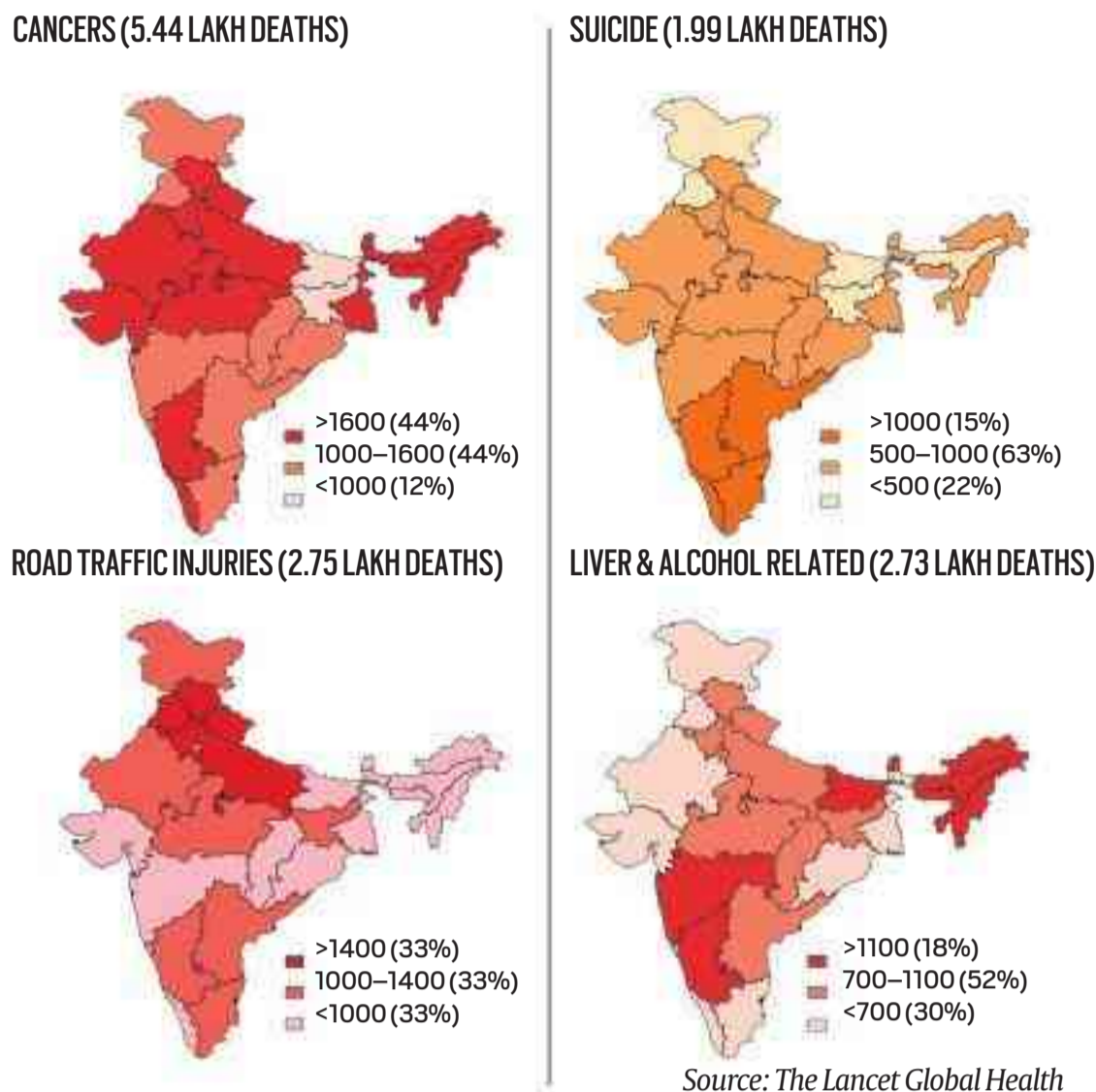


**TELLING NUMBERS**

**Premature deaths in India: different causes, different states**



The maps show variation in YLLs (years of life lost) for selected non-communicable diseases and injuries across the major states. Figures alongside each map denote the range of YLLs per lakh, as specified.  
 Source: The Lancet Global Health

AN ANALYSIS published in *The Lancet Global Health*, which looked at about 9.7 million deaths in India in 2017, found that every condition that was common in one part of India was uncommon elsewhere. For example, the Northeastern states, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Haryana, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh account for 44% of India's cancer burden (*The Indian Express*, November 12).

Premature deaths due to various causes, expressed as YLLs, too were unevenly distributed in terms of the burden on the states. By the World Health Organization definition, YLLs, or years of life lost, are calculated from the number of deaths multiplied by a standard life expectancy at the age of death. For example, liver and alcohol-related YLL rates were high in the northeastern states, Bihar, Karnataka, and Maharashtra, accounting for 18% of national YLLs. Suicide YLL rates were highest in the southern states, accounting for 15% of national totals. Road traffic injuries were high in the northern states of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab,

Uttarakhand, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, accounting for 33% of national totals. Drowning YLL rates, meanwhile, were highest in the central states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, and in Assam in the Northeast, accounting for 11% of national totals.

In 2017, India had 486 million DALYs (disability-adjusted life years, a measure of the number of years lost due to ill health or disability). The ratio of DALYs to the 9.7 million deaths was about 50 to 1. More than three quarters of deaths and DALYs occurred in rural areas, and males accounted for 54-3% of all DALYs. At all ages, the DALY rate per 100,000 population was 36,300, but rates were higher among rural residents and among males. DALY rates in rural areas were at least twice those of urban areas for certain conditions.

The study, funded by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, included authors from the Indian Council of Medical Research, and from the global health research wings of the University of Toronto and University of California, San Francisco.

**BURDEN OF DISEASE IN INDIA (INDIALYS PER LAKH POPULATION)**

AGE	OVERALL	MALE	FEMALE	URBAN	RURAL
All ages	36,300	38,100	34,400	27,400	40,400
0-4	84,400	83,800	85,000	58,100	93,700
5-14	13,300	14,400	12,100	9,300	14,800
15-29	17,400	16,800	18,100	16,100	18,100
30-49	27,900	31,000	24,600	20,400	31,900
50-59	52,200	59,200	44,900	36,800	60,600
60-69	85,000	94,000	76,000	66,800	92,500
70-79	1,27,600	1,37,900	1,18,400	1,09,700	1,35,100
>80	1,12,900	1,20,400	1,06,800	99,600	1,18,600

Source: The Lancet Global Health

**SIMPLY PUT**

**Why BRICS matters for India**

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi attends the BRICS Summit in Brazil, a look at how the grouping began and has since evolved, what are the issues it will take up, and what it means for India in the global order.

**SHUBHAJIT ROY**  
 NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 12

ON TUESDAY, Prime Minister Narendra Modi left for Brazil to attend the 11th BRICS Summit. What is on the agenda of this grouping, and why is it important?

**The origins, and now**

On November 30, 2001, Jim O'Neill, a British economist who was then chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management, coined the term 'BRIC' to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.

In a paper, 'The World Needs Better Economic BRICs', written for the Goldman Sachs 'Global Economic Paper' series, O'Neill — who went on to serve as Commercial Secretary to the Treasury between 2015 and 2016 in the governments headed by David Cameron and Theresa May — made a case for BRIC on the basis of econometric analyses projecting that the four economies would individually and collectively occupy far greater economic space and become among the world's largest economies in the next 50 years or so.

"In 2001 and 2002, real GDP growth in large emerging market economies will exceed that of the G7. At end-2000, GDP in US\$ on a PPP basis in Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) was about 23.3% of world GDP. On a current GDP basis, BRIC share of world GDP is 8%. Over the next 10 years, the weight of the BRICs and especially China in world GDP will grow, raising important issues about the global economic impact of fiscal and monetary policy in the BRICs. In line with these prospects, world policymaking forums should be re-organised and in particular, the G7 should be adjusted to incorporate BRIC representatives," O'Neill wrote.

Answering a question, "Should the G7 be replaced by a G9?", he wrote it seems quite clear that the current G7 needs to be "upgraded" and room made for the BRICs in order to allow more effective global policymaking.

And, about India's role, he wrote, "India would almost definitely be the least eager to join the G9 club. They might regard any 'obligations' as unwelcome, as well as possibly seeing their own experiences as limiting their ability to give 'advice'. However, in view of their size, population and potential (and their geographical location), the possible inclusion of India would be attractive."

Eighteen years later, India finds itself as one of the emerging economies in the grouping



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and leaders of the other four BRICS countries at the 2015 Summit in Ufa, Russia. AP/File Photo

and beyond, especially G20. BRICS now brings together five economies accounting for 42% of the world's population, 23% of the global GDP and an around 17% share of world trade.

As a formal grouping, BRIC started after the meeting of the leaders of Russia, India and China in St Petersburg on the margins of the G8-Outreach Summit in July 2006. The grouping was formalised during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers on the margins of the UNGA in New York in September 2006. The first BRIC Summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia, on June 16, 2009.

It was agreed to expand BRIC to BRICS with the inclusion of South Africa at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' meeting in New York in September 2010. South Africa attended the third BRICS Summit in Sanya on April 14, 2011. Last year, leaders of the grouping commemorated the 10th anniversary of BRICS in Johannesburg.

**India & the current Summit**

As Modi attends the 11th BRICS Summit in Brasilia, his sixth since he assumed office in 2014, it will be the beginning of what New Delhi sees as the "second cycle" of BRICS. Since July 2014 in Fortaleza in Brazil, Modi's first multilateral summit after becoming Prime Minister, the grouping has completed the first

cycle during his regime in India.

From the Indian perspective, BRICS has emerged the voice of developing countries, or the global south. As these countries face an aggressive club of developed countries, raising challenges on issues from WTO to climate change, New Delhi believes BRICS has to protect the rights of the developing countries. The five BRICS countries are also members of G-20.

While the economic heft of three of the five countries has been denied in the last few years, the BRICS cooperation has two pillars — consultations on issues of mutual interest through meetings of leaders and ministers, and cooperation through meetings of senior officials in areas including trade, finance, health, education, technology, agriculture, and IT.

Also, India has to maintain the balancing act between Russia-China on the one side and the US on the other. While India has had a growing role in global affairs in the last decade or so, and is seen to be helping drive the global agenda, the current crop of BRICS leaders too are seen as strong personalities — from Chinese President Xi Jinping to Russian President Vladimir Putin to Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro — with a pronounced nationalistic agenda. South Block views this as a potential for cooperation, as the leaders have more in common than their predecessors.

New Delhi believes that over the last few years, India has taken the lead in galvanising BRICS. BRICS has also worked within the grouping to take a strong stand against terrorism and bring about focused consultations on specific aspects relating to terrorism.

**On the table in Brazil**

This year, the joint working group on counter-terrorism has decided to constitute sub-working groups in five areas: terrorist financing; use of Internet for terrorist purposes; countering radicalisation; the issue of foreign terrorist fighters; and capacity-building. It is expected that India will chair the subgroup on use of Internet for terrorist purposes. During meetings of National Security Advisers of BRICS last month, India's NSA Ajit Doval put forward a proposal to host a BRICS workshop on digital forensics in India. Brazil has also made terrorism one of the priorities for its presidency. It held the first BRICS seminar on Strategies for Countering Terrorism.

The fact that BRICS has put counter-terrorism on top of the agenda has been a success for India. That was evident in the BRICS Summit in Xiamen in September 2017, with China as the chair. The fact that it was achieved, despite the strained ties due to the standoff in Doklam, was a testimony to the value Beijing and New Delhi attach to the outcomes of the grouping.

On the question of multilateralism, Modi has articulated a vision for strengthening and reforming the multilateral system itself. He has underlined that when India calls for multilateralism, it is not a call to reinforce the status quo of multilateralism but to reform it since this is what BRICS had originally set out to do.

Leaders will attend a BRICS-restricted session, expected to focus on challenges and opportunities for the exercise of national sovereignty in the contemporary world. In the Plenary Session, leaders will discuss cooperation for economic development of BRICS societies. A meeting of BRICS leaders with BRICS Business Council will take place, and BRICS MoU among Trade and Investment Promotion agencies will be signed. On the conclusion, Summit leaders will issue a joint declaration.

The Summit will be an opportunity for India to lay the groundwork for hosting the 2021 Summit scheduled in India. The last Summit took place in Goa in 2016. India will also be mindful of the fact that the G20 Summit to be hosted in India will take place in 2022, and this will be an opportunity to synergise the two agendas from New Delhi's lens as well.

**President's Rule in Maharashtra: what now?**

**PRADEEP KAUSHAL**  
 NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 12

ON TUESDAY, while recommending President's Rule in Maharashtra, Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari noted that a situation has arisen when the formation of a stable government is not possible even 15 days after election results had been declared.

**How it is imposed**

President's Rule implies the suspension of a state government and the imposition of direct rule of the Centre. This is achieved through invocation of Article 356 of the Constitution by the President on the advice of the Union Council of Ministers. Under Article 356, this move can be taken "(1) If the President, on receipt of report from the Governor of the State or otherwise, is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution..."



Ahmed Patel (Congress) and Sharad Pawar (NCP) in Mumbai. Ganesh Shirsakar

The Maharashtra Assembly has been kept in suspended animation. However, the new Assembly stands constituted, with the names of the election winners having been notified by the Election Commission.

**How long it can last**

A proclamation of President's Rule can be revoked through a subsequent proclamation in case the leader of a party produces letters of

support from a majority of members of the Assembly, and stakes his claim to form a government. The revocation does not need the approval of Parliament.

So, this is not the end of the road for any formation in Maharashtra. In fact, all players now have time to work out their alliances and head to Raj Bhavan to stake their claim to form a government.

Any proclamation under Article 356 — which stands for six months — has to be approved by both Houses in the Parliament session following it. This six-month time-frame can be extended in phases, up to three years.

**Similar precedents**

This is not the first time President's Rule has been imposed following an election that did not lead to government formation. For instance, no party could mobilise a majority in the Bihar Assembly following elections in February 2005. President's Rule, which was imposed on March 7, 2005, lasted 262 days until November 24. It was lifted after fresh

elections in October-November.

A hung verdict in the Jammu and Kashmir elections of 2002 led to the imposition of President's Rule for 15 days, from October 18 to November 2 that year. The National Conference had emerged the single largest party, but was short of a majority. The PDP and the Congress formed a coalition government after prolonged negotiations. PDP leader Mufti Mohammad Sayeed became the Chief Minister for the first three years and Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad for the remaining three years. The alliance also included the Panthers Party.

In the UP Assembly elections of 2002, no party could secure a majority. This led to the imposition of President's Rule for 56 days, from March 3 to May 2, 2002. Then Mayawati (BSP) and the BJP struck a deal and the former became the Chief Minister on May 3. The alliance collapsed a year later and Mayawati resigned in August 2003. This was followed by the assumption of power by the Samajwadi Party with the support of BSP rebels.

**Why SC verdict today holds key to Dec 5 Karnataka bypolls (and BSY govt)**

**JOHNSON TA**  
 BENGALURU, NOVEMBER 12

THE SUPREME COURT will deliver judgment on aspects of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, popularly known as the anti-defection law, on Wednesday in the context of the disqualification of 17 MLAs of the Congress and Janata Dal-Secular (JD-S) in Karnataka.

The MLAs were disqualified from the 16th Karnataka Legislative Assembly by the then Speaker on July 25 and 28 this year under the anti-defection law, and were barred from contesting elections during the tenure of the current Assembly (which is until 2023).

The judgment will have a bearing on the December 5 byelections to 15 of the 17 vacant seats in the Assembly, and on the future of the BJP government headed by Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa.

**Under what circumstances were the MLAs disqualified?**

The 2018 state elections produced a

hung Assembly — the BJP won 104 seats, Congress 80, and JD-S 37 in the 224-member House. Three seats went to others. When the BJP failed to muster a majority after three days of Yediyurappa being Chief Minister, the Congress and JD-S, whose leaders had forged an alliance soon after the results, formed the government with H D Kumaraswamy of the JD-S as CM.

In July 2019, 14 MLAs from the Congress and three from the JD-S quit the Assembly, ostensibly because they were unhappy with the coalition government. The resignations were seen as linked to a BJP attempt to topple the government, and the Congress and JD-S sought the MLAs' disqualification, and a bar on their contesting elections.

As the 17 rebels stayed away from the Assembly, the Congress-JD-S government collapsed during a trust vote on July 23, paving the way for the BJP to stake claim to form a new government under Yediyurappa on July 26.

In the interim, however, on July 25 and 28, then Speaker K R Ramesh Kumar issued two separate orders under the anti-defection law,

disqualifying the 17 MLAs from the House and barring them from contesting elections during the tenure of the current Assembly.

The MLAs subsequently moved the Supreme Court asking that the Speaker's orders be quashed. The Congress and JD-S too approached the court, seeking enforcement of the disqualifications.

**How will the court's verdict impact the December 5 bypolls?**

In its order on Wednesday, the Supreme Court will essentially decide whether the Congress and JD-S MLAs who were disqualified from the Assembly in July can contest the December 5 bypolls. Elections will not take place at two out of the 17 vacant seats — Rajarajeshwari Nagar and Maski — where separate election petitions challenging the results of the 2018 elections are pending in Karnataka High Court.

Nearly all the disqualified MLAs are hoping to contest the bypolls as BJP candidates. And the BJP is awaiting the outcome of the SC verdict to decide on its nominees. When the MLAs resigned from the Assembly in July

to topple the Kumaraswamy government, they had been assured they would be returned to the House on BJP tickets and given important positions in the government.

The 15 MLAs are hoping the Supreme Court will either quash their disqualification entirely, or set aside the ban imposed on them by the Speaker from contesting elections during the tenure of the current Assembly.

The bypolls were originally scheduled to be held with the elections to the Maharashtra and Haryana Assemblies on October 21, but were pushed to December 5 after the Election Commission told the Supreme Court that it was willing to wait for the outcome of the pleas made by the 17 rebel MLAs.

**What impact can the verdict and bypolls have on Yediyurappa's government?**

Yediyurappa currently has the support of 106 MLAs in the Assembly, including one Independent, while the Opposition combine of the Congress and JD-S has 101. The Karnataka House has 224 seats, with 17 vacancies. The BJP will have to win a minimum six out of 15 seats, and seven out of

17 to keep its majority. (It will, however, still be dependent on the support of the Independent — and would like to win at least one extra seat in both situations for a clear majority of its own.)

There are 14 vacancies in the council of ministers, which Yediyurappa intends to use to accommodate the rebels if they contest the bypolls and win. However, there is opposition within the BJP — including from many in the party's central leadership — over the kind of leeway being offered to the Congress and JD-S turncoats in order to save the Yediyurappa government.

With frictions between the Congress and JD-S rising after the collapse of their coalition government, the BJP could have the alternative choice of tying up with the JD-S in case it needs the numbers. The JD-S, whose leaders face CBI cases, has in recent days shown the inclination to back the BJP if necessary.

**What larger questions could the Supreme Court answer today?**

The major question the court could answer is whether lawmakers who are dis-

qualified under the anti-defection law can also be barred from contesting elections during the tenure of the incumbent legislative Assembly.

It could also decide whether disqualification proceedings under the Tenth Schedule gains precedence over acceptance of resignations of MLAs in a situation where the Speaker is simultaneously processing the resignations of MLAs, and pleas for their disqualification.

A great deal of ambiguity exists on these issues, often leading to confusion and gamesmanship in the use of the anti-defection law, which was inserted in the Constitution in 1985 by the 52nd Amendment Act with the intention of curbing horse-trading in Assemblies and Parliament.

There is also the question of whether the MLAs who resigned could have been subjected to the disqualification process under the anti-defection law, given that the Supreme Court had, in an order passed on July 17, said that the MLAs must not be compelled (through a whip) to attend the Assembly or the trust vote.



WORDLY WISE  
ME, POOR MAN, MY LIBRARY WAS DUKEDOM  
LARGE ENOUGH.  
— WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY  
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

WINNING & LOSING

In Maharashtra, BJP's ally trouble carries a lesson and a warning

IT IS UNUSUAL for a pre-poll alliance that won an assembly election to fail in forming the government. That Maharashtra has been placed under President's rule, despite the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance winning a clear majority in last month's assembly election, is an exceptional development. The BJP and Sena have been partners for more than a quarter century, sharing power in local bodies, the state government and at the Centre. Their relationship was firming up by their adherence to the ideology of political Hindutva. Now, the two parties have had a seemingly bitter parting, jeopardising the prospects of a BJP-Sena government in Maharashtra, with the Sena also quitting the NDA. For the BJP, the Maharashtra mess is a moment of reckoning. Among other things, it reveals the predicament of the new BJP, which has been expanding at a furious pace, and has been on a winning spree. For many years, the BJP, despite its ideological character and in contrast to the Congress, was viewed as a party that had the flexibility and skills to stitch coalitions in the most adverse circumstances. Since 1996, when Atal Bihari Vajpayee, after failing to win support for his 13-day government at the Centre, complained of parties practising "political untouchability", the BJP was seen to have mastered the art of winning allies and running coalition governments. Coalition dharma was a much evoked principle in the NDA of Vajpayee and L.K. Advani. However, there is reason to suspect that the party, after its several electoral victories under Narendra Modi and Amit Shah, seems to be losing the ability or willingness to engage with partners and allies. Now the BJP's approach seems to be more intransigent, to emphasise its greater numbers and insist that the regional party lower its expectations. It is curious that the BJP's national leadership refused to intervene in the public spat involving its Maharashtra leaders and the Sena over the chief minister's office and ministerial berths. Does it view the Sena's departure as an opportunity to monopolise the entire Hindutva vote in Maharashtra? Or is it an instance of the leadership failing to judge the Sena's intent? Either way, the Maharashtra break-up reflects poorly on the BJP's management of allies, even as anti-BJPism may again become the glue that can bring together disparate Opposition parties. The Maharashtra and Haryana results, that came just six months after the BJP won the general election with an enhanced mandate, are a pointer that no party can claim the permanent loyalty of voters. The federal character of the polity also allows space to regional players, which can scuttle the aims of arrogant or complacent national parties. That may not be a bad thing for democracy.

A DEEPER DARK

Industrial production contracts again, another pointer that the slowdown is unlikely to reverse on its own, or quickly

ON MONDAY, DATA from the National Statistics Office showed that industrial production contracted by 4.3 per cent in September — the lowest in the current series. Over the course of the entire second quarter, the index of industrial production (IIP) has contracted by 0.4 per cent, after growing by 3 per cent in the previous quarter. Of the 23 sub-sectors within manufacturing, 17 contracted in September, up from 15 in the previous month, suggesting that the contraction is deeper and more widespread. The worsening performance of the consumer durables as well as the non-durables segment, indicative of subdued household demand, has dashed hopes of restocking of inventories prior to the festive season. Equally worrying, the capital goods segment, which connotes investment demand, contracted by 16.8 per cent in the second quarter, indicating that investment activity continues to be depressed. Higher central government spending may have provided some support in the second quarter. Data from the Controller General of Accounts shows that government spending, both revenue and capital, picked up pace significantly after the Union budget was presented in July. But this is unlikely to have been enough to offset the subdued performance of other sectors. With various high frequency indicators suggesting that economic activity has slowed down considerably over the past few months, growth may well come in below the psychological 5 per cent mark in the quarter ended September. Equally worrying, even the crutch of government spending will not be available in the coming quarters as with its own finances coming under pressure, transfers from the Reserve Bank of India can only partially offset the shortfall in both direct and indirect tax collections, and disinvestment receipts remain well below the budgeted target — cuts in government spending are likely going forward, further accentuating the slowdown. Reflecting this deteriorating economic situation, a few days ago, rating agency Moody's changed its outlook on India's rating from stable to negative, citing increased risks that the country's economic growth will remain "materially lower than in the past." It is possible that towards the end of this year the headline growth numbers may pick up once the base effect kicks in. But this is a statistical illusion. It would be a mistake to construe this as a sign of a recovery. The government needs to address multiple issues plaguing the economy. Along with measures to boost long-term potential growth, comprehensive measures are needed to address the stress in specific sectors such as telecom, real estate and the financial system. Piecemeal solutions are unlikely to lead to sustainable growth.

LOST IN THE LABYRINTH

A vandal has been hiding 'liberal' books in a US library. The crime may have a silver lining

AS VILLAINOUS ONE-LINERS go, "Your liberal angst gives me great pleasure" is one for the ages. Part of a note left in the comment box of the library in Coeur D'Alene, a small town in Idaho, US, the declaration of sadistic pleasure is from an as yet unidentified vandal who has been deliberately hiding books that are anti-President Donald Trump and/or deal with issues like gun control and LGBTQ rights. Going by reports, the "liberal angst" in Coeur D'Alene is indeed palpable. All libraries are labyrinths: They must be navigated through complex notations, the Dewey Decimal System, and the librarian, like some ancient, formidable sphinx, guards knowledge, and ensures silence. But the mazes of shelves and books do talk, often to each other, and open up strange new worlds for the unsuspecting reader. Browsing, long before it meant scrolling through the algorithm-determined shopping suggestions on Amazon, was a journey of discovery. Searching for a book on marine biology, one could stumble on to Darwin, and through him, to theological explanations of first causes on to St Augustine and from him to Plato. By hiding certain books, the vandal of Coeur D'Alene has brought back bitter memories for a town that was forced to put under lock and key books on human rights because of white supremacists 30-odd years ago. For many, Trump's political ascendance is a throwback to that time. But the books that are hidden are still there, in the library, on a shelf they don't belong, waiting to be discovered by an eager reader. Nestled in those shelves is a possibility of opening up a mind that would otherwise remain ensconced in the received wisdom of reading lists and letting it loose in the labyrinth of ideas. The thought alone is enough to dispel liberal angst.

Majority, minority & temple

A temple on the contested site of a mosque's destruction departs from judicial counter-majoritarianism



ASHUTOSH VARSHNEY

FOR THE FIRST time since Independence, an entirely new electoral prospect has been consolidating itself. This phenomenon can be conceptualised as the political irrelevance of Muslims. It came to life with the 2014 general elections, though some might drag it back further. Its implications, serious in any case, have become even more so after the Ayodhya judgment of the Supreme Court. The Court has held Hindu mobs responsible for an egregious violation of the law on December 6, 1992 — when they destroyed the Babri mosque — but deploying the kind of legal reasoning that frustrates non-specialists of law, it has handed over the site, where the erstwhile mosque stood, to the Hindu community for the building of a Ram temple. In a display of religious equidistance that marks Indian secularism, the Court has also allowed a mosque to be built on a plot twice as large as the original site. But those who destroyed the mosque, according to India's highest court, now have the right to construct a temple in its place. If the Court intends to draw a distinction between the law-breakers, who ought to be punished, and the larger Hindu community, whose wishes should not be denied, it can still argue it has not abandoned the idea of justice. But given its lack of resolve to confront electorally enabled power, one cannot be too sanguine about whether it would punish those who violated the law but are currently in power. How the Court actually pronounces on the culprits of December 6, 1992, will, therefore, be carefully watched.

Admittedly, some Muslims will not mind the judgment, thinking it ends a seemingly interminable period of painful contention and provides an opportunity to move on. But many are likely to feel doubly marginalised. They are being made electorally irrelevant, and even the judiciary has not sufficiently protected them. Two points should immediately be noted. First, in the 1940s, Jinnah's argument for partition was precisely that democracy in a Hindu-majority India would serve the interests of Hindus, not of the Muslim minority. The argument was wrong, as both Nehru and Ambedkar painstakingly demonstrated. It is ironic that the argument, false then and for decades later, is starting to acquire credibility now, for the system after seven decades is threatening to generate Muslim helplessness.

The trend is still not irreversible, but it is dire. Second, a lot of democratic theory, and much of modern democratic practice, envisions the judiciary as a counter-majoritarian institution. In a multi-ethnic, multi-religious democratic polity, the electoral process can easily begin to reflect the wishes of the ethnic or religious majority. But the judiciary's functioning is fundamentally based on constitutional principles, not the wishes of the majority. If the judiciary only replicated what governments, legislatures or political parties based on electoral victories did, we would not really need it as a separate and autonomous institution. That is also why minorities in a democracy have often looked up to the courts for protection, when popular electoral currents go against them. The distinction between the electoral and the judicial, towards which the SC judgment is pushing us, requires further elaboration. Let us begin historically. Should India treat its Muslims the same way as Pakistan was dealing with its Hindus? This question repeatedly arose in the early years of freedom when India's Constitution was debated. Supported by Ambedkar, Nehru argued: "Whatever the provocation from Pakistan and whatever the indignities and horrors inflicted on non-Muslims there, we have to deal with (our) minority in a civilised manner: We must give them security and the rights of citizens in a democratic state. If we fail to do so, we shall have a festering sore which will eventually poison the whole body politic." Earlier, critiquing Jinnah, Ambedkar argued that constitutional and institutional safeguards could easily be devised to check majoritarianism and protect minority rights. That Hindus are a majority, said Ambedkar, does not automatically lead to Hindu rule. India's Constitution thus developed a charter of minority rights — educational, cultural, religious — and gave no special privileges to

the Hindu majority. Secularism came to be defined not only as equal rights for all, regardless of religious affiliation, but also as comprising special minority rights on the assumption that minority numbers alone would not allow them to protect their interests in a democracy. This constitutional settlement was further bolstered by the electoral realities of India. Until 2008, 81 parliamentary constituencies of India were more than 20 per cent Muslim (including 10 that were Muslim-majority) and 126 seats were 10-20 per cent Muslim. Thus, in 38 per cent of parliamentary seats, Muslim voters could play an important role. Even if mainstream politicians had anti-Muslim feelings, these electoral realities would partly check them. The 2008 redrawing of constituencies has most probably not significantly changed Muslim proportions. This long-lasting electoral logic was fundamentally altered in 2014 and 2019. The BJP came to power with only 8 per cent of the Muslim vote each time, an outcome inconceivable under the earlier electoral calculus. The key to this transformation was the consolidation of the Hindu vote. The BJP received 37.4 per cent vote in 2019; roughly 35 per cent was Hindu. Compared to 2014, BJP's vote went up in all caste categories, including Dalits. Muslims can play an important electoral role only if the Hindu vote is sufficiently caste-cleaved. Analytically, Hindu consolidation and Muslim irrelevance are two sides of the same electoral coin. If Hindu consolidation goes further, Muslims will become electorally even more irrelevant. We can't still be sure this would happen. But even if Hindu electoral consolidation remains at the current level, India's Muslims would need the judiciary's counter-majoritarianism to safeguard their interests. If the judiciary bows to the executive and legislature, supporting majoritarian logic, Jinnah's fears will be affirmed, Ambedkar's constitutional optimism nullified, and Nehru's prediction about a "festering sore" might also come true. Production of Muslim helplessness is most unlikely to strengthen India, or its polity.

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HIMANSHU GUPTA

THE SWACHH BHARAT Mission is being executed by two different ministries — the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation for rural areas and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for urban areas. In the rural areas, the major challenge was to change the mindset of the populace so that they would start using household toilets rather than defecate in open areas. As majority of the households did not have toilets in their homes, the main component of Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) was to construct household latrines and to focus on information, education and communication (IEC) activities. The need for a dedicated sewerage network is less in rural areas as the toilets are connected with in-house soak pits. Domestic waste in rural areas is also managed in a much better manner as it is segregated at the household level and a majority of it is used in the fields. Thus, improving the cleanliness level in a rural area is much less complex than in an urban set up. An urban area faces two major challenges — disposal of solid waste and sewerage/liquid waste. Disposal of solid waste has three key components. First, waste collection, then transfer of the waste, and lastly, proper disposal at the landfill site. The task of waste collection and its transfer to the landfill site requires both manpower as well as an efficient transportation system. The segregation of

SWACHH BHARAT IN THE CITY

Urban areas require a different approach to end open defecation

waste can either be at the source or at the landfill. Segregation at source is more economical. At the landfill, it is done by either using high-end segregation plants or manual conveyors. In most urban areas, disposal of solid waste is primarily the responsibility of municipalities. However, these municipalities are not equipped with the manpower, financial resources and technology for the task. Most of them are dependent upon the state governments for resources. These municipalities do not have sufficient human resources in terms of engineers or sanitation staff to manage the waste. Landfill site management is very poor due to lack of technical know-how. The second challenge is to manage sewerage in urban areas. Merely constructing toilets cannot solve the problem as these areas require proper sewerage network. The soak pit system that works in rural areas cannot work in urban areas due to a space crunch and increasing population density. The job of laying the sewerage network is again distributed between the state's public health engineering department and the municipalities. If we look at strategy adopted by the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), its main focus is on the construction of individual household toilets, community toilets, public urinals and IEC activities. The funds earmarked for solid waste management are minimal. Similarly,

there is limited provision of funds for laying the sewerage networks. The strategy used for Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) will not yield results in the urban mission. Hence, there is a need for revamping the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) wherein the focus is on solid waste and sewer management. The ministry must ask the state governments to assess their capabilities in waste handling. Recurring funds must be provided for collection of waste and its disposal. A window may be given to municipalities for upgrading their capabilities to augment their revenue collection. Separate funds must be given for the development of landfill sites. Best possible practices for waste collection across key cities must be studied and emulated. Adopting a piecemeal approach for constructing toilets and litter bins will not solve the systemic issue of waste disposal in cities. Unless we are able to lift the waste from the streets systematically, cleanliness will not have any meaning. The success of the Swachh Bharat Mission depends not only on changing the mindset, but, also on changing in the way waste is disposed of by the municipalities and the state governments.

The writer is secretary, planning and investment, Government of Arunachal Pradesh. Views are personal

NOVEMBER 13, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO



**AKALI UNITY**  
IF THE FORMULA hammered out by the Akali Dal's seven-member committee appointed by the head priests is acceptable to other parties, there is every possibility of the Akali Dal remaining united. Six of the seven members of the committee met in New Delhi for over two hours to consider the question of electoral alliance with other parties. Only Jagdev Singh Talwandi, president of the Akali Dal, was absent. According to the formula worked out in the morning, the Akali Dal will contest seven of the 13 Lok Sabha seats in Punjab and the remaining six will be left for the alliance parties. The seven seats which the Akali party proposes to contest are Sangrur, Bhatinda

(Reserved), Ropar (Reserved), Ludhiana, Faridkot, Patiala and Tarn Taran. **IRAN'S DEMAND**  
ABOLHASSAN BANI-SADR, RECENTLY put in charge of Iran's foreign ministry by Ayatollah Khomeini, told French radio interviewers "no compromise, no negotiation, is possible", over Iran's demand that the US extradite the ousted Shah to stand trial for his life, reports AP. Bani-Sadr summoned all foreign ambassadors to his office in Teheran on Monday to urge them to ask their governments to persuade the US to extradite the deposed Shah to stand trial in Iran. "Mr Bani Sadr told the envoys the Iranian demand was both logical

and reasonable," a foreign ministry spokesman told the Associated Press in Nicosia by telephone. **SHEKHAR'S PROPHECY**  
THE JANATA PARTY President Chandra Shekhar forecast that the coalition caretaker government would break before the ensuing Lok Sabha elections. Chandra Shekhar said in Bombay that Congress leaders were beginning to realise that they would not be a factor to reckon with in the upcoming elections if they associated with the Lok Dal. Many did not believe his earlier prediction about the disintegration of the Lok Dal, "which is now coming true", Chandra Shekhar said.

# 13 THE IDEAS PAGE

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"At a time of great confrontation and mistrust in the subcontinent, Pakistan has taken a major step towards peace by opening the Kartarpur Corridor in Punjab's Narowal district."  
—DAWN

# In Ayodhya, either justice or peace

Supreme Court's offer of a five-acre plot elsewhere to compensate for the demolition of the Babri mosque is charity by the privileged to the underprivileged



IRENA AKBAR

WE KNEW IT was coming. We knew it since May 23, when the BJP was re-elected to power with a bigger majority than the previous general election. We knew that the BJP would not miss this most opportune moment in history to complete the campaign that first brought it to national prominence: The construction of the Ram Mandir on the ground where the Babri Masjid once stood.

This knowledge, or apprehension, was born not of a dream. But of hard facts that played out in the first tenure of the Narendra Modi-led government. A tenure marked by a spate of unpunished lynchings of Muslims, unchecked anti-Muslim rhetoric of BJP politicians, and an unending anti-Muslim narrative peddled by the media, that kept the community in the news on one pretext or the other, be it beef or "love jihad" or "Bharat Mata ki Jai" or dead Muslim men like Aurangzeb and Jinnah.

After May 23, the BJP re-launched its Hindutva agenda with a renewed zeal. A zeal boosted by the party's re-election despite the failure to deliver on economic development, proving without doubt, at least to the Muslim citizen, that Hindutva was the BJP's only attraction for its voters.

With the nation's mood firmly in control, it was time for the BJP to get down to serious business. To grow beyond wielding public opinion through news television, or giving a free pass to mob violence against Muslims. To put the spirit of Hindutva to the letter. To write the agenda subtly in law. And thus, the first assignment of the BJP's current tenure was to pass the Triple Talaq Bill, on July 30. Less than a week later, on August 5, Parliament struck down Article 370, snatching away the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir, and locking down the Valley indefinitely. The swift progression from one milestone to another, amidst the implementation of the NRC in Assam, signalled that the next stop could be building the Ram Mandir.

The Supreme Court wrapped up hearing the 70-year-old title suit in 40 days and announced its verdict, giving the whole of the disputed land to the Hindus to build a temple. With this one stroke, it put the final full-stop to the story of the gradual, state-and-court-sanctioned conversion of mosque into temple — from the illegal placement of idols inside the mosque and disallowing Muslim prayer there in 1949 to unlocking the gates in order to give Hindu devotees access inside the mosque in 1986 to demolishing the mosque in 1992 and building a makeshift, functioning temple at the site a few months later.

We knew that the end to the long story was now finally in sight. In the unofficial Hindu Rashtra, its time had come. And yet, my preparedness could not stop me from being overwhelmed with grief when the verdict was being read out on TV. Similar to the grief felt over the death of a terminally-ill patient, Muslims felt a quiet, resigned sadness over a verdict that they knew would not go their way.

The sadness was compounded by the conviction that the verdict should have gone our



CR Sasikumar

way. That we were stronger claimants of victory. Not the chest-thumping victory of gain. But a sombre victory of recovering a loss. The loss of the physical structure of the masjid, the loss of lives in the bloody aftermath of its demolition, the loss of faith in the secular foundations of the country. The recovery of this loss would have spelt justice for Muslims.

But Muslims knew all too well that justice for them in the Court could mean injustice for them on the street in the form of possible retaliatory violence by Hindu right-wing groups. Justice would then have come at the cost of peace. On the other hand, losing the claim to the title suit would greatly reduce the possibility of violence by the other side and ensure peace.

In an ideal situation, justice and peace go hand in hand. But in majoritarian India, Muslims knew that they would get either justice or peace. In recent months, prominent Muslims talked of withdrawing claim to the site provided no fresh cases of other disputed sites are opened and Muslims are allowed to pray at mosques under the ASI. Would I now be allowed to pray on any day of the week and at any of the five times during the day in the mosque inside the Taj Mahal complex?

It would have been best had Muslims won the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit and then handed over ownership of

It would have been best had Muslims won the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit and then handed over ownership of the land. That would have been a win-win: Hindus would get the land that they attach to their faith; Muslims would get justice for their masjid. That would have gone a long way in correcting Hindu misperceptions of Muslims. But the possibility of such a scenario, born of a tiny flicker of hope in the judiciary, fell apart on November 9.

the land to Hindus in all humility. That would have been a win-win: Hindus would get the land that they attach to their faith; Muslims would get justice for their masjid which was criminally demolished on December 6, 1992. That would have gone a long way in correcting Hindu misperceptions of Muslims. But the possibility of such a scenario, born of a tiny flicker of hope in the judiciary, fell apart on November 9.

The Supreme Court verdict has guaranteed peace but denied justice to Muslims. Let us not forget, Muslims are at the forefront of maintaining that peace, and the community must be lauded for its patience and restraint in the face of repeated provocations from the state, the mob and the media over the last five years. And finally, betrayal by its last bastion of hope, the Supreme Court, on November 9.

One may ask if the apex court's offer of a five-acre plot elsewhere to compensate for the demolition of the mosque isn't justice. Charity is not a synonym of justice. Or of closure. Charity is given by the privileged group to the underprivileged group. Thank you, India, for reminding Muslims that privilege can only belong to the majority in a majoritarian state.

The writer is an entrepreneur and a freelance contributor

# When siblings part

End of alliance with Shiv Sena speaks of BJP's recent propensity to convert friends into foes, once a Congress hallmark



GIRISH KUBER

TIRED OF HIS wife's constant bickering, a husband loses his cool and tells her, "I won't mind killing myself, but I will make you a widow". This popular anecdote, that speaks about a section of the argumentative Marathi *manos*, also sums up the Shiv Sena's — that claims to be the custodian of Marathi interests — current predicament. The Sena may have been successful in robbing its senior partner, the BJP, of the chance to be in office in Maharashtra for the time being. But in the bargain, it has also exposed itself to an existential challenge. The political situation in Maharashtra also indicates how history repeats itself. In the 1980s and 1990s, it was anti-Congressism which brought political forces of all hues together, that has now been replaced by anti-BJPism.

First, about the Shiv Sena's misadventure. Though the Sena-BJP stayed loyal to each other for nearly three decades, of late there were indications that major fissures were developing in the saffron alliance. The alliance was also showing signs of fatigue, which would otherwise have been described as normal in any relationship. But what was not normal in this case was the unwillingness of the now-senior partner, the BJP, to accept the reality. The BJP kept on painting a picture that everything was normal and ignored the Sena's signals asking for "better treatment" (read a better deal in the alliance). Snubbed consistently by the BJP, the Sena was exasperated. Signs of its desperation became visible after the election results were out. The Sena was gleeful after the verdict, which had considerably weakened the BJP. However, it ignored the fact that the election outcome had weakened the Sena even more. The party thought of playing the role of the Big Brother, which it had conceded to the BJP. Hence, its demand for the chief minister's post. It was naive for the Sena to expect that the BJP would give up the top post when the former's numbers were little more than half of that of the latter. In the 288-member House, the BJP is the single-largest party with 105 MLAs while the Sena has 56. The Congress and NCP have 44 and 54 MLAs.

The situation offers only one option: Two v/s three. In other words, either BJP-Sena have to stay together to stake a claim or the other two — Congress and NCP — need one of the saffron siblings supporting them to reach the required number. That saffron sibling can only be Sena since there is no way for the BJP to accommodate the Congress or the NCP. So, taking a simplistic view of the situation, the Sena

did what it should not have done.

It dared the BJP and dreamt of leading the state with the Congress and NCP in tow. But politics is not just about arithmetic, it's also a lot about chemistry. The latter can change the former but the reverse is always less likely. As a result, the Sena caught itself hanging between the devil and deep sea as the Congress refused to sign on the dotted line. Completely unmindful of the Congress's machinations, the Sena took its support for granted and went to stake claim only to realise there is no one to support it.

On the other hand, two politicians played their game astutely — Sonia Gandhi and Sharad Pawar. First, Pawar actually did nothing but his sweet talk misled the Sena. Pawar indicated his willingness to support the Sena provided it gets the Congress on board. While doing that, though he took a high-moral ground citing an alliance with the Congress, the reality is that he knew that numbers are such that the NCP's support alone isn't enough to break the ice. On the other hand, Sonia Gandhi took her own time and refused to succumb to pressure from the Congress's state satraps who were eager to join hands with the "communal" Sena. The alliance-in-the-making, Sonia must have realised, would have helped the NCP rather than the Congress. As a result, the Congress's letter of support never came and the Sena was left in the lurch.

But this high-voltage drama also signifies the BJP's ability to convert friends into foes, the trait the Congress was once known to have. Ironic as it may sound, it took the Congress more than 60 years to reach this stage while the BJP has managed to earn this distinction in less than a decade. In the 1980s and 1990s, it was the Congress that every other political party loved to hate. Now it's the BJP that triggers such repulsive feelings amongst other parties — friends as well as competitors. In the end, the Congress and NCP may not have extended their support to the Sena, but the anti-BJPism of all these parties was the glue that brought them together.

The results from Maharashtra, along with the Haryana assembly elections, also have another message — to focus on the real issues facing the people. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP chief Amit Shah had pinned great hopes on Maharashtra considering its size and importance. The duo had held more than a dozen rallies in the states. But the BJP's performance was certainly underwhelming, to say the least. However, that should not be the BJP's sole cause for concern. It should worry about the fact that it lost the important constituencies that Modi-Shah had singled out and had campaigned vigorously in.

In the end, the stalemate in Maharashtra will force everyone to get off their high-horse and introspect. More importantly, it's bound to compel the BJP to soften its rhetoric and start addressing real issues like the state of the economy and growing unemployment.

The writer is editor, Lokstatta



FIROZ BAKHT AHMED

# After the verdict

Muslims need to shun opportunist leaders and shed congealed stereotypes

MOST MUSLIMS HAVE welcomed the Ayodhya verdict as it is a balanced scorecard. The Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute, the Muslims have missed the bus.

The Muslims have always maintained that once a mosque exists, it will always remain till the Day of Judgment — the house of Allah can't be shifted. That is true in a religious sense, but in view of the circumstances, some settlement was needed. As the Muslims have their Mecca, Christians have Bethlehem, Jews have Jerusalem and Buddhists have Bodhi Gaya, the Hindus too must have their most important shrine. Muslims, most of the time, remained occupied with legalities. They couldn't properly process that their lives and lived realities are attached with the Hindus. If a matter like this was not sorted out amicably, it would have harmed the Muslim cause more than anything else.

We are not living in the Mughal times, nor in the Congress era. The RSS and its political wing, the BJP, are in power. The Muslims should have changed their outlook but, instead, they kept distancing themselves from these platforms. Not only this, a lot of vitriol is being poured against the Sangh Parivar. It is high time that the Muslims stop casting as-

persions on the RSS and BJP — especially during elections when many from the community make appeals to vote for the BJP candidate. In a democracy, a capable candidate, no matter from which party he or she belongs to, should be supported.

Even I used to think that the RSS, Jana Sangh and the BJP are against the Muslims. But at some point, I thought of interacting with them and found that this was my misconception. It was based on a misunderstanding. The RSS is a nationalist organisation that has its own strict set of rules and wants Muslims to do well. In fact, whenever Mohan Bhagwat, the RSS chief, has spoken of Muslims, he has been well-meaning — he has often said, publicly, that if the Muslim community is backward, India will also remain backward. He expressed his opinion too — alongside PM Modi — regarding the Ram temple judgment, and, said that it was a balanced one: Nobody should thump one's chest in victory or shed tears on defeat.

Some of the baggage Indian Muslims carry is due to the perception they believe the majority community has of them. That

perception is, in fact, inaccurate, made up of half-truths and cooked-up charges. The other burden is a result of their own inaction, which has led to the emergence of opportunist interlocutors — clerics and personal law boards. Muslims must come out of the control of these hypocritical, rigid clerics who lead them astray.

If Muslims want to progress educationally, socially and economically, they must now try to get out of the clutches of the rabble-rousing representatives or faux secularists — these are the very people responsible for their misery since Partition. Around 200 million Muslims have to exist in India with their non-Muslim brethren; they have to live in amity with them to take India towards success and glory.

PM Modi, who tells them to hold the Quran in one hand and a computer in the other, has been their well-wisher. However, Opposition leaders have been misleading them. It is time Muslims stopped being misled by such leaders who keep instigating the community against the RSS and the BJP.

The writer is the chancellor of Maulana Azad National Urdu University

there are also issues with its ally, AJSU, in Jharkhand. But for the Gandhis, it seems that their personal grudge against the Thackerays matters more than the party's interest.

S Bhalerao, Mumbai

## CRIME & TREATMENT

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Treat the disease' (IE, November 12). Paedophilic tendencies should be treated with compassion and sympathy. One in 35 men show such a tendency. They should be given counselling and administered anti-depressants. The government should take initiatives to accommodate the patients and ensure good treatment. It is important to treat the disease, not merely punish the diseased. This way we can reduce crimes and abuse towards children.

Muhammad Ansari, Kerala

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### DEBATING A SHIFT

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'A crop for clean air' (IE, November 11). Though the solutions suggested by the writer seem simple, they will not be easy to implement. The real problem is not of subsidies provided for paddy or the high procurement rate for paddy but the uncertainties of the market system. Farmers do not have much faith in the market, especially when that involves a shift to an uncertain crop. Schemes like providing incentives are not going to change the mindset of farmers.

Gaurav Deshmukh via e-mail

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'A crop for clean air' (IE, November 11). A major hindrance in promoting crop diversification is that the MSP for a crop doesn't account for ecological costs of agriculture like soil salinisation, overuse of pesticides, groundwater exploitation. I agree with the writer that we need to remove distorting subsidies. What is also needed is a predictable export policy, promotion of contract farming, and expansion of extension programmes and outreach to help farmers make better informed choices.

Tanvi Singh, Jalandhar

### UNSURE AGAIN

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Cong closes the door on Sena' (IE, November 12). The Congress's dithering in Maharashtra has dismayed its supporters. After MP and Rajasthan, the loss of another big state would be a huge blow to the BJP. Moreover, the friction with the Sena is already creating problems for the BJP —

### 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.