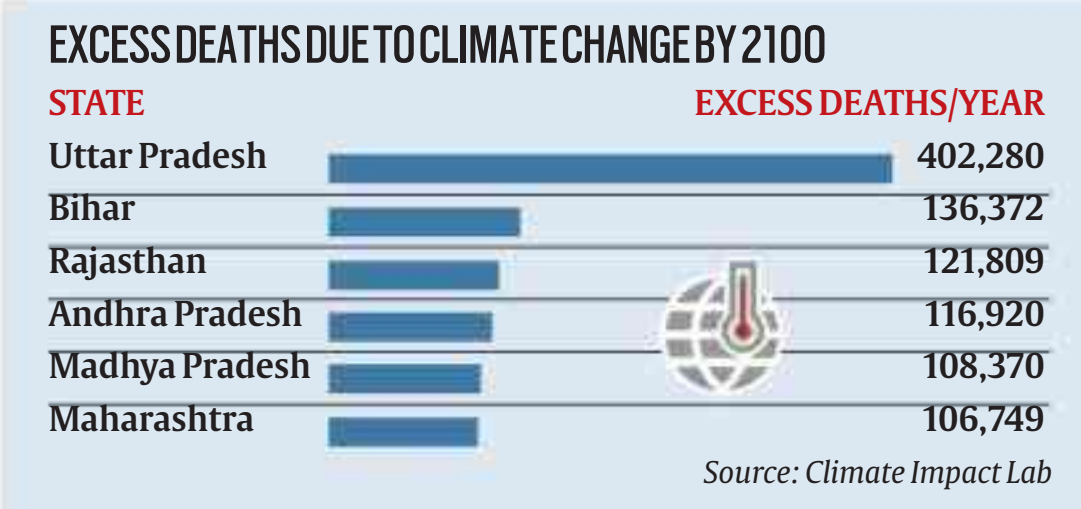


TELLING NUMBERS

Excess deaths due to climate change, projected state by state



A NEW study has projected that 1.5 million more Indians may die per year from extreme heat due to climate change by 2100, and that India's energy use will more than double in the next 20 years, driven largely by fossil fuels. If emissions continue to be as high as they are at present, India will see a death rate of about 60 per 100,000 by 2100, the study says. This projected death rate is double the current death rate from oral cancer in India, which is the most common cancer in the country. The study, 'Climate Change and Heat-Induced Mortality in India', was conducted by the Climate Impact Lab in collaboration with the Tata Centre for Development at the University of Chicago.

It says the average annual temperature in India is expected to increase from 24°C to 28°C. The number of extremely hot days (above 35°C) across India is expected to increase by over eight times, from 5.1 per year in 2010 to 42.8 in 2100. By 2050, there are expected to be 15.8 extremely hot days a year.

The National Capital Region is projected to see 22 times more extremely hot days and more than 23,000 cli-

mate-related deaths annually by 2100 in a high-emission scenario. Odisha is projected to see the highest increase in the number of extremely hot days, at about 30 times more than what it is today. Punjab is projected to experience 85 extremely hot days a year, the highest among all states.

Overall, the six states of Uttar Pradesh (4,02,280), Bihar (1,36,372), Rajasthan (1,21,809), Andhra Pradesh (1,16,920), Madhya Pradesh (1,08,370) and Maharashtra (1,06,749) are projected to account for over 64 per cent of the heat-related deaths.

While the projected death rate in a high-emission scenario is 60 per 100,000 by 2100, mitigation of emissions will bring down the death rate to roughly about 10 per 100,000, the study says. According to the report, the risks associated with extreme temperatures vary around the world and are dependent upon the wealth of a country. For instance, the impact of a single hot day on the annual mortality rate of a wealthy and warm city such as Houston, US, will be 0.4 deaths per 100,000. The same will be double for a warm and poorer city such as Delhi, at 0.8 deaths per 100,000.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

What next in Maharashtra?

Term of current government ends tomorrow, with no clarity on who will form the next. With BJP and Shiv Sena divided over power-sharing, a look at the constitutional provisions for government formation

SANDEEP ASHAR
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 7

THE CLOCK is ticking for the outgoing Maharashtra government, which needs to step down by Saturday, November 9, when the term of this Assembly ends.

It has been two weeks since the results of the Assembly election were announced, but no party has staked claim yet to form a government. While the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance has a clear majority, they have been wrangling over power-sharing and the Chief Minister's post, held by BJP's Devendra Fadnis in the outgoing government.

Usually the moment an election is won or lost, the Chief Minister resigns and is then asked by the Governor to continue as 'caretaker' until a new government is in place. The spotlight is therefore on Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari.

How do things stand at the moment?

On Thursday, Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni met the Governor to "advise the Governor on the legal and the constitutional options besides precedents available before him to explore all the possibilities regarding the next government's formation."

While the existing Legislative Assembly will cease to exist post November 9, legal experts noted that there is no binding that the government should be in place by that day. The Election Commission of India published a notification on October 25, convening the newly elected Assembly.

What is the Governor's role in such circumstances?

According to sources, Governor Koshyari has already begun holding consultations with representatives of major political parties regarding government formation. On Thursday, a BJP ministers' delegation held discussions with him.

Sources said the Governor would be expected to go as per an order of preference set out in the Sarkaria Commission recommendations, which have also been ratified by the Supreme Court. By the order of preference, the Governor can invite 1) a pre-poll alliance of parties; 2) invite the single largest party



BJP leaders at Raj Bhavan on Thursday, after meeting the Governor. Nirmal Harindran

which stakes a claim to form government; 3) invite a post-poll alliance of parties, with all the partner in the coalition joining the government or 4) invite a post-poll alliances of parties, with some becoming part of the government and some supporting from outside.

The Opposition and even Shiv Sena leaders have been demanding that the Governor invite the BJP, the single largest party, to form the government. So far the BJP's strategists have been reluctant to stake claim without the Shiv Sena's support. Incidentally the Governor can only summon the new House for the first sitting only after a new government is sworn in and the Cabinet has suggested a suitable date. The process of swearing-in of the newly elected members and appointment of the new Speaker can be held thereafter.

Have there been precedents?

Maharashtra's current political stalemate is not unlike that in 2009, when the Congress-NCP alliance, despite winning an election, had delayed government formation for 13 days due to a power-sharing tussle. Then Governor SC Jamir even had to step in.

Both parties eventually buried their differences to share power.

How do the present numbers stack up?

Out of 288 Assembly seats, the BJP has the highest number (105) but is nowhere near the halfway mark of 144. The Shiv Sena has 56 seats. The NCP and the Congress have 54 and 44 seats, respectively. While the BJP has been reaching out to independents and smaller parties, it still doesn't have the numbers to form the government without the Sena's support. And while the Sena has been eyeing the CM's post, it is not in a position to form the government without the BJP either, unless both the Congress and the NCP prop up a government formed by the Sena.

What happens if any of these parties is invited to form the government?

Any government formation will have to involve the BJP or the Shiv Sena, or both. Once any formation is sworn in, it will need to pass the floor test, which will reveal whether the executive enjoys the confidence of the legislature as mandated by the Constitution. In the floor test, the person sworn in as the CM

has to prove that s/he enjoys the confidence of the House. If the confidence motion fails, the Chief Minister has to resign. If more than one person stake claim to form the government and the majority is not clear, the Governor has the powers to call a special session to assess who has the majority. The date for the floor test is decided by the Governor in consultation with the new government.

In 2014, the BJP, which had 122 members, had passed the floor test on a voice vote amid din and controversy, becoming the only instance in the state's history when a minority government was sworn in. The Shiv Sena, then the principal Opposition party, later joined the Fadnis government.

If no government can be formed, is President's rule likely?

Article 356 of the Constitution provides for the imposition of President's Rule in a state in "case of failure of the constitutional machinery in the state". As per the constitutional stipulation, it can be imposed in cases where 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 the Constitution.

In Maharashtra's current case, imposition of the President's rule is still a remote possibility. According to legal experts, Governor Koshyari would first need to exhaust all options and possibilities of government formation before making any such recommendation. He will first have to hold consultations with all parties to examine if any one of them is in a position to cobble together the numbers required. Only after he is satisfied that no party or alliance can form a stable government would he recommend imposition of President's rule.

In the event that the BJP is unable to form the government, both the Congress and the NCP camps in the state have dropped several hints that they would be willing to prop up a government formed by the Shiv Sena. In Maharashtra's 59-year-long history, President's rule has only been imposed twice — for 112 days between February and June 1980, and for 33 days between September and October 2014.

TIP FOR READING LIST

ARE THERE REALLY MANY WORLDS?

CONCEPTS OF quantum mechanics have been at the centre of much recent discourse, thanks largely to the Marvel Cinematic Universe and partly to the quantum breakthrough claimed by Google. The plots of many of the Marvel films hinge on the Many Worlds Theory, which states that if a number of outcomes are possible from an event into time, all of those events will take place along separate timelines that branch out of that event — simply put, many worlds existing simultaneously. Quantum computing works on the principle that a bit of information can exist as 0 and 1 at the same time, and on the separate probabilities of multiple states existing. It is a concept that appears so weird, even to scientists, that many of them limit themselves to doing the mathematics of these probabilities.

California Institute of Technology, has now proposed that if you measure multiple possible outcomes, it means that these multiple universes do exist. "We just have to accept that there is more than one of us in the universe. There are many, many Sean Carrolls. Many of every one of us." That is the idea Carroll explains in his new book, *Something Deeply Hidden: Quantum Worlds and the Emergence of Spacetime*.

"As quantum books go, Carroll's is exceptionally clear, conversational and enjoyable. He has a knack for linguistic lubrication that helps make some highly technical concepts reasonably smooth to swallow. His is by far the most articulate and cogent defense of the Many-Worlds view in book-length depth with a close connection to the latest ongoing research (in the arena known as quantum foundations)," *Science News* writes in its review.



Sean Carroll, a physicist at the

FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

Delhi smoke, Punjab water: the tradeoff

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, NOVEMBER 7

A 10-year-old Punjab law is being blamed for contributing to the air pollution over Delhi and surrounding areas. The law led to the sowing and transplantation of the summer paddy crop to be delayed by about a fortnight, and moved the harvesting season to end-October and early November — a time when the moist air and largely inactive wind systems cause particulate matter and gases from burning paddy stubble to hang in the atmosphere. This air is carried by northwesterly winds towards Delhi, which lies to the southeast of Punjab.

What is The Punjab Preservation of Subsoil Water Act, 2009?

The law, brought by the SAD-BJP government of Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal, aimed at conserving groundwater by mandatorily delaying the transplanting of paddy to beyond June 10, when the most severe phase of evapotranspiration (transfer of water from land to the atmosphere through evaporation

from the soil and plant transpiration) is over. Farmers were forbidden from sowing paddy before May 10, and transplanting it before June 10. Haryana has a similar law.

Why was the law enacted?

There has been serious concern over the drastic fall in the water table in Punjab. Paddy is procured by the government at minimum support price (MSP), and leads to over-exploitation of underground aquifers, as a very large number of tubewells (more than 14 lakh in 2015-16) running on free power pump out virtually endless amounts of water.

The Punjab State Farmers Commission (PSFC), led by the late Dr G S Kalkat, pushed for the law — he suggested it to Capt Amarinder Singh's Congress government in 2006, and followed up with the Badal government that took over in 2007. Despite farmers being a formidable votebank, Dr Kalkat was able to convince the government that early transplanting of rice (before mid-June) resulted in unsustainable withdrawals of groundwater with the monsoon still far, temperatures very high, and the evapotranspiration rate (ETR) at its peak.

What is the law's link with air pollution?

Farmers' organisations say late sowing and transplanting delays the harvesting as well (it is end-October by the time operations end), and they are left with a very small window to prepare their fields for the next (wheat) crop. In this situation, setting the stubble ablaze is a quick-fix solution. By this time, temperatures have started to fall, and a combination of atmospheric and meteorological conditions ensure that the smoke cannot disperse easily. A part of the smoke from the farm fires is carried by westerly winds towards the NCR and further down the Indo-Gangetic plain. Last year, the date for paddy transplantation under the Act was pushed to June 20; it was advanced this year to June 13.

But does the Act really help conserve groundwater?

A study, 'Impact of Preservation of Subsoil Water Act on Groundwater Depletion: The Case of Punjab, India' (*Environmental Management*, 2016) by Amarnath Tripathi, Ashok K Mishra, and Geetanjali Verma, reported "a robust effect of the 2009 Act on re-

ducing groundwater depletion". Between 2008-09 and 2012-13, the average annual rate of decline of groundwater in Punjab was 0.7 metres, less than the 0.9 m during the period 2000-01 to 2008-09, the study found.

What is Punjab's underground water situation currently?

According to a report in May 2019 by the Central Ground Water Board under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, 105 out of 138 blocks are in the dark zone. At current rates of depletion, good quality water in the first aquifer up to a depth of 100 m shall be exhausted in 10 years, and the entire subsurface water resource could be finished in the next 22 years.

Is Punjab willing to do away with the subsoil water preservation law?

No. The government argues that the main reason for the declining water table is the cultivation of paddy, which Punjab produces for the central pool. Stubble burning can be managed, especially if the Centre helps with money to compensate farmers — but dry aquifers cannot be recharged, it says.

Who are the Brus in Tripura camps, and why are they not returning to Mizoram?

DEBRAJ DEB
KANCHANPUR (TRIPURA), NOVEMBER 7

SINCE OCTOBER 1, six members of the Reang or Bru community have reportedly died in relief camps in Tripura, after the Centre decided to stop food supplies and cash dole. They were among 32,000 Brus living in these camps since 1997, when they fled their homes in Mizoram.

On Thursday, the Tripura government announced that it would restore food supplies, leading to the Brus withdrawing a road blockade they had set up for eight days. The restoration of supplies, however, is only until a deadline of November 30, within which the Brus have to decide whether they will accept a package for repatriation to Mizoram.

Who are the Brus?

Bru or Reang is a community indigenous to Northeast India, living mostly in Tripura, Mizoram and Assam. In Tripura, they are recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable

Tribal Group. In Mizoram, they have been targeted by groups that do not consider them indigenous to the state. In 1997, following ethnic clashes, nearly 37,000 Brus fled Mamit, Kolasib and Lunglei districts of Mizoram and were accommodated in relief camps in Tripura. Since then, 5,000 have returned to Mizoram in eight phases of repatriation, while 32,000 still live in six relief camps in North Tripura.

What have they been surviving on?

Under a relief package announced by the Centre, a daily ration of 600 grams rice was provided to every adult Bru person and 300 grams to every minor. Some salt too was given to each family. The package also provided for a daily cash dole of Rs 5 per adult and Rs 2.5 for every minor, besides essentials like soap, slippers and mosquito nets over various periods.

Most of the migrants would sell a part of their rice and use this money, along with the cash dole, to buy various supplies including medicines. Most of their vegetable supplies would come from wild growth



Politician and activist Pradyot Deb Barman meets Bru refugees during their protest, now withdrawn. PTI

nearby, where some of them have been practising slash and burn cultivation.

They live in makeshift bamboo thatched huts, without permanent power supply, a safe drinking water supply system, health centres, or schools.

Why are they still here?

In June 2018, community leaders from the Bru camps signed an agreement in Delhi with the Centre and the two state governments, providing for repatriation in Mizoram. But most camp residents rejected the terms of the agreement as "insufficient". Only 5,000 have gone back and the ongoing ninth phase has succeeded in sending back only about 700 of the remaining 32,000. The camp residents say the package does not guarantee their safety in Mizoram. They have demanded resettlement in cluster villages, among other things.

In Tripura, scion of the erstwhile royal family Pradyot Deb Barman and others have called for resettling the Brus in the state. No government organisation, however, has taken up such a discourse.

Why did the Centre stop supplies?

After a series of meetings over repatriation failed to make headway, the government suspended food supplies. It offered a final package, which expires on November 30: Rs 25,000 for each family that accepts

the package and gets ready to be repatriated within two days. This did not find any takers either.

Rations had been stopped twice in the past, including in October 2018. These decisions had come right before a phase of repatriation was about to start.

What happened after the move?

Six persons including four infants reportedly died in the camps, which were claimed to be due to starvation. The local administration has confirmed only four deaths and have not confirmed that these were caused by starvation. A huge group of Brus blockaded the streets in protest, which ended after the state government stepped in with its assurance.

Did they get medical care, and what caused the deaths?

At least three Primary Health Centres — Dasda, Gachirampara and Anandbazaar — are close to the camps. Only one of the Brus was treated at Dasda PHC, but it was too late. Bru leader Apeto Sawibunga said the

families could not afford to go to the hospital after the government dole was stopped.

The local administration initially claimed two persons died due to "unknown disease". Since then, officials have conceded four have died. Amid an outcry, authorities have exhumed the body of a 65-year-old woman for a postmortem. A senior official told *The Indian Express*: "We have done post-mortem examination of two deceased persons. We cannot say anything for sure now. Samples were sent to Agartala Government Medical College and the forensic laboratory." Medical officers at Kanchanpur Sub-Divisional Hospital, where the postmortem was done on two deceased Brus, refused to speak about their findings.

What happens now?

The Brus plan to lobby with the government in Delhi. A four-member Bru delegation headed by Apeto Sawibunga were scheduled to fly to Delhi on Thursday and hoped to meet Home Minister Amit Shah. Asked if they have an appointment, Sawibunga conceded that they do not.



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Closing a door

By not joining RCEP, India sends signal of shrinking possibilities — at home and abroad



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

INDIA'S SUSPENSION OF its bid to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership should be an opportune moment to take stock of India's place in the world economy. Both the supporters of the decision and those disappointed by it are, in fact, arguing on the same ground. For supporters of the RCEP, the decision not to join it seems like an admission of defeat, an acknowledgement that India is simply not in a position to compete strongly in the global economy, without risking serious trade imbalances and domestic economic disruption. Those opposing it are also, for the most part, saying the same thing: India is not ready. The price of joining will be too high.

Most of us who, on balance, prefer freer trade must acknowledge how the global context has changed. It is true, as Macaulay once said, "free trade, one of the great blessings which a government can confer upon its people, is in every country unpopular." But if there is one lesson we need to learn from the last decade, it is that the political backlash against globalisation needs to be managed. If as sophisticated and historically open an economy as the United States can experience as deep a backlash against trade imbalances, why expect India to be any different? Indeed, there is a political case to be made for going slow and not setting yourself up for a backlash. Given the unanimity against the RCEP, Modi had no choice.

The relationship between trade and strategy needs to be rethought. The honest truth is that our enthusiasm for FTAs was often driven by strategy more than economics. During the 2000s, that was the flavour of thinking in India. We somehow thought that the strategic tail could wag the economic dog. But the idea that you can define strategic ambitions far in excess of your economic clout is deeply misplaced, and all our pretensions in that regard, like "Look East," now "Indo-Pacific", always had a ring of exuberant hollowness to them. You can bank on strategic narratives to solve economic problems only so much. In one sense, then, there is a nice modesty and consistency to the Swadeshi Jagran Manch vision of things. They don't want India dependent on foreign capital. They want India to grow from its own

savings. But nor do they have ambitions of a global footprint.

Given the political objections, and uncertain economics, not joining the RCEP may have been the right thing to do. But the incongruity of not joining is greater for Modi, because he wants all three things simultaneously: Dependence on foreign capital, and an exaggerated sense of India's power, and yet a recoiling from trade openness. You cannot do the third, without affecting the first two. The best thing Modi might have done for India is that he has made it clear that we are, in the end, a modest power with much to be modest about.

The economic gains from those FTAs did not turn out to be as great as India hoped, particularly in employment. Globally, there is no more room for nuanced thinking on the benefits of trade. The idea that trade agreements would, on their own, provoke domestic reform, turned out to be wishful thinking. There is no point denying that the current state of the economy, with its regulatory sclerosis, broken financial system, no serious investment in human capital, infrastructure constraints, is not competitive, and it is hard to see the prospect of the trade deficit correcting that. Reform has its own political economy dynamics that is not going to be easy to circumvent simply in the name of trade. So the risk of ending up in a worse equilibrium exists, where you have opening without reform.

There is also the changing outlook on China. A decade or so ago, when the RCEP talks started, the world was still a place where there was more confidence that the imperatives of economic integration and interdependence would lead China to a path of liberalisation and moderate its global ambitions. But China's own economic downturn, its turn to nationalism and authoritarianism, places a question mark over the nature of its outward economic engagement. It has a series of instruments with which to maintain its dominance for the foreseeable future, and unless you are sure you have a means of countering them, some prudence might be in order.

This prudence is not a decisive argument against joining. It could be balanced by two other considerations. First, the fact that other

Asian powers were quietly facilitating our joining suggests we will forego a loss in standing in the short run. Second, the fact is that there is no seriously new avenue available for trade liberalisation. We have closed off the South Asia route, given our relations with Pakistan. The protectionist sentiment that exists in the US, even beyond Trump, makes it unlikely that multilateral trade liberalisation is going to be an option anytime soon. An FTA with the US, another one of those bad faith arguments the government floats, is also a pipe dream. In any case, a trade agreement with the US or the EU will arguably come with even deeper regulatory intrusions into the Indian economy. So all things considered, even with attendant risks, the RCEP might have been worth it. But if our frank assessment is that we are not in a position to take advantage of the RCEP on the current terms, we should honestly admit that rather than engaging in wishful thinking, openness will solve our problems.

But opponents of the RCEP should acknowledge the truth. The RCEP has been stopped not because there is a coherent alternative vision of India's development in place. It has been stopped because the whole range of interests, from agriculture to industry, that have made domestic reform difficult have also come out against the RCEP. Don't convert India's global weakness into an ideological virtue. The truth is that India's domestic agenda of reform will, in most respects, need to be the same, RCEP or no RCEP: Cheaper logistics, better human capital, better governance, regulatory certainty, better banking, better forms of urbanisation and so forth. In fact, a more "swadeshi" agenda, ironically, needs even deeper reform since it requires more capacity building.

The consequences of going slow in the RCEP will unfold in time, and depend on what we do now. But the real worry in Modi's climbdown is not that he turned his back on the RCEP. It is that he is sending a clear signal that India's economy and politics is so fragile that we should not expect effective reform anytime soon.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express.

DOWN HOME STRETCH

Fund for stalled housing projects is a good idea. But kickstarting a virtuous cycle will need an enabling economic climate

ON WEDNESDAY, THE government approved the final structure of an Alternate Investment Fund (AIF) which will provide funding for stalled housing projects in some of the major metros in the country. That's a positive measure, which, with its promise of a multiplier effect, could help kickstart a sputtering economy. The proposed fund will have a corpus of Rs 25,000 crore to start with, with the government providing Rs 10,000 crore, while the State Bank of India and Life Insurance Corporation of India contribute the balance to ensure last mile funding for housing units worth less than Rs 2 crore in Mumbai and Rs 1.5 crore in the Delhi-NCR area and a few other metros and Rs 1 crore for other parts of the country. The government reckons that the corpus of the AIF would swell once other investors, such as sovereign wealth funds and pension funds besides banks and institutional investors, participate and unlock a good number of the 4.58 lakh housing units spread across 1,600 stalled projects in the country.

It is also good that the government has carried out design changes to the original proposal first announced in September this year, which restricted access to this fund only to projects which were at least 60 per cent complete, and were non-NPA and non-National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) projects, which meant that the original proposal would have been a non-starter. Instead, the government has specified that even projects which are now under the insolvency process but where liquidation has not been initiated could be eligible, provided they had a positive net worth. The intentions are no doubt good, yet it is not clear how some of the stalled projects, especially the NCLT ones, will be untangled with this condition linked to a positive net worth. During a previous downturn over a decade and a half ago, a group of housing finance firms and some developers had joined hands for completing some last mile projects, which yielded them dividends once the slowdown was reversed. But the scenario is different this time.

Many shadow banks or NBFCs which had also funded developers are now struggling with the snapping of liquidity support after the collateral impact of the IL&FS collapse. Coupled with that is the challenge of a huge inventory of unsold homes in some of India's major cities and the issue of demand, except perhaps in the affordable home category. An AIF featuring multiple investors will surely have to generate positive returns, which presupposes an experienced and professional team with more housing industry and operational experience and with adequate safeguard protection against fishing expeditions by investigative agencies looking to further expand their turf. But for a broader impact, it is important for the government to foster an enabling economic environment and repose far more trust in wealth creators, to get the economic engine firing again before these projects are completed, so that it becomes a virtuous cycle.

THREAT PERCEPTION

Tagore's Visva-Bharati will make history with a permanent police presence — a fallout of administration's own ineptitude

IN 2017, THE vice chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University had sought the help of two central ministers to have a tank installed on campus, ostensibly to strengthen the nationalist fibre of the student body. The ridiculous plan fizzled out. But in the east, another vice chancellor has succeeded in his slightly less ambitious quest for central armed police on his turf, the Visva-Bharati University in Tagore's Santiniketan. In his letter to the HRD ministry in October, Bidyut Chakrabarty had sought the induction of the Central Industrial Security Force, while commending their "steadfastness and commitment to the nation". Now, Visva-Bharati will be the first campus in India with a permanent police presence — in a polarised political climate, it may not be incidental that it is in an Opposition-ruled state. The university will pay the expenses, though in September, Chakrabarty had declined to pay arrears of the Seventh Pay Commission because it was in financial trouble.

That had sparked off unrest on campus. This year, there was also a confrontation over transfers, and a gherao by students following a 20 per cent hike in the cost of admission forms. But these are symptoms of administrative incapacity, and rather than a threat perception, amount to an admission that the vice chancellor's office is isolated from the university. A vice chancellor who needs protection from his own staff and students cannot possibly serve the institution well, or iron out points of friction. The function of a university administration is to nurture an environment of learning, in which students and teachers can think freely and collaborate to create fresh knowledge. A university fails its mandate if it becomes a place where teaching is a top-down process and students must be kept in line.

The modern university is a Western construct, and one of its fundamental beliefs is that it must be self-regulating, and not under the law and order apparatus of the state. Traditionally, the forces of royalty and parliaments were consciously kept off campus, because academic thought cannot flourish if it must be constantly mindful of the politics of the day. While many campuses worldwide have their own police, answerable to the administration, regular police cannot enter except at the request of the vice chancellor. This could be countenanced only in extreme circumstances — in recent times, there was much debate in Greece about violent anarchist movements sheltering in campuses, for instance. However, differences of opinion in Santiniketan scarcely qualify. It only indicates administrative ineptitude, and the need for a review and rethink at the top.

GOD'S OWN SENA

The private force mooted by the Catholic Church in Kerala may be a case of history repeating as farce

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH in Kerala wants to have its own private force, the Gabriel Sena — it says it wants it for crowd control. The plan is to enlist retired military and para-military men, who will become "guardians of faith and warriors of ideals". Many of the faithful, however, are wondering who this crowd is, that so scares the church. What are these "threats" to faith and ideals and how grave are they that the Church needs to rope in a private force? Could it be that the clergy feels under siege from the faithful themselves? In fact, in recent times, the laity has often been seen protesting against the clergy for what it perceives to be the latter's deviation from Christian ideals.

Six decades ago, the Catholic Church had raised a similar private force, the Christopher Sena, to safeguard its interests when the then Communist government introduced laws to reform land tenure and the education sector. Then, the Church had feared that the CPI-led government would legislate for a state takeover of its educational institutions and land. At its peak in 1959, the Christopher Sena, interestingly inspired by Spanish religious groups that rallied for General Franco against the Republicans, had a membership of a lakh. The Church and the Christopher Sena were at the forefront of the direct action movement — "the Liberation Struggle" — that led to the dismissal of the CPI government by the Centre.

Much has changed in Kerala since, and Gabriel is no Christopher if initial responses to the formation of the Sena are any indication. The hold of the clergy on the laity has surely weakened since the 1950s. Not surprisingly, on Thursday, the Church, following public criticism, shelved a meeting of the Sena planned for November 15.



YOGINDER K ALAGH

THE PROBLEM of periodic cyclones in the Arabian Sea, which cause havoc to agriculture in the western coastal states, has not received adequate attention because the formation of a government in Mumbai has become the overwhelming concern today. But misery in agriculture should not be ignored. Positive employment data from the organised sector should not be used to paper over the plight of small farmers and landless labourers. Ignoring the medium and long-term needs of agriculture can prove to be very expensive in a land and water-deficit regime. We anxiously await the Niti Aayog's efforts on the promised seven-year plan (policy) for water. In this context, I am reminded of a period in the Seventies that resonates with the current times.

In the second half of the mid-Sixties, India was going through a "ship to mouth" phase of grain shortage. There were large grain imports in the form of the PL 480 aid from the US. Indian scientists took the risk of importing the dwarf varieties of wheat from the IWRI (International Wheat Research Institute), Mexico. M S Swaminathan and other scientists of the ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research) helped in replicating the seeds here. But there was still considerable pessimism about the growth potential of Indian agriculture. W Paddock and P

SEEING A BLIND SPOT

Agriculture urgently needs higher resource allocation, policy support

Paddock of the conservative Hudson Institute in the US argued in *Famine 1975!* that "it will be beyond the US to keep famine out of India during 1970s".

In the late Sixties, it was the received wisdom from studies — amongst others by Keith Griffin — that the Green Revolution strategy would not impact small farms. Also, that such farms would not participate in diversified agriculture. This assessment was made by a variety of institutions and experts. Think tanks like the Hudson Institute, the social scientist Francine Frankel, the Bretten Woods institutions and the development studies experts, Paul Streeten and Michael Lipton — all had a dim view of India's agricultural prospects. Some argued that India did not even have medium-term growth prospects, since poor agriculture would lead to a wage goods constraint. The initial spurt of grain growth had petered out and the Green Revolution was seen as a misnomer. India's grain production, after reaching 108 million tonnes in 1971, was hovering between 101 and 104 million tonnes in the early Seventies. The World Bank and, in fact, even the Indian finance ministry (led by its then chief economic adviser, Manmohan Singh) said that India would not achieve its target of 125 million tonnes of grain by 1978/79 — the es-

timates ranged between 118 and 120 million tonnes instead.

It was at that time that planning in India focussed on resource allocation and policy support to agriculture. Priorities were set by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who saw food security as a central issue. This was the first job I was tasked with. The PM was clear: We must produce grain to feed ourselves. As the head of the powerful perspective planning division of the Planning Commission, I insisted we make conservative estimates about land reserves and productivity so that the resource allocation for agriculture — particularly irrigation — got high priority in the budget. We argued that if this was done, we could produce 125 million tonnes of grain in 1978/79, notwithstanding the World Bank's estimates. Indira Gandhi backed us with funds.

By 1978/79, India was producing 127 million tonnes and was a net exporter of grains. In 1979, at a seminar in Washington, I was asked by a World Bank Official how India had exceeded its target of foodgrain production. I told him that I was from Ahmedabad, where we always keep reserves.

The writer, a former union minister, is an economist



NOVEMBER 8, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

JANATA CANDIDATES
THE JANATA PARTY president, Chandra Shekhar, and eight former ministers have been renominated for the Lok Sabha elections. The prominent party candidates whose names figure in the list of 123 from seven states and two union territories finalised by the Central Election Committee are two former union ministers — Asoka Mehta, who replaces former prime minister Morarji Desai from Surat and Dinesh Singh, who will contest from Pratapgarh in Uttar Pradesh. Desai had announced his decision not to seek re-election immediately after his government fell. Pilo Mody, a Rajya Sabha member, will seek reelection from Godhra in Gujarat.

IOC STRIKE
THE AGITATING INDIAN Oil workmen are likely to call off their 14-day-old go-slow protest tomorrow to facilitate resumption of talks between the leaders of the nine unions and the government authorities. This optimistic scenario has emerged after informal talks which the leaders, Y D Sharma and Raja Kulkarni, had first with the cabinet secretary and later, with the petroleum minister. This was followed by consultations with the workers' representatives. The All-India Petroleum Workers Federation leaders have called an urgent meeting of the representatives of the nine protesting unions early tomorrow morning for a final decision.

AMERICAN HOSTAGES
THE FORMER ATTORNEY general and well-known liberal and civil rights leader, Ramsey Clark, and a senate intelligence committee member, William Miller, left Washington last night for Teheran with a letter from President Carter to secure the release of the American hostages held in the embassy there. In his letter, presumably addressed to Ayatollah Khomeini, Carter reportedly seeks to assure the Iranians that the United States will not arm the Kurds who are in rebellion. Carter has appealed for the release of the hostages. Clark and Miller have been authorised by the White House to assure the Iranians that the Shah will not be given asylum in the USA.

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WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

Boris Johnson promises to lead a 'one-nation' Conservative government, but events of the past week expose the improbability of that claim.

—THE GUARDIAN

How markets can serve climate

Kyoto Protocol's emission trading mechanisms could become redundant after 2020. India needs to plan for the changed scenario



R R RASHMI

THE NEXT CLIMATE conference to be held in Madrid in December has the challenge of deciding how markets can be deployed in the service of climate. The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), a product of the Kyoto Protocol, is one such market instrument that can help industry as well as climate. Along with China and Brazil, India is a leader in CDM since its inception in 2007. A number of small and medium projects in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energy, set up in India in the last two decades, owe their origin to the financing support available from CDM. Unfortunately, its future hangs in balance.

The situation may change in 2021 when market mechanisms mandated under the Paris Agreement come into operation. Most developed countries are strongly opposed to permitting the carryover of CDM projects and their credits into the Paris Pact's mechanisms. The credits lying unsold with the CDM projects could lose their economic worth. Besides, the CDM projects will have to go through the process of validation and registration again with the new mechanism. This will involve additional financial and administrative costs.

India has about 250 million Certified Emission Reduction (CER) units under CDM issued by the UNFCCC, the global administrator of Kyoto mechanisms. The number of CDM projects registered in India is 1,376 (out of total 7,979 globally) and 89 per cent of these projects are still active. The demand in EU, which has been the largest market for CDM credits, has declined sharply over the last decade because of regulatory barriers. The unrealised value of CDM credits could be in the range of almost \$5 billion — estimated at a very conservative price of US\$20 per unit. India stands to lose substantially if the doors on the existing CDM projects and credits are closed in 2020.

What does one do to help CDM find a place in the post-2020 markets? This requires one to understand the arguments against CDM. There are three main concerns. One, it has failed to demonstrate environmental benefits in addition to the "business as usual" scenario, or provide technological benefits. Two, its transition to new mechanisms will have adverse impacts on carbon prices and investor sentiments in future markets. Three, double counting could compromise global ambition on reducing GHG emissions.

The argument on "lack of addition to the business as usual scenario" appears to be a contrived one. Credits for CDM projects are issued after their compliance with internationally approved criteria is ascertained. CDM project proponents should be free to choose available cost-effective technologies as long as the objective of emission reductions is achieved. Moreover, "additionality" in CDM projects should not be judged solely on the criterion of technology; they are also about investments and overcoming market barriers. All CDM projects have passed these tests.

The argument that a full-scale transition of CDM credits may flood the market and lead to deterioration in the carbon prices in future markets is also over-stretched. Validation and registration of projects under the new mechanism may take at least three years. Assuming that all CDM units available globally till 2020 are traded immediately, they may be fully absorbed by 2024 — as demand for credits for meeting the Paris commitments increases. In fact, more than 60 per cent of the credits may be used fully even before 2022 if we take into account the demand from airline operators to meet commitments under CORSIA — an emission reduction scheme for international civil aviation effective from 2021.

The question of impact of CDM on global environmental integrity is, however, an important one. Environmental integrity is an objective of the market mechanisms under the Paris Agreement. Environmentalists believe that, in case of project/programme-based mechanisms, countries should make arrangements to prevent double counting of emission reduction units in their national accounts. The proponents of sustainable development, however, argue that difference in levels of development of countries requires that the adjustment principle should not be applied uniformly to developed and developing countries. The question, therefore, is: Should the pre-2020 CDM credits be discounted from the national emission reductions in case this principle is adopted for post 2020 credits?

Recent developments in the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) warrant an urgent examination of the issue. ICAO is actively considering a plan that seeks to limit the use of CDM credits to those issued after 2015. This could deal a body blow to CDM in the future carbon market. It may still be possible for the countries having a stake in CDM to influence the ICAO process if they negotiate the conditions for the long-term use of credits originating in their host country. It will be important for India to have a strategy that ensures that it does not get shut out of the CORSIA market even as ICAO enlarges the source of supplies from other countries. A pragmatic assessment of likely gains and losses from competing approaches to CDM transition into new mechanisms is the need of the hour.

It is time that we rethink the relationship between the project/programme-based emission reduction units and the national pool of emission reductions so as to establish a firm basis for access to future carbon markets. CDM has been a useful source of finance to industry and we may build a viable domestic carbon market in future on the foundations of industry interest as well as environmental protection.

The writer is a distinguished fellow in TERI

Experts, dissent and the economy

Creating spaces for different, even dissenting opinions, is the only way to craft policies that encourage investment and sustained growth

to get India back to the 9 per cent growth it had achieved earlier.

All nations in the world today face a challenge of expertise. Because the world has become so complex, it is impossible for all of us to know everything. We therefore have some people (engineers) who have the expertise to build bridges, some (doctors) who know how to cure infections, some (lawyers) who can advise you on how to fight a legal battle, and some (economists) who know how to design auctions, taxes and monetary policy.

With the rise of the importance of experts, there is an unavoidable heightened tension that has to do with asymmetric information — one party having the knowledge that another party needs. In economics, the breakthrough work on this happened in the early 1970s with George Akerlof's seminal paper, 'The market for lemons' — the paper shows how second-hand car markets work poorly because of asymmetric information. (As an aside, I may mention that Akerlof wrote the paper after a long stay at the Indian Statistical Institute in Delhi. I wonder if part of the credit for the paper should go to some car dealer who introduced Akerlof to the hazards of buying a used car.)

The seller of a second-hand car will typically know more about the car than the buyer, and will have a propensity to misrepresent its quality. I can testify to this from my days in Delhi in the early 1980s. Virtually all second-hand car salesmen would assure you that the car was driven by "a South Indian lady" — a South Indian lady being the ultimate prototype of gentleness, honesty and professionalism at that time, thereby creating the assurance of a well-maintained car. The only way this could have been true was for the world to have had more South Indian women than it did. So, the car-dealers were clearly distorting the truth to serve their own interests.

This is the difficulty with asymmetric information. We know that some experts will use this to their own advantage. And, at the same time we have no escape from the expert in today's complex world.

The problem with economics is even bigger

because economics is part common-sense and intuition, and part algebra and expertise. No politician would ask the engineer to move aside and try to take over the building of spacecraft. There is just too little scope for doing that with mere common-sense. In economics, there is a lot that intelligent persons with basic intuition can do. But there is a lot that they cannot. It is this that makes politicians fall into the trap of designing economic policies on their own and with the support of cronies. What is urgently needed in India today is to draw in the best talent and restore confidence in the markets and banks — institutions in general.

Even if one does not want to go outside the country in search of talent, there is no big loss. Having worked in India, as professor and as policymaker, I am aware that there is a huge amount of talent — in the universities, the private sector and the bureaucracy. We have to create space to draw from this reservoir of talent.

One fundamental precept for this, however, is space for dissent. If we bring in advisers who will simply endorse what the political bosses say, the government may look more orderly, but will achieve little. The true expert will inevitably have opinions which are often different from those of the leaders. There are risks in this, as pointed out above, but this is unavoidable, given the complex character of the modern economy. To create valves for different and even dissenting opinions is the only way to craft policies that encourage investment and sustained growth.

The famed music-conductor, Charles Hazlewood, had put his finger on the problem when he observed that to have a truly great orchestra you have to have trust, and give individual musicians freedom. There has to be space to create, improvise and even dissent. With strong top-down control, where every musician does exactly as the conductor commands, there can be order but never true excellence.

The writer is C. Marks Professor at Cornell University and former Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, World Bank

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this was an unofficial group and they wanted to know the ground situation in the state. They realised that people are happy with the Centre's decision and want development." It terms "interesting" that the BJP leaders and the central government have been saying the same thing for two-and-a-half months. It asks: "What is the secret behind all this? What does the government fear?"

Etamad on October 30 writes: "This bunch of EU MPs is touring Kashmir when local leaders are under house arrest. When this group reached Srinagar, even the commercial establishments which are open in the morning and evenings were found shut." It asks: "When the group reached Srinagar, they found its SMS service cut off, then will it accept what is shown to them by the Centre or will they personally try and get to the truth? The government is trying to project 'normalcy' but the situation on the ground says otherwise."

STATE ELECTIONS

THERE IS SOME frisson visible in most Urdu dailies, on the poll results in Maharashtra and Haryana, especially because no party has got a clear majority. *Inquilab* on October 25 has an editorial titled, 'Exit polls ki khuli pol' (Exit Polls exposed). "Here, exit polls again have failed in their claims. They have

On November 5, in another editorial, *Etamad* (the Hyderabad-based AIMIM daily) writes, "It's an 'attack on the Right to Privacy'. The editorial argues: "The world has morphed into a global village in this era of modern technology. Smartphones are needed by everyone. In the meanwhile, spying on WhatsApp has shocked the people of India. During the general elections, an assortment of the country's journalists and human rights activists were tapped via WhatsApp and that has raised many kinds of questions." The newspaper adds: "The government must alleviate fears of the people and the Opposition and reassure that it is the custodian of the people's right to privacy." It rues that "no concrete statement related to this matter has come from the government. This needs to be investigated — who allowed this company to allow these hackers, and who got it done?" It concludes, sardonically, that the "honourable purposes" for spying "must be revealed to the people and they must be reassured of their right to privacy being secure."

EU MPs IN KASHMIR

THE CONTROVERSIAL TRIP of some European Union MPs, mostly from far-right parties, to Srinagar has attracted wide comment. *Munsif* on October 31 ran an editorial which states "an EU MP told the media that



ECONOMIC GRAFFITI BY KAUSHIK BASU

I HAVE STRONG political differences with the present Indian government. That is what democracy is about — having space for different opinions and ideas. Where I had expectations from this government was in terms of the economy. In terms of its stated objectives — growth, development, job-creation and higher standard of living for the poor — there was little to contest. As an Indian citizen I had hoped — even though my politics was different — the government would succeed in its economic objectives.

What has, therefore, come as a disappointment is the sharp deterioration in the economy. India's annual growth rate in the first quarter of this financial year is down to 5 per cent, the unemployment rate is at a 45-year high, inequality has risen sharply, the banks are under strain with money supply growth (M3) lagging GDP growth for two years now, and average exports virtually stagnant over the last six years.

Not surprisingly, all this is being written about widely in the Indian media and also in international news outlets. India's outstanding growth performance from 2003 to 2011 had raised hopes, among all well-wishers, of a new normal for the country. Hence, this unexpected turnaround is a puzzle and source of discontent.

Why did this happen? I believe India's economy is fundamentally strong. In this column, I do not want to dwell on the nitty gritty of corrective policies — there is enough talent in the country to figure those out. I want to speculate about the larger question of why we are failing to marshal the talent

THE Urdu PRESS

WHATSAPP, PRIVACY

THE STORY OF rights activists, journalists and lawyers being spied upon by Israeli software, via WhatsApp has been discussed threadbare in editorials.

Inquilab on November 3, writes: "It is surprising that an international agency has stolen private and other details from consumers and despite this, the government is quiet. It has tried to shake off responsibility by hiding behind Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad's statement that WhatsApp has been questioned on the nature of the breach." The paper writes "that instead of taking refuge behind these statements, the government should have appointed a committee of experts and should have started enquiries about what had happened, why and at whose behest?"

Siasat's editorial on November 4 notes: "Technology brings in positive change but its negative effects cannot be denied. Now the fact that Israeli agencies are snooping on thousands of people worldwide is public, and social media app WhatsApp has also admitted that the app has been used for hundreds of tapings." The paper concludes by emphasising the government's role and of actions by them, beyond just talk: "The government cannot just rely on statements. Otherwise there will be more suspicion about their role."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

REAL ESTATE WOES

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Rs 25,000 cr fund to help complete stalled housing projects' (IE, November 7). RERA generated much hope among home buyers but it has failed to live up to their expectations. The realty sector is on a downhill path primarily due to demonetisation and the uncertainties of GST. The builders fraternity has compounded the problem by launching projects indiscriminately. This has resulted in a slowdown in the ancillary sectors. The government's financial stimulus to rejuvenate the real state is perplexing from the perspective of the home buyer who is wondering why projects are stalled on account of liquidity crunch when majority of them have already coughed up 90 per cent of the cost of the flat? Recently a builder was exposed by the Supreme Court's forensic auditors. Due diligence is necessary before salvaging the builders lobby.

Deepak Singhal, Chennai

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.

ONUS ON COURTS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Above the law'. The judiciary must act impartially when it comes to adjudicating an altercation between the protectors of the rule of law, the police, and preservers of rule of law, the lawyers. Bias would only result in trust deficit among people.

Divya Singla, Patiala

MATTER OF TRUST

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Drawing dark lines' (IE, November 7). The abrogation of Article 370 and 35A in Jammu and Kashmir is being viewed by the Valley's residents as an assault on their identity. Militants will look for soft targets like migrant workers to desist outsiders from making Kashmir their home. The government needs to assuage fear of the local people. New Delhi has never been able to win the Kashmiris' trust. That seems even more difficult today.

Kamna Chhabra, Gurugram

ISOLATIONIST MOVE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Lost opportunity' (IE, November 6). RCEP would have provided India with a chance to integrate into global supply chains. India's decision to stay out of RCEP could prove detrimental to its economy. The government should formulate policies to make industries globally competitive.

Sanya Bansal, Chandigarh

Compiled by Seema Chishty