SCs, 51 per cent for Hindu OBCs and 59 per cent for Hindu upper castes.

A sizable proportion of Muslim youth are leaving the formal education system and moving into the NEET category. Thirty-one per cent of youth from the community fall in this category — the highest from any community in the country — followed by 26 per cent among the SCs, 23 per cent among the Hindu OBCs, and 17 per cent among the Hindu upper castes. This trend is more pronounced in the Hindi belt — 38 per cent of Muslims youth fall under NEET in Rajasthan, in UP and Haryana, this figure is 37 per cent and in MP, it is 35 per cent. In South India, the proportion of Muslims outside the formal education system is relatively low — 17 per cent in Telangana, 19 per cent in Kerala, 24 per cent in Tamil Nadu and 27 per cent in AP.

While the marginalisation of Muslims began several years ago, the phenomenon seems to have gathered pace in recent years. As Sam Asher et al point out in their recent study, 'Intergenerational Mobility in India: Estimates from New Methods and Administrative Data', "Muslims are being left out from educational mobility in India while the SCs are getting integrated into it". More studies are needed to link this disturbing process to the political marginalisation of Muslims. The activities of vigilante groups could possibly have led young Muslims to withdraw in to their shell.

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# Our unloved laureates

South Asia does not give its Nobel winners their due



SHASTRI RAMACHANDARAN

EVERY YEAR when the Nobel Prizes are announced, Indians lament that they have been deprived of their "due recognition". Yet when an Indian, such as Abhijit Banerjee, is awarded the Nobel Prize, Indians, as a whole, take no pride in it. India does not love its Nobel laureates. Nor does the rest of South Asia, Pakistan and Bangladesh too, berate and belittle their laureates. South Asian laureates are treated in a shabby manner at home, as if they are undesirables, best got rid of.

This year, the response was somewhat mixed. Generally, "progressive" sections of the intelligentsia cheered when the prize was awarded to Abhijit Banerjee, along with Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer. Though there were conspicuous exceptions.

Bangalis felt they had a particular reason to be proud. Banerjee, though a US citizen now, is a Bengali. Bangalis have produced five of the 10 Indian Nobelists, beginning with Rabindranath Tagore in 1913, the two foreigners — Ronald Ross in 1902, for discovery of the malaria parasite, and Mother Teresa in 1979. The other two are Amartya Sen in 1998 and Banerjee in 2019. Of the three laureates from Madras (now Chennai), the first, Sir CV Raman, who got the Nobel in Physics in 1930, worked in Calcutta. While Tagore was the first Asian to receive the Nobel (for literature), Raman was the first Asian to get one in the sciences. Both had a Bengal connection.

Abdus Salam, the Pakistani laureate in Physics, came to India, he went to his pre-Partition physics teacher Anilendra Ganguly's house in Calcutta. Salam placed his Nobel medal in Ganguly's hands and said, "Sir, this is yours, not mine". Modesty muzzles the Bengali from claiming credit for that Nobel.

While the prime minister and a galaxy of eminent individuals greeted Banerjee, there were big names in academia and public life, including Union ministers, that troled and trashed this year's Nobel winner and his seminal work which is part of a global trend among economists concerned with the poor. All because Banerjee did not endorse demonetisation, criticised the GST implementation and had his evidence-based poverty alleviation proposals, including the scheme for a minimum income, lauded by parties other than the BJP.

Though the applause for his Nobel is fulsome, Banerjee's focus on choices of the poor as opposed to the structural causes of poverty is debatable. This is a matter of ideology, difference in approach and something that concerns him and his peers, although it affects public policy. It is not a reason to be churlish about his Nobel. Just as Amartya Sen and Raghuram Rajan, in spite of their divergences, can be civil, have a dialogue and support each other at times, Banerjee's peers should applaud him unabashedly now, as some of the leftists, particularly those from

JNU, have done. In fact, being from JNU earned Banerjee much applause and support across academia and the thinking class. Above all, if his focus is on poverty, regardless of his method, his heart is in the right place.

Banerjee's Nobel has earned him a vastly more flattering response at home than Amartya Sen or Kailash Satyarthi, who in 2014, shared the Peace Prize along with Malala Yousufzai of Pakistan.

India's philosopher-economist Sen has been vilified for his criticism of Narendra Modi — for the killing of Muslims in Gujarat under his watch in 2002. Sen is outspoken on issues of identity and academic freedom, and the majoritarian forces resent this. Instead of being honoured, valued and utilised in national interest, Sen was hounded out of the Nalanda University. The campaign of calumny and slander against Sen may have abated, but it continues.

Satyarthi and Malala were not cause for celebration in either India or Pakistan. Far from home, in the mid-December Nordic winter, snow-bound Oslo came alive with Prize-related events where Satyarthi and Malala were the toast of the town. They were feted as one for their work on child rights, without any trace of the hostility that marks India-Pakistan ties. But, many in India, including in the government, felt it was no honour, as the focus was on child rights, where India has a poor record.

Malala, who was forced by extremists to flee abroad for her life, did not evoke even a single cheer in Pakistan. Living in the West has earned her enemies at home where she's seen as an agent of anti-Islamic forces. Sadly, she was not sought after elsewhere in South Asia either.

The benign "neglect" of Satyarthi and Malala, compared to the shabby treatment meted out at home to Pakistan's Abdus Salam and Bangladesh's Grameen Bank founder Muhammad Yunus, is no cause for comfort. Somewhat like Sen, Yunus had a hard time in Bangladesh: He was reviled, including by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and ousted from the board of the iconic institution that epitomises his work, and which inspired the micro-credit movement worldwide. Pakistan refused to accept Salam, one of the world's greatest physicists, as one of its own because he was an Ahmadiya — an excommunicated Muslim minority. Pakistan disowned both Salam and Malala.

It is cold comfort that Indian laureates are not assigned to obscurity (like Salam in Pakistan or Yunus in Bangladesh) when South Asia treats its globally acclaimed eminenes in such a despicable manner.

The writer is an independent political and foreign affairs commentator. He was invited to the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo in 2014

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### ABOUT OUTCOMES

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'A new kind of governance' (IE, October 31). Governance structures in the country are designed to administer "rules" not produce "outcomes". "Centrally-imposed" schemes generally have transient effects, are prone to "data doctoring" and are costly. In contrast, consider, one, giving a fixed tenure of three to five years to the district head, two, list the socio-economic-cultural indices (nationally mandated and district-specific) at the beginning of this official's tenure, three, allow him/her to form cross-functional teams, and four, measure the agreed indices at the end of the official's tenure. This could form the basis of the district head "performance assessments". We could then fulfill PM Modi's promise of "good governance" at no additional cost or effort.

Vinod Dhall, Gurgaon

### DIFFERENT BALLGAME

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Pink ball cricket' (IE, 31 October). Test Cricket is still considered the real game of cricket. But now spectators don't have the time to spend five working days on it, so day-night Test cricket will be the best option to promote the game. If pink ball cricket entertains spectators and satisfies advertisers, the game will move on.

Abhijit Chakraborti, Howrah

### 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.

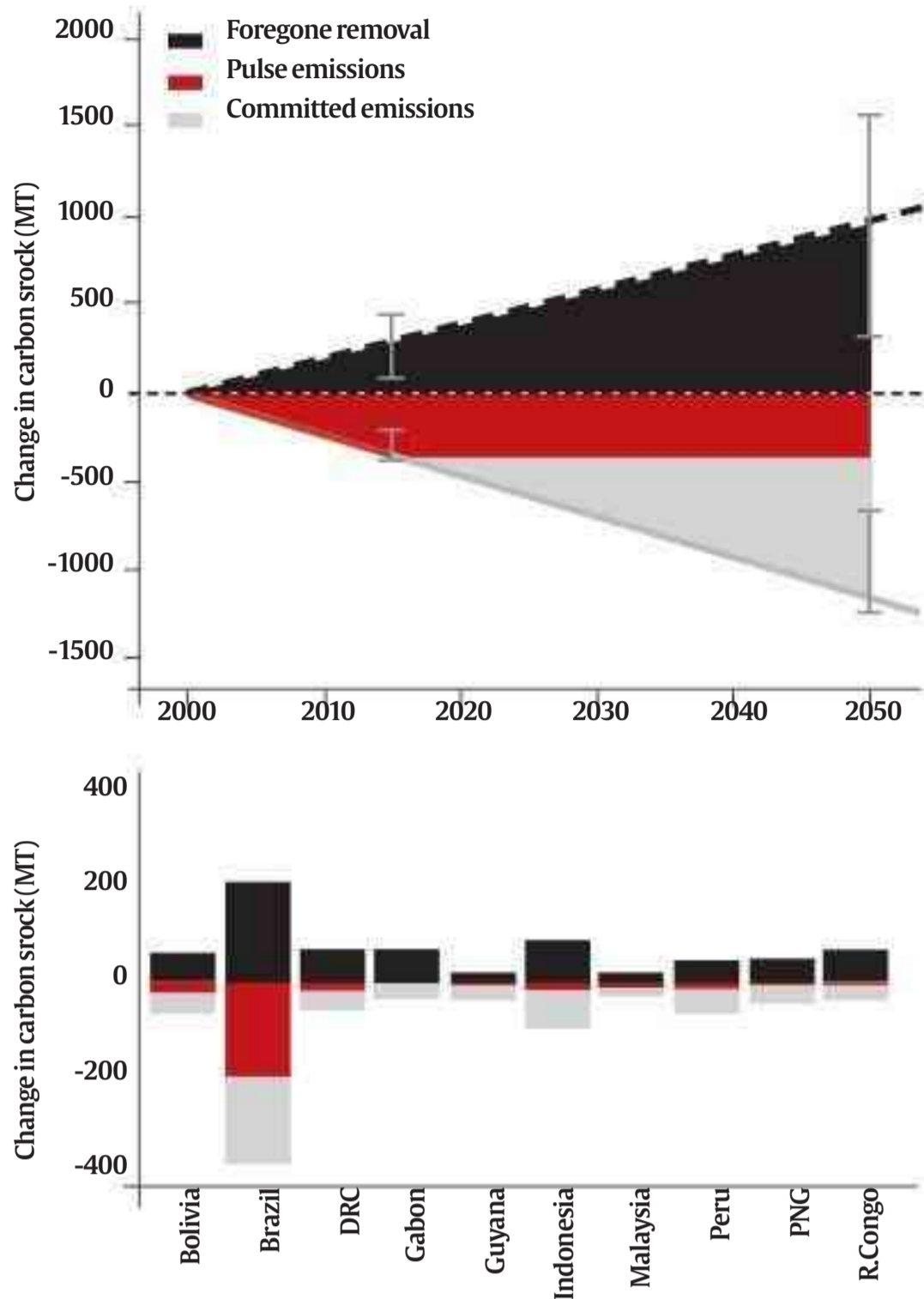
### MORE KARTARPURS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Neighbour's duty', (IE, October 31). Pakistan's National Accountability Bureau is selectively persecuting political opposition and showing reluctance to prosecute former army officers involved in corruption scandals. The Pakistani deep state, like always, is ramping up hostility with India. The political leadership has a very limited role in matters related to security and international affairs. India should explore more Kartarpur-like moments to give ground to the civilian leadership.

Sudip Kumar Dey, Kolkata

TELLING NUMBERS

## Carbon emission from tropical forests jumps in new calculation



**Overall carbon impact, after accounting for conventional as well as new factors. Segment A is for emissions from readily observed forest clearance, which is conventionally measured. Segment B is for emission due to less readily observed degradation processes that follow forest clearance — selective logging, edge effects, and defaunation. Segment C is for forgone carbon removal, which could have occurred had cleared or degraded forest areas remained intact beyond 2000.** Source: Maxwell et al, *Science Advances*

A NEW study says that carbon impacts from the loss of intact tropical forests has been grossly underreported. Published in *Science Advances*, the study has calculated new figures relating to intact forest lost between 2000-2013. It has found that the long-term net carbon impacts, through 2050, are six times the current estimates. The revised total equals two years' worth of all global land-use change emissions, the World Conservation Society (WCS) said in a statement.

Conventionally, only carbon emissions from readily observed forest clearance are considered. This study accounted for less readily observed degradation processes that follow forest clearance - selective logging, edge

effects, and defaunation. Another metric used in the new study is "forgone carbon removal" — which could have occurred had cleared or degraded forest areas remained intact beyond 2000. Full accounting of these additional factors led to a 626% increase in cumulative net carbon impact from intact forest loss, the study says.

"Our results revealed that continued destruction of intact tropical forests is a ticking time bomb for carbon emissions. There is an urgent need to safeguard these landscapes because they play an indispensable role in stabilising the climate," the WCS statement quoted lead author of the study, Sean Maxwell of WCS and the University of Queensland, as saying.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

# Meet spyware Pegasus

**What is the Israeli-made malware that WhatsApp has said was used to snoop on journalists and activists around the world this summer, including in India? Are you personally at risk, and should you stop using WhatsApp?**

SHRUTI DHAPOLA  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 31

On Thursday, *The Indian Express* reported that the popular messaging platform WhatsApp was used to spy on journalists and human rights activists in India earlier this year. The surveillance was carried out using a spyware tool called Pegasus, which has been developed by an Israeli firm, the NSO Group.

WhatsApp sued the NSO Group in a federal court in San Francisco on Tuesday, accusing it of using WhatsApp servers in the United States and elsewhere "to send malware to approximately 1,400 mobile phones and devices ('Target Devices')... for the purpose of conducting surveillance of specific WhatsApp users ('Target Users')".

The surveillance was carried out "between in and around April 2019 and May 2019" on users in 20 countries across four continents, WhatsApp said in its complaint.

In an Op-ed in *The Washington Post*, the head of WhatsApp, Will Cathcart, wrote that the surveillance "targeted at least 100 human-rights defenders, journalists and other members of civil society across the world". He underlined that "tools that enable surveillance into our private lives are being abused, and the proliferation of this technology into the hands of irresponsible companies and governments puts us all at risk".

WhatsApp, which is owned by Facebook, is the world's most popular messaging app, with more than 1.5 billion users worldwide. About a quarter of those users — more than 400 million, or 40 crore — are in India, WhatsApp's biggest market.

The NSO Group is a Tel Aviv-based cyber-security company that specialises in "surveillance technology" and claims to help governments and law enforcement agencies across the world fight crime and terrorism.

### So what exactly is Pegasus?

All spyware do what the name suggests — they spy on people through their phones. Pegasus works by sending an exploit link, and if the target user clicks on the link, the malware or the code that allows the surveillance is installed on the user's phone. (A presumably newer version of the malware

does not even require a target user to click a link. *More on this below.*) Once Pegasus is installed, the attacker has complete access to the target user's phone.

The first reports on Pegasus's spyware operations emerged in 2016, when Ahmed Mansoor, a human rights activist in the UAE, was targeted with an SMS link on his iPhone 6. The Pegasus tool at that time exploited a software chink in Apple's iOS to take over the device. Apple responded by pushing out an update to "patch" or fix the issue.

In September 2018, The Citizen Lab, an interdisciplinary lab based at the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy, University of Toronto, showed that Pegasus delivers "a chain of zero-day exploits to penetrate security features on the phone and installs Pegasus without the user's knowledge or permission". Pegasus spyware's operations were live in 45 countries at the time, The Citizen Lab research showed.

(A "zero-day exploit" is a completely unknown vulnerability, about which even the software manufacturer is not aware, and there is, thus, no patch or fix available for it. In the specific cases of Apple and WhatsApp, therefore, neither company was aware of the security vulnerability, which was used to exploit the software and take over the device.)

In December 2018, Montreal-based Saudi activist Omar Abdulaziz lodged a case against the NSO Group in a court in Tel Aviv, alleging that his phone had been infiltrated using Pegasus, and conversations that he had with his close friend, the murdered Saudi dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi, snooped on. Khashoggi was slaughtered by Saudi agents at the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul on October 2, 2018; Abdulaziz said he believed

his phone was hacked in August that year. In May 2019, the *Financial Times* reported that Pegasus was being used to exploit WhatsApp and spy on potential targets. WhatsApp issued an urgent software update to fix the security bug that was allowing the spyware to exploit the app.

### Once installed, what all can Pegasus do?

The Citizen Lab post said Pegasus can "send back the target's private data, including passwords, contact lists, calendar events, text messages, and live voice

calls from popular mobile messaging apps". The target's phone camera and microphone can be turned on to capture all activity in the phone's vicinity, expanding the scope of the surveillance.

According to claims in a Pegasus brochure that WhatsApp has submitted to court as a technical exhibit, the malware can also access email, SMS, location tracking, network details, device settings, and browsing history data. All of this takes place without the target user's knowledge.

Other key features of Pegasus, according to the brochure are: ability to access password-protected devices, being totally transparent to the target, leaving no trace on the device, consuming minimal battery, memory and data so as not to arouse suspicion in more alert users, a self-destruct mechanism in case of risk of exposure, and ability to retrieve any file for deeper analysis.

The brochure, called *Pegasus: Product Description*, says Pegasus can work on BlackBerry, Android, iOS (iPhone) and Symbian-based devices. The mention of the now discontinued mobile OS Symbian and the no longer popular BlackBerry suggests the document is old — and Pegasus has certainly been upgraded over the years.

### And how did Pegasus exploit WhatsApp?

That's the big question for many, given that WhatsApp has always tommommed its end-to-end encryption. The *Financial Times* report in May this year said that a missed call on the app was all that was needed to install the software on the device

— no clicking on a misleading link was required. WhatsApp later explained that Pegasus had exploited the video/voice call function on the app, which had a zero-day security flaw. It did not matter if the target did not take the call — the flaw allowed for the malware to be installed anyway.

The exploit impacted WhatsApp for Android prior to v2.19.134, WhatsApp Business for Android prior to v2.19.44, WhatsApp for iOS prior to v2.19.51, WhatsApp Business for iOS prior to v2.19.51, WhatsApp for Windows Phone prior to v2.18.348, and WhatsApp for Tizen (which is used by Samsung devices) prior to v2.18.15.

### Can Pegasus be used to target just about anyone?

Technically, yes. But while tools such as Pegasus can be used for mass surveillance; it would seem likely that only selected individuals would be targeted. In the present case, WhatsApp has claimed that it sent a special message to approximately 1,400 users who it believed were impacted by the attack, to directly inform them about what had happened.

WhatsApp has not said how many people it contacted in India. *The Indian Express* reported on Thursday that at least two dozen academics, lawyers, Dalit activists, and journalists were alerted by the company in India.

It is not known who carried out the surveillance on the Indian targets. The NSO Group, while disputing WhatsApp's allegations "in the strongest possible terms", has said that it provides the tool exclusively to "licensed government intelligence and law enforcement agencies", and not just to anyone who wants it.

### Is WhatsApp's end-to-end encryption now compromised? Should you switch to another app — perhaps Signal or Wire or Telegram?

The very popularity of a messaging app makes it a target for hackers, cyber criminals, or other entities. Even law enforcement agencies across the world want messages to be decrypted — a demand that WhatsApp is fighting, including in India.

WhatsApp uses the Signal app protocol for its end-to-end encryption, which seems safe so far. WhatsApp has an advantage over Telegram: in Telegram,

only the "secret chats" are end-to-end encrypted, while on WhatsApp everything is end-to-end encrypted by default.

Those rattled by the WhatsApp episode might want to switch to Signal or Wire.

However, it is important to be aware that unknown "zero-day" exploits could exist for virtually every software and app in the world — and that they might be exploited at some point in the future by individuals or agencies determined to do so.

*The image is based on information in a Pegasus brochure submitted by WhatsApp to the California court as a technical exhibit. It shows the variety of data that the system can sweep up: email, SMS, location tracking, network details, device settings, browsing history, contact details, social networks, phonecalls, calendar records, file retrieval, instant messaging, photos and screenshots, and microphone recording. Illustration: Shyam Kumar Prasad*

# What National Health Profile says about targeted, actual health spend

ABANTIKA GHOSH  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 31

AT A time when Universal Health Coverage has become the new buzzword of healthcare in India since Ayushman Bharat, the National Health Profile 2019 throws up sobering figures. Between 2009-10 and 2018-19, India's public health spend as a percentage of GDP went up by just 0.16 percentage points from 1.12% to 1.28% of GDP, and remains a far cry from the 2.5% GDP health spend that has been India's target for some years now.

The National Health Profile (NHP) is an annual stocktaking exercise on the health of the health sector.

### The current situation

"The cost of treatment has been on rise in India and it has led to inequity in access to health care services. India spends only 1.28% of its GDP (2017-18 BE) as public expenditure on health. Per capita public expenditure on health in nominal terms has gone up from Rs 621 in 2009-10 to Rs 1,657 in 2017-18," NHP 2019 says.

Compare this with the average total medical expenditure per childbirth in a public hospital: Rs 1,587 in a rural area and Rs 2,117 in an urban area. Based on Health Survey (71st round) conducted by NSSO, average medical expenditure incurred during hospital stay during January 2013-June 2014 was Rs 14,935 for rural and Rs 24,436 in urban India.

In his Independence Day address in 2011, then PM Manmohan Singh had declared

that financing of health would be upped to 2.5% of GDP, during the 12th Five Year Plan (a concept since discontinued). In 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at the Partners' Forum meeting in Delhi: "We are committed to increasing India's health spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2025, reaching to more than \$100 billion. This will mean an actual increase of 345 per cent over the current share, in just eight years."

### Blueprint for meeting targets

In 2011, the High Level Expert Group of the erstwhile Planning Commission submitted its seminal report on the roll-out of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in India. Recommendation 3.1.1 reads: "Government (central government and states combined) should increase public expenditures on health from the current level of 1.2% of GDP to at least 2.5% by the end of the 12th plan and to at least 3% of GDP by 2022."

The report adds: "Financing the proposed UHC system will require public expenditures on health to be stepped up from around 1.2% of GDP today to at least 2.5% by 2017 and to 3% of GDP by 2022. The proposed increase is consistent with the estimates by government as well as our preliminary assessment of financial resources required to finance the NHP. Even if we assume that the combined public and private spending on health remains at the current level of around 4.5% of GDP, this will result in a five-fold increase in real per capita health expenditures by the government (from around Rs 650-700 in 2011-12 to Rs 3,400-3,500 by 2021-22).

Year	Actual spend (₹ crore)	Per capita spend	% of GDP	WHAT COUNTRIES SPEND
2009-10	72,536	621	1.12	Domestic general government health expenditure (GGHE-D) in constant (2016) US\$ per capita
2010-11	83,101	701	1.07	US 8,078
2011-12	96,221	802	1.1	Norway 6,366
2012-13	1,08,236	890	1.09	Switzerland 6,175
2013-14	1,12,270	913	1.00	Luxembourg 5,093
2014-15	1,21,600.23	973	0.98	Sweden 4,769
2015-16	1,40,054.55	1112	1.02	Denmark 4,682
2016-17 (RE)	1,78,875.63	1397	1.17	India 16
2017-18 (BE)	2,13,719.58	1657	1.28	

Source: Health Ministry via National Health Profile 2019

Source: WHO via National Health Profile 2019

There will also be a corresponding decline in real private out-of-pocket expenditures from around Rs 1,800-1,850 in 2011-12 to Rs 1,700-1,750 by 2021-22."

Universal Health Coverage, according to the World Health Organization, means that "all people and communities can use the promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative health services they need, of sufficient quality to be effective, while also ensuring that the use of these services does not expose the user to financial hardship." The three objectives are: equity in access to health services; quality of health services should be good enough to improve the health of those receiving them; people

should be protected against financial-risk, ensuring that the cost of using services does not put people at risk of financial harm.

### The states

There are wide disparities in the health spend of states, the NHP points out. The Northeastern states had the highest and the Empowered Action Group (EAG) states plus Assam had the lowest average per capita public expenditure on health in 2015-16. EAG states are the eight socio-economically backward states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. Among the big states (erstwhile) Jammu

and Kashmir leads with a 2.46% GSDP spend on healthcare - nearest to the ideal spend. Among the NE states, the leaders in health spend were Mizoram with 4.20% GSDP spend and Arunachal Pradesh with 3.29%.

Even states seen as better performers on health parameters, such as Tamil Nadu and Kerala, fare poorly on the health finance index. Tamil Nadu spent 0.74% of its GSDP and Kerala 0.93% of its GSDP on healthcare.

### India and world

The NHP does some very telling calculations on India's per capita health spend and how it stacks up against countries who are on the UHC path. In 2016, India's Domestic general government health expenditure stood at \$16 per capita. This is lower than Norway (\$6,366), Canada (\$3,274), Japan (\$3,538), Republic of Korea (\$1,209) and Brunei Darussalam (\$599). Among the 23 countries including India that the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence chose for that comparison, the highest per capita spender is the United States at \$8078. The American system, though, is considered neither ideal nor economical. This data has been sourced from the Global Health Expenditure Database of the World Health Organisation.

### Other findings

The NHP also notes the change in disease profile of the country with a shift towards the non-communicable disease from communicable ones - a fact that has been minutely documented by the State Level Disease Burden Study that was released

some years ago and the subsequent analyses of that data periodically published in various medical journals. "It has been observed that the non-communicable diseases dominate over communicable in the total disease burden of the country. In a recent report of India Council of Medical Research, titled *India: Health of the Nation's States: The India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative* (2017), it is observed that the disease burden due to communicable, maternal, neonatal, and nutritional diseases, as measured using disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), dropped from 61 per cent to 33 per cent between 1990 and 2016. In the same period, disease burden from non-communicable diseases increased from 30 per cent to 55 per cent. The epidemiological transition, however, varies widely among Indian states: 48% to 75% for non-communicable diseases, 14% to 43% for infectious and associated diseases, and 9% to 14% for injuries," the NHP notes. DALYs are an international standard of disease burden that measures how much of a normal life span of an individual is taken away by a disease related morbidity or mortality.

The NHP has also noted that medical education infrastructure has shown rapid growth over the past few years. "The country has 529 medical colleges, 313 Dental Colleges for BDS & 253 Dental Colleges for MDS. The total number of admissions for academic year 2018-19 in Medical Colleges is 58756. The Dental Colleges saw an admission of 26960 in BDS and 6288 in MDS in the academic year 2018-19," it says.