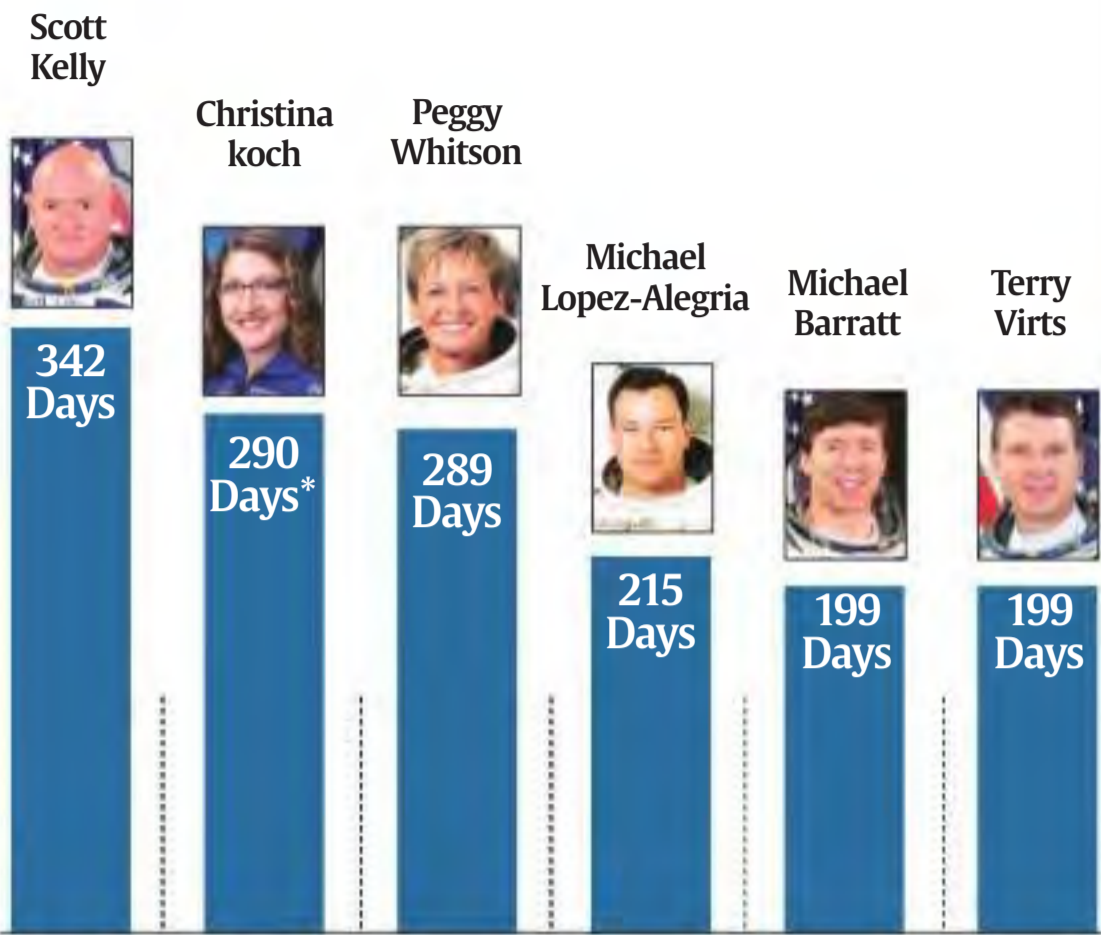


TELLING NUMBERS

Longest single spacewalk by a woman, and other records



*Koch completed 290 days on Sunday. While that is the world record for women, the graphic is for American astronauts only. Source: NASA

THIS WEEKEND, US astronaut Christina Koch set the record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman when she reached, and crossed, 289 days in her current mission at the International Space Station (ISS). The previous record for women was set by another American, Peggy Whitson, in 2016-2017.

Koch, 40, an electrical engineer, is set to extend that record. Having reached the ISS in March this year, she is expected to spend a total of 328 days on board before returning to Earth in February 2020. Missions are typically six months, but NASA announced in April that it was extending her mission. Koch has already made history once in her stay aboard the ISS. In October, she was part of the first all-female spacewalk, together with Jessica Meir.

340 days

Counting both male and female astronauts, this is the overall record by an American for a longest single spaceflight. Scott Kelly spent 340 days in space in 2015-2016.

438 days

Between January 1994 and March

1995, Valery Polyakov of Russia spent 438 days aboard the Mir space station. Across genders, this is the world record for the longest single human spaceflight.

665 days

Although Koch has now overtaken her for the longest single spaceflight, Peggy Whitson continues to hold the record for the longest time by a woman in cumulative spaceflights. Whitson, now 59 and retired, is a biochemist who logged a total of 665 hours over a number of space expeditions between 2002 and 2017. Koch once said she took a lot of helpful advice from Kelly's 2017 autobiography *Endurance*. Now, Koch's extended mission will help NASA learn about the effects of long spaceflights. The Associated Press reported that NASA officials have said such data is needed to support future deep space exploration missions.

878 days

This is the longest cumulative time spent in space by any astronaut, male or female. Gennady Padalka of Russia holds this record, accumulating the 878 days (about 2½ years) across five spaceflights between 1998 and 2015.

SIMPLY PUT

How the Preamble was adopted

The Constitution, particularly its Preamble, has frequently been at the centre of the ongoing debate over the Citizenship Amendment Act. How it was introduced in the Constituent Assembly, discussed, and adopted

PRADEEP KAUSHAL

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

IN THE nationwide protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act, many have held up the Constitution of India, saying the Act goes against it. Many of the programmes have been marked by a reading of the Preamble, which is reflective of the essence of the Constitution of India.

The original Preamble, adopted by the Constituent Assembly in 1949, declared India a "Sovereign Democratic Republic". By the 42nd Amendment of 1976, enacted during the Emergency, the words "Socialist" and "Secular" were inserted; the Preamble now reads "Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic".

Resolution & discussion

The Preamble is based on the Objective Resolution moved by Jawaharlal Nehru in the Constituent Assembly on December 13, 1946. The Resolution was adopted on January 22, 1947.

Constituent Assembly President Rajendra Prasad told members: "The time has now arrived when you should give your solemn votes on this Resolution. Remembering the solemnity of the occasion and the greatness of the pledge and the promise which this Resolution contains, I hope every Member will stand up in his place when giving his vote in favour of it."

The Resolution was adopted, all members standing.

On October 17, 1949, the Constituent Assembly took up the Preamble for discussion.

Hasrat Mohani proposed that India, instead of being designated as "a Sovereign Democratic Republic", be made "a Union of Indian Socialistic Republics to be called UISR, on the lines of USSR". This was objected to by Deshbandhu Gupta, who contended that "it is out of order because it goes counter to the Constitution we have passed". Mohani replied that he had not said "we should go and merge in the USSR or that you should adopt the same Constitution; but what I want to say is that we should work out our Constitution along the lines and on the pattern of Soviet Russia. It is a special pattern and also republican pattern and also it is of a centrifugal pattern".

To invoke God, or not to

After Prasad informed the Assembly that members had given notices for moving a number of amendments, H V Kamath moved a motion proposing the Preamble begin with: "In the name of God, We, the people of India..."

"Let us consecrate this Constitution by a solemn dedication to God in the spirit of the Gita: *Yatkaroshi yadashmasi*

Yajjuhoshi dadasi yat
Yattapasyasi kaunteya
Tatkurushwa madarpanam."

He said: "Whatever our shortcomings, whatever the defects and errors of this Constitution, let us pray that God will give us strength, courage and wisdom to transmute our baser metal into gold, through hard work, suffering and sacrifice for India and for her



Dr B R Ambedkar hands over the draft Constitution to President Rajendra Prasad on November 26, 1949. Express Archive

people. This has been the voice of our ancient civilisation, has been the voice through all these centuries, a voice distinctive, vital and creative, and if we, the people of India, heed that voice, all will be well with us."

Thirumala Rao argued that "it should not be subjected to the vote of a House of 300 people whether India wants God or not. We have accepted that God should be there in the Oath, but for those who do not believe in God, there is an alternative there, but there is no possibility of a compromise which can provide for both the things in the Preamble". He suggested Kamath withdraw his amendment.

Hriday Nath Kunzru regretted that "our most sacred feelings should have been brought into the arena of discussion". He felt Kamath's proposal was "inconsistent with the Preamble which promises liberty to thought, expression, belief, faith and worship to everyone". Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri endorsed Kunzru. He cited *Vande Mataram* and said: "It means an invocation to a Goddess... We who belong to the Sakthi cult, protest against invoking the name of God alone, completely ignoring the Goddess... If we bring in the name of God at all, we should bring in the name of the Goddess also".

Rejecting pleas by both Prasad and B R Ambedkar to drop his amendment, Kamath pressed his motion along with a demand for a division. A vote was taken and the motion was rejected 41-68. Kamath's reaction was: "This, Sir, is a black day in our annals. God save India."

Gandhi and the Preamble

Shibban Lal Saksena moved a motion proposing that the Preamble read: "In the name of God the Almighty, under whose inspiration and guidance, the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, led the Nation from slavery into Freedom, by unique adherence to the eternal principles of Satya and Ahimsa, and who sustained the millions of our countrymen and the martyrs of the Nation in their heroic and unrelenting struggle to regain the

Complete Independence of our Motherland."

Brakeswar Prasad opposed this, arguing: "I do not want that the name of Mahatma Gandhi should be incorporated in this Constitution, because it is not a Gandhian Constitution. The foundation stones of this Constitution are the decisions of the American Supreme Court. It is the Government of India Act, 1935, repeated again. If we had a Gandhian Constitution, I would have been the first to offer my support. I do not want that the name of Mahatma Gandhi should be dragged in the rotten Constitution."

Observing that "it is not behaving us to vote on this amendment", J B Kripalani made a request to Saksena to withdraw it. He said: "I yield to nobody in my love and respect for Gandhiji. I think it will be consistent with that respect if we do not bring him into this Constitution that may be changed and reshaped at any time." Saksena withdrew the amendment.

Govind Malaviya had given a notice for moving an amendment, which ran: "By the grace of Parameshwar, the Supreme Being, Lord of the Universe (called by different names by different peoples of the world), From whom emanates all that is good and wise, and who is the Prime Source of all Authority, We the people of Bharata (India), Humbly acknowledging our devotion to Him, And gratefully remembering our great leader Mahatma Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and the innumerable sons and daughters of this land who have laboured, struggled and suffered for our freedom..."

Ambedkar and P S Deshmukh noted the Assembly had already decided on the names of God and Mahatma Gandhi. This was accepted by Rajendra Prasad and also Govind Malaviya.

'Secular' & 'Sovereign'

Brakeswar Prasad felt the word 'Secular' should "be incorporated in our Preamble because it will tone up the morale of the minorities..." He also wanted the word 'Socialist' included in the Preamble because "I believe that

the future of India is in Socialism". He was against "any undue emphasis upon this word sovereignty" because he felt that "sovereignty leads to war; sovereignty leads to imperialism". His amendment was negated.

Purnima Banerji proposed an amendment with "the sovereignty of the people" mentioned. Mahavir Tyagi supported her. "The sovereignty must be vested in so many words in the people as a whole," he argued.

"Sir, you like a good host, have reserved the choicest wine for the last," said J D Kripalani. "This Preamble should have come in the beginning of the Constitution even as it is given in the beginning of the Constitution... It would have cautioned us that we were not deviating from the basic principles which we have laid down in the Preamble..."

Kripalani added: "As we have put democracy at the basis of your Constitution, I wish Sir, that the whole country should understand the moral, the spiritual and the mystic implication of the word 'democracy'. If we have not done that, we shall fail as they have failed in other countries. Democracy will be made into autocracy and it will be made into imperialism, and it will be made into fascism... I also say democracy is inconsistent with caste system... Then we have said that we will have liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship... All these freedoms can only be guaranteed on the basis of non-violence... Mere tolerance will not carry us far... We have to respect each other's faith."

He suggested that the Assembly adopt the amendment proposed by Banerji. He said: "A Minister says 'Our Government' not 'The People's Government'. The Prime Minister says 'My Government' not 'The People's Government'. Therefore, on this solemn occasion, it is necessary to lay down clearly and distinctly, that sovereignty resides in and flows from the people." The members responded with loud applause.

'From the people'

Ambedkar, who replied to the discussion, said the point was whether the Preamble as drafted conveyed any other meaning than what was the general intention of the House — "that this Constitution should emanate from the people and should recognise that the sovereignty to make this Constitution vests in the people". "My contention is that what is suggested in this amendment is already contained in the draft Preamble."

Ambedkar said: "No person in this House desires that there should be anything in this Constitution which has the remotest semblance of its having been derived from the sovereignty of the British Parliament... In fact, we wish to delete every vestige of the sovereignty of the British Parliament such as it existed before the operation of this Constitution." He declared: "I say that this Preamble embodies what is the desire of every Member of the House that this Constitution should have its root, its authority, its sovereignty, from the people. That it has."

Ambedkar rejected Banerji's amendment. It was also negated.

Thereafter, the Preamble was adopted.

AN EXPERT EXPLAINS

Afghan citizenship, defined & redefined over decades of change



FAIZAN MUSTAFA

THE CITIZENSHIP Amendment Act (CAA), 2019 makes it easier for non-Muslim migrants from three countries to get Indian citizenship. This series has previously looked at the Constitutions of Pakistan and Bangladesh. The third country is Afghanistan:

Constitutional history

In a long history of conflict and multiple invasions, no empire or nation could control Afghanistan for long. Even the British, in spite of three wars since 1839, could not keep Afghanistan under their control and were defeated in the third of these wars in 1919. Afghanistan was not part of British India and was not partitioned from India, which was cited among the reasons for enacting CAA. Under the Treaty of Rawalpindi, Afghanistan got independence in 1919. Simultaneously, a treaty of friendship was signed with Russia.

King Amanullah got a Constitution for Afghanistan in 1921 and again in 1923 but the Tajiks removed him in 1929. A new Constitution was enacted in 1931. A coalition of rightist groups came to power in 1952 and General Dawood Khan became PM in 1954.

A new Constitution was adopted in 1964 by the Grand Assembly, or Loya Jirga. Signed by King Zahir Shah, it provided for a consti-

tutional monarchy and a bicameral legislature. Sovereignty was vested in the nation, not Allah. Article 2 declared Islam the state religion and, unlike Pakistan and Bangladesh, mentioned that religious rites of the state shall be performed as per the Sunni Hanafi doctrine. Thus, other Muslim sects were in a way minorities. But the same Article also said non-Muslims shall be free to perform their rituals within limits determined by the laws for public decency and public peace.

Title Three of the Constitution talked about Rights and Duties (in India, Fundamental Duties were inserted in 1976). The first Article declared the people of Afghanistan, without discrimination or preference, have equal rights and obligations before law. Right to liberty under Article 26 was said to have no limitations except liberty of others and public interest. It said the state has a duty to protect liberty and dignity of every human being. The Constitution did not mention freedom of religion of Muslims or others.

Soviet invasion

In a coup in 1978, the Communist Party took over power and introduced radical reforms. The United Nations condemned the invasion and the US supported the Afghan rebels in a decade-long war with the USSR. India supported the Soviet invasion. Eventually the Soviet army withdrew in 1989 and Soviet Union-backed government collapsed in 1992. Thus until 1992, under the communist regime, no religious persecution of minorities could be alleged.

In 1995, the Islamic militia Taliban came to power and introduced regressive restrictions on female education and dated Islamic law and punishments. In 2001, they destroyed Buddhist statues in Bamiyan.

During their six-year rule, even Muslims were persecuted. On December 22, 2001, Hamid Karzai took over as head of an interim government. The current Constitution was adopted and ratified in January 2004.

Religion & minority rights

Unlike the Pakistan and Bangladesh Constitutions, the Afghanistan Constitution begins with praise of Allah and also blessings for the last Prophet and his followers. The Preamble makes a categorical statement that Afghanistan belongs to all its tribes and peoples. Unlike the Indian Constitution, it mentions its commitment to the United Nations Charter as well as Universal Declaration of Human Rights and thus broadens the ambit of non-Muslims' rights and non-discrimination.

While it declares Islam the state religion, Article 2 says followers of other religions shall be free within the bounds of law in exercise and performance of their religious rituals. Article 3 is problematic as it lays down that no law shall contravene tenets and provisions of Islam. Unlike Pakistan, sovereignty here (under Article 4) rests with the people, not Allah. Article 35 prohibits formation of any party on the basis of religious sectarianism in addition to tribalism, parochialism and language. Article 80 prohibits ministers on tour from using their position for religious purposes. Article 149 prohibits amendment of principles of Islam and Islamic republicanism. It says fundamental rights can be amended only to improve and enlarge guarantees, not to diminish or restrict them.

The First Fundamental Right under Article

22 prohibits any discrimination and distinction between citizens and states that all citizens have equal rights and duties. India has given right to equality even to non-citizens. Article 57 of the Afghanistan Constitution does say foreigners will have rights and liberties in accordance with the law.

Unlike in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Article 29 of the Afghanistan Constitution specifically uses the term "persecution". It forbids persecution of human beings. Thus the allegation of religious persecution in Afghanistan is not supported by the text of the Constitution; in practice, except during the short regime of the Taliban, no such case is made out. Unlike in India (only the SC, ST & OBC Commissions have constitutional status),

Article 58 gives constitutional status to the independent Human Rights Commission.

Only a Muslim citizen born to Afghan parents can become President (in India, a naturalised citizen can become President) but the Afghanistan Chief Justice, judges and ministers can be naturalised citizens.

Citizenship

The original 1922 citizenship law of Afghanistan was handwritten. Article 8 of the 1923 Constitution gave citizenship to all residents without religious discrimination. The main purpose was not citizenship but issuance of *tazkira*, or national identity cards. In India too, the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) concept came with National Identity Card Rules, 2003. Afghanistan's Article 8 gave citizenship just to males and was based on the narrower principle of *jus*

sanguinis or blood relationship. But on November 7, 1936, a new citizenship law was made and, as per the 1930 Hague Convention on Nationality, *jus soli* or citizenship by birth was adopted. Article 2 said all children born to Afghan parents inside the country or abroad will be Afghan citizens.

The Indian Constitution and original Citizenship Act too was based on *jus soli* but the 1986 and 2003 amendments have now adopted *jus sanguinis*; for children born after December 31, 2003, both parents should be Indian citizens. Any foreigner who had resided for five years in Afghanistan could get Afghan citizenship. Following the "dependent principle", any woman who married a foreigner lost citizenship but could get it back if her marriage subsequently ended in divorce. Non-Afghan women married to Afghan men were given citizenship.

The communist regime brought a few changes. On May 5, 1986, citizenship was defined as the legal and political relationship between a national and the state of Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. India does not define citizenship. For the first time in Afghanistan, dual citizenship was abolished. The "independent principle" was adopted in respect of married women.

In 1979, citizenship of the king was withdrawn for supporting alien powers; it was restored in 1992 by the new government. A new law of the Republic of Afghanistan came into force on March 15, 1992 but there was no major change except that renunciation of citizenship now required parliamentary approval and presidential assent. This law was replaced on June 11, 2000 by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, without any substantive change. Under Article 28, an Afghan woman now retains her citizenship in spite

of marrying a foreigner. Under Article 9(2), a child born in Afghanistan or outside to Afghan parents is a citizen. Even a child born in Afghanistan to foreigners can get citizenship on attaining age 18, if he decides to stay there, and if, within six more months, he does not apply for the same citizenship as his parents. In 2001, dual nationality was again accepted.

Article 12 says that if a child is born in Afghanistan and parents' documents show that evidence of their citizenship is not available, the child will be considered an Afghan. Had India adopted this rule, 2 lakh children would have got included in the Assam NRC. In accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Stateless Persons, 1954, all stateless persons are considered Afghan citizens. Citizenship by naturalisation is given to anyone who has resided there for five years.

After the Soviet invasion and subsequent conflict, Afghanistan has seen out-migration of millions. In 2017, 1,773 applications of renunciation including of Hindus and Sikhs were received. Not every migration was due to religious persecution or well-founded fears.

Article 4 of the current Constitution declares that the Afghanistan nation is composed of all individuals who possess Afghan citizenship and the word Afghan shall apply to every citizen. In a bold and categorical statement, it says no individual shall be deprived of citizenship. Article 28 mentions it as a Fundamental Right and states no Afghan citizen shall be deprived of citizenship or sentenced to domestic or foreign exile. Like Pakistan and Bangladesh, Afghanistan neither confers nor denies citizenship on the basis of religion.

The author is an expert in constitutional law and Vice Chancellor, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad

THE GOVERNANCE PAGE

DUMMY’S GUIDE TO TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Short-staffed police try out a model solution on the streets of Bengaluru

Commissioner says the police mannequins will subsequently have cameras, become part of an AI-run traffic law enforcement system

JOHNSON TA
BENGALURU, DECEMBER 29

ONE of the schools of thought for controlling crimes in high crime zones in urban areas around the world is to create the impression of an ubiquitous police force — or, in other words, tricking criminals into believing that the police are all around and there is no getting away.

In Bengaluru where road traffic problems are a cause of bigger concern than high crime rates, the city’s understaffed police force has hit upon an idea to create the impression of the traffic policeman being an ubiquitous presence on the streets by using traffic police mannequins.

Over the past few weeks, some 30 traffic police mannequins have been deployed during the day at heavy traffic junctions in the city by the Bengaluru police to put the fear of the police in the hearts of traffic law violators.

At junctions where traffic jams occur every day, a real traffic policeman now controls traffic, while mannequins create an impression of the presence of many traffic policemen.

The deployment of traffic police mannequins — dressed in the uniform of the Bengaluru traffic police — has been described by the city’s Police Commissioner as the first step in deploying high technology for policing the streets, but the regular traffic policeman thinks it is just a scarecrow.

According to official records, the Bengaluru traffic police have a sanctioned strength of 5,262 personnel to regulate traffic across 44,000 intersections, but they are 600 short of the sanctioned strength. “It is just a strategy to prevent traffic offences — like triple riding on two wheelers,



Some 30 mannequins dressed in the uniform of the traffic police have appeared across the city. Police hope they will warn off potential traffic violators. *Express*

riding without helmets or driving without seat belts, or using cell phones while riding or driving — even when there are no policemen at the traffic signals,” a police constable manning a traffic junction in the central business district of Bengaluru said, regarding a mannequin planted on the traffic island in the area.

“These are just dummies — in the end they do not perform any roles, and a policeman still needs to control the traffic,” the traffic constable said.

Bengaluru Police Commissioner Bhaskar Rao, however, said that the police mannequins are part of a plan to bring in robotic technologies into policing the traffic in the IT capital of the country.

“The mannequins are the first or a crude form of promoting technology. They will later have cameras fitted for the eyes — for both day vision and night vision. The mannequins will be connected to an artificial intelligence based software system to record and recall what is being seen on the streets, and provide alerts to officers. Later on, there

will be robotics incorporated in the system, which will change the structure of the mannequin itself,” the Police Commissioner said.

“We have several plans to leverage the kind of technologies available in Bangalore itself. This is just a first step,” according to Rao.

Since taking over as the Bengaluru Police Commissioner in August this year, Rao has attempted multiple innovations — from employing masseurs at some police stations to ease the pains of traffic policemen, to deploying the “pedal police”, or police on bicycles, in areas like the central Cubbon Park, as well as creating crèches and play areas for children at police stations to reduce the negativity attached to the image of the police force in general.

In police stations with large areas — where the properties belong to the police department itself — like the Koramangala police station in the south east of Bengaluru, the police have created a colourful play area-cum-crèche for kids, with walls painted with images of popular cartoon characters.

“There are many young mothers in the police department who don’t have a support sys-

EXPLAINED An attempt at image-building

THE TRAFFIC police mannequins are part of several measures introduced by Bengaluru Police Commissioner Bhaskar Rao, which include employing masseurs at some police stations to ease the aches of personnel who are on their feet for long hours, and creating play areas for children at police stations to counter the negativity attached with these buildings. There are creches to help young policewomen who have to work long hours, and have no support system for their children.

tem to take care of children when they work long or unpredictable hours. The department does not shut shop at 5 pm and go home, and staff have to work irregular hours. If the child is at the police station itself, then she gets to see the child while doing her work even if it is late. More and more women are being recruited in the police and this will give them a sense of comfort,” Commissioner Rao said.

According to local police officers at the Koramangala police station where a play area has been created on the premises, the kids’ zone is also an attempt to soften the image of the police among school children who are sometimes brought from surrounding schools.

“There is a sense of fear of the police, and people are often reluctant to go to police stations to report cases as a consequence. A fear-some image of the police is also created among children since people try to discipline them using images of the scary policeman. We are hoping that when they visit our station and spend time in the kids’ area some of their fears will go away,” a police officer said.

‘Said two services only if you have two separate exams... that’s the caveat’

BIBEK DEBROY, Chairman, Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council, led the committee that in 2015 recommended major reform in the Railways. His report is being cited by the government and all stakeholders to argue both in favour of and against the recent controversial move to unify all eight Group A services into one Indian Railways Management Service. In an interview with AVISHEK G DASTIDAR, Debroy explained what the report meant and what he thinks about the move.



THE
POLICY INTERVIEW
BIBEK DEBROY
Chairman,
Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council

In your report, why didn’t you prescribe merger of all services into one?

We said that we would not get into the merger with retrospective treatment because we have no particular expertise in that. We did not say anything on that because we said the Railways should do that, and remember there will be legal cases and things like that.

Did you foresee that it will end up being a messy affair?

Right, it is messy... We did not have a complete picture of the age profile the Railway employee. We had a sense that recruitment is not always linear over time... there was a bunching together... I mean we knew that the hump would be crossed at around 24 years of age but then there is the General category and the SC and ST category etc... so as far as that is concerned, we left it to the wisdom of Railways.

Why did you recommend two services, one technical and one logistics, instead of just one service?

In the final report, there is an important sentence where we have recommended two services. We said that if there are two separate (recruitment) exams then you need to have two services. That is the important caveat... Today, on the one side you have the Civil Services Exam and on the other, the Engineering Services Exam. In that case, you have two services.

Why is that?

In the report we had an interesting graph that showed that as you climbed up the ladder, the less important the functional specialisation becomes, and you go more and more towards management. Someone who enters the technical side is an engineer. The person is entering the service when he or she is about 22 years old. On the other side, the person entering the service is may be 25 years old or thereabouts. So there is a disadvantage in terms of vertical mobility. Now if you unified the exams, this difference would go.

How would you ensure multi-disciplinary efficiency in that case?

Because the core functioning of the Railways is of running trains, so most of them would be engineers. But there would also be the Personnel Service, Accounts Service and Traffic Service. So you recruit them also, and then obviously you’re not going to get the person who has a History background to run the trains. So, what we had contemplated was that after you join, maybe 13, 14 years down the line, you get a choice — do you want to switch, regardless of your background? Like if you are an engineer, do you now want to switch to the management side, in which case you aspire to become, eventually, a Member of the Railway Board, even Chairman. Or do you want to continue with running trains, then you aspire to become GM and then the rank of a GM is equalised with the rank of a Railway Board Member.

When you studied departmental

rivalries in Railways, did you see it prevailing between the Engineering services or did you see it between civil services and the engineers?

It was across the board.

How did you seek to find a solution?

As a committee, we had wide consultations. I don’t think any other committee has had as wide a consultation process and, if I recall correctly, most of the ideas that we have had came from the people from the Railways themselves. We just put them in a structure. In the course of this we had discussions with the employees associations, like the Federation of Railway Officers’ Association (FROA). We said this in the Interim report and final report also, FROA strongly recommended one service. The Prakash Tandon Committee (1994) recommended one service.

Why didn’t you recommend it then?

We had this dilemma. We thought that a lot of things go in favour of one single service, but the problem was the entry-age differential, and the problems that the two sides would face thereafter... That is the reason we put that caveat. So all the messages on social media are missing this point, which is that if you have two entry exams, then please have two services.

But now the demand is: Why can’t the reform be about two services, considering there are about 8,000 serving officers involved?

To the extent that I have been able to track social media is that one issue is, “What happens to us?”. I have read reports that the Chairman, Railway Board made a statement that your position and seniority will be preserved, just wait for the alternate mechanism to do its work. This is one issue. The other issue which they (protesting officers) are not mentioning on social media that much is what happens to their vertical growth? Because departmentalism encadres posts. Now that is being brought down, so if I am X then I am not just worried about my seniority being protected, I am now also worried about my vertical mobility. That, they are not voicing very strongly, but I think in the heart of their hearts the main issue is that. I think the actual reservation is about the fact that my vertical mobility will be affected because posts reserved for certain cadres are going to end. And suddenly, the total number of posts is also being pruned. And then there is also the threat of lateral entry, which also we have mentioned in our report.

In Goa school curriculum, lessons from ground on sanitation, waste management, traffic sense

SMITA NAIR
PANAJI, DECEMBER 29

A PILOT project from 2018 — training children on civic sense — will be integrated into the school curriculum this year in Goa. Of the core categories under civic sense, traffic is seen as a crucial “life saving” module, say experts with Goa Traffic Police who have been roped in to provide “educational feed” straight from their experiences.

Chairman of the Goa Education Development Corporation (GEDC), established under Goa Education Development Corporation Act, 2003, Kanta Patnekar said, “The review showed the need for these subjects. The response from students and teachers was encouraging.”

In 2017-18, the pilot was conducted following a discussion between then Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar and educationists in the state. Three subjects were introduced under umbrella topics: sanitation including personal sanitation, waste management, and traffic sense.

Goa, a tourist state with the local population facing the burden of floating tourists — through exceeding levels of garbage and also number of two-wheeler accidents, teachers say the subjects were “the need of the state”.

GEDC undertook 80 per cent of the research behind the project, as its inception mandate is to “develop competitive, flexible and value-based education system to meet the individual, institution and socio cultural development needs of the people of Goa”, says Patnekar.

The pilot was introduced in 108 schools as “separate subjects” in three different phases divided between primary and secondary schools. According to teachers, menstrual health was also a topic discussed in Goan schools for the first time under this sanitation module.

Once the topics were decided initially by academics and officials approved them, the next step was to look for experts in each field. Experts were roped in to create content in Goa and elsewhere. The content was then vetted by the State Council of Educational Research and Training.

According to a teacher, under the waste management module, children were taught the importance of segregation instead of burning waste — a practice otherwise prevalent in village pockets of Goa. “They were not just told, but informed through researched content by experts who work in those fields. Detailed literature was prepared, which included exercises for them to conduct back home,” an official with SCERT said.

“Three books were then published with detailed topics for three stages — first for Class III and Class IV students. The second stage was between Class V and Class VIII, and the final stage was for Classes VIII-IX,” said Patnekar. The coverage was limited to government schools. Before the subjects were introduced in schools, teachers from each taluka were trained by experts by giving them detailed examples from case studies in villages across Goa.

Traffic Deputy SP Dharmesh Angle who was roped in for the traffic module, said the training has already shown results. “While there are many reasons for lower fatalities this year, one reason is that children are walk-

ing back following the lessons they learn from these chapters on civic sense. Traffic sense is directly related to societal behaviour. These chapters were designed by the traffic department with the educationists and starts with the do’s and don’ts and with real life case studies,” said Angle. The traffic department now wants the SCERT and GEDC to include the importance of wearing helmets in the new curriculum with case studies and number of lives saved.

According to teachers, children have also started sensitising their parents on the lessons they learnt in school — an input which GEDC says helps.

GEDC is now in the process of finalising the content for the academic year 2020-2021. “We are now integrating the subjects in the curriculum, and all the learnings will now be part of existing subjects and will also be given as optional papers. Traffic sense will be part of Physical Education and the remaining two subjects will be part of the science and social science textbooks. These will include Goa case studies and will be implemented by the next academic cycle,” said Patnekar.

STATE WOMEN’S COMMISSION INITIATIVE

Women break free in rural Maharashtra, get appsolutely phone-smart

TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA
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IN RURAL Maharashtra’s Daregaon village, a 16-year-old girl last month used her phone to register an online complaint on the Tejaswini application against a local boy who was sexually harassing her.

In the nearby Ramnagar village, Neeta Nene learnt how to upload all identification documents on Digilocker.

Neeta’s neighbour Radha Kishore now uses Google Assistant to read recipes.

And Sangeeta Satpute spends most of her spare time searching about the online dairy market, and how to sell her cattle produce in Jalna.

The Maharashtra State Commission for Women has started giving digital training to rural and tribal women to make them self-sufficient in using the Internet to pay utility bills, access government schemes, and register complaints online.

All that they need is a smartphone. Since November, 50 workshops for 1,000 women have been held across Maharashtra. The Commission plans to finally organise 450 workshops for 1 lakh women.

In Wada, a town in the tribal Palghar district some 90 km from Mumbai, Akshata More (39) was ready with a notebook and pen to take copious notes in a panchayat hall with 200 other women during one such workshop.

Several women had brought their husbands’ phones for the day.

More has a basic smartphone, and only knows how to dial a number. She does not understand what the Internet is, but plans to teach her three daughters, the eldest aged 18, its use for online education material.

As the session begins, trainer Komal Jadhav starts with explaining the difference between smartphones and ordinary ones, and teaches the basics of using a smartphone — taking pictures, connecting to WiFi, setting up wallpaper.

Jadhav then moves on to a more complex operation: how to download a mobile app. As she gives step-by-step instructions, the women are glued to their mobile screens, asking each other about which icon to select. Some without a phone make notes to later try it at home.

“I want to learn more about farming and how to sell our produce online. There are so many fertilizers to choose from. I thought I can



In Palghar, a training session has over 200 women from nearby villages. *Express*

learn how to use the Internet, and teach my husband,” said Archana Sambre (34), a villager in Wada.

Her neighbour Kanchan Palekar (24) is more digital savvy, she knows how to use

WhatsApp. “But I want to learn more, all these apps that we can use for payments,” she said.

These women are being taught six mobile applications — Tejaswini, Bhim, Aaple

Sarkar, Umang, NaMo, and Digilocker — apart from using Google Assistant. “One villager has started using Google Assistant to even set alarms,” said Gracy Cardozao, project incharge at the women’s Commission. The Commission has trained 50 women to give digital training, and each is paid Rs 3,000 per session.

After every workshop, spanning over four hours, the women are added on a WhatsApp group, and given daily exercises. Says trainer Usha Shinde, from Jalna, “There is excitement in middle-aged women to learn more. Every day we ask them to try something new on phone, make a digital payment or scan and upload documents. Those who face problems are given step-wise assistance.”

39-year-old Manasi Sawant, a villager in Palghar, said: “My son knows how to use a smartphone, but never had time to teach me. I want to learn how to make calls, chat on WhatsApp, so that I don’t need to rely on my children for help.”

Kamini Waghat (23), who came along with her newborn baby, said learning how to use the Internet will help her family in farming. “There are new techniques on the Internet about farming. We can now use it to improve produce without relying on the lo-

cal administration,” she said.

While the Umang app provides information on 440 government schemes, the Bhim app is useful in making digital payments. Maharashtra’s Aaple Sarkar provides a portal to register complaints against government officials.

“On the Tejaswini app, women can register complaints of sexual or domestic violence, or workplace harassment. Several women fear reaching out to the village panchayat,” said Vijaya Rahatkar, Chairperson of the women’s Commission.

For trainer Usha Shinde, the best outcome of digital training has been the motivation it has provided to two schoolgirls, aged 15 and 16, in her village Daregaon.

“Both registered sexual harassment complaint on that app. A few boys in school were sexually harassing them. They could not dare to approach police. But after I taught them these apps, they quietly registered a complaint on the Tejaswini app,” Shinde said.

The only hiccup in these sessions has been with the NaMo app — the first app that these women are taught to remain updated with news about Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is 50 MB in size, and takes up 30-45 minutes to download in poor network regions.



Young and cornered

Ongoing protests speak of a pent-up frustration at dwindling opportunities, a bleaker future



HARISH DAMODARAN

I WAS A marginally above-average student in both school and college. All I had on passing out was a second class Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in economics from Delhi University. But I was lucky to enter the job market that was just starting to boom. It was a rising tide that lifted all boats, including people like me.

The Nineties, Noughties and the first half of this decade were a great period for enterprise and employment. A host of industries, both new and old, grew: IT, media, advertising, financial services, accounting, telecom, aviation, hospitality, restaurants, auto, pharma, healthcare, education, construction, real estate, organised retail and food processing. Even agriculture did well as farmers diversified beyond foodgrains to horticulture, dairying and poultry, while embracing new technologies such as hybrid seeds (especially in vegetables and maize), Bt cotton, tissue-culture planting, drip irrigation and laser leveling. As all these sectors thrived, jobs were aplenty, even for those passing out of ordinary private engineering colleges or science and arts graduates.

Simply put, if India's first middle class was created by the public sector, the second one was largely a product of private enterprise, unleashed after the economic reforms of 1991. While many of our parents were government employees, we are the beneficiaries of growth and investment activity in the first 25 years or so after liberalisation.

The significant point to note, however, is that the boom in jobs during those 25 years did not happen at a time of a "bulge" in India's working-age population. That, if anything, is taking place now when there aren't too many new jobs and even the existing ones are under threat.

According to the United Nations population database, the proportion of Indians aged between 20 and 59 years — those one would consider to be the most active work seekers — actually fell from 46.9 per cent in 1950 to 45.8 per cent in 1990. It rose thereafter to 51.7 per cent in 2010. But, the real bulge is yet to come: The ratio of those aged 20-59 years to the country's total population is projected to rise to 54.6 per cent in 2020, peaking at 56.7 per cent in 2035.

In other words, the challenge of finding jobs

would be far greater for my niece and daughter than for me, despite them being smarter and brighter, unless the economy churns out jobs like it did in the two decades or more from when I joined the workforce in 1991.

There are many who believe that India is on the cusp of a demographic dividend which comes with the share of any country's working-age population exceeding that of its non-working-age population. The more the number of people in a position to work and earn, not only are there lesser numbers to support — those either too old or too young — but also, greater is the potential for savings from the generation of income. As those savings are directed to finance investments, a virtuous cycle of growth is set in motion. This was seen, for instance, in Japan, and more recently in China.

The Japanese economic miracle from the mid 1950s to the late 1970s happened when the median age of its population ranged between 23.6 and 32.5 years. The median age of China was 21.9 years in 1980 when its growth story took off, and rose to 35 years in 2010, by which time the peak was over.

Meanwhile, Japan's demographics had worsened — the median age reached 41.2 years in 2000, rising to 44.7 years in 2010 — reflecting in its economic performance.

In India's case, the tipping point of the proportion of the population aged 20-59 years crossing 50 per cent was reached in 2010. The median age, too, that year was just 25.1. Moreover, it is projected to hit 30 years in 2025 and reach 35 years only by 2040. Logically speaking then, this decade, and the next two as well, ought to have been India's, just as the 1950s to 1970s was Japan's and the 1980s to 2000s China's. But it hasn't been, at least so far.

Much of this decade has been a lost one and is ending even worse than when it began. The part about a flood of young men and women entering the labour market is certainly true; you can see and feel it by simply taking a Delhi Metro train ride. This youth bulge, though, is yet to deliver the promised demographic dividend that Japan, China or the East Asian economies successfully harnessed in their time. On the contrary, the cohort of young people of my generation found

productive employment and experienced upward mobility far more than the ones who have come out of college or have migrated from the hinterlands in the present decade. And the irony is, we did well even before the golden age of growth, resulting from favourable demographics, was supposed to have dawned on India.

The ongoing protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act are a manifestation of the pent-up frustration of our millennials/Gen Z at what they clearly perceive is a bleak future. We saw it initially in the Jat, Maratha, Patidar and Kapu agitations, demanding reservation in government jobs and education institutions from around 2015, which also coincided with the deepening of the crisis and the lack of upward mobility options within agriculture. The current protests are, by contrast, not confined to any particular community or sector. Their universality derives precisely from the fact that the economy is today faced with a general growth slowdown sparing no sector or industry.

Two things must be borne in mind here. The first is, of course, diminishing employment opportunities in government. The organised public sector workforce fell from a high of 19.56 million in 1996-97 to 17.61 million in 2011-12 (we have no published data for subsequent years).

The second is an even more profound crisis: The collapse of enterprise. Some of that may have to do with the legacy of the twin balance sheet problem, of debts accumulated by private corporates during the investment boom of 2004-11 turning into bad loans of state-owned banks. But, far from fixing the problem, the current regime has worsened it by subjecting the economy to successive shocks — demonetisation, the goods and services tax, cattle slaughter restrictions, and now, uncertainty over citizenship, whose impact on investor and consumer sentiment is not to be underestimated.

Unfortunately, it is the young, vibrant and energetic generation of job-seekers who are bearing the brunt of all this. The least the government can do is to listen to them. They aren't on the streets for nothing.

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NOT A DROP TO WASTE

Atal Bhujal Yojana is a first step towards recharging groundwater. There is a need to move to more long-term solutions

IN 2020, ACCORDING to the Niti Aayog, 21 Indian cities, including Delhi, Chennai and Bengaluru, will run out of groundwater. The Aayog's "Composite Water Management Index" (CWMI), released in June, notes that "Seventy per cent of our water resources are contaminated". Several other reports, including the Central Water Commission's "Water and Water Related Statistics 2019", have thrown light on the poor state of India's groundwater aquifers. The urgency of the Atal Bhujal Yojana, launched by the Union Jal Shakti Ministry last week, can, therefore, hardly be overstated. The groundwater revival scheme ticks quite a few right boxes. It seeks to strengthen the "institutional framework of administering groundwater resources and aims to bring about behavioural changes at the community level for sustainable groundwater resource management". However, the Yojana that will be implemented in seven states — Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh — should only be seen as the first step towards restoring the health of the country's aquifers.

India has had a Groundwater Management and Regulation Scheme since 2013. The Atal Bhujal Yojana will draw on some of the institutions created by this scheme, especially village-level water user associations (WUAs). The Jal Shakti Ministry will have its task cut out. The Niti Aayog's CWMI notes that though "80 per cent states have a regulatory framework to establish such associations, progress on the ground is weak". Less than 50 per cent states involve the WUAs in critical groundwater management decisions like those pertaining to irrigation resources, according to the CWMI. The Atal Bhujal Yojana would do well to follow the Niti Aayog's recommendations for strengthening the financial state of the WUAs, including allowing these bodies to retain a significant portion of irrigation fees.

Groundwater contributes to more than 60 per cent of the country's irrigation resources. Power consumers in the agriculture sector are billed at highly subsidised rates, which several studies have shown accounts for the over-extraction of groundwater. However, there is also a substantial body of work which shows that it is politically imprudent to install electricity meters on farmers' fields. The discourse on groundwater use has to move beyond this binary: Ways must be found to balance the demands of farmers with the imperatives of reviving the country's aquifers. One solution — tried out in parts of Punjab — is to gradually reduce subsidies and offer cash compensation to farmers for every unit of electricity they save. The CWMI report talks of other solutions like persuading farmers to adopt more efficient technologies such as drip irrigation. By emphasising on local-level institutions like the WUAs, the Atal Bhujal Yojana has signaled the Jal Shakti ministry's inclination towards such persuasive solutions.



RAMIN JAHANBEGLOO

THE PRINCIPLE THAT every Indian is equal before the law — enshrined in the Indian Constitution — is an ideal Mahatma Gandhi fought for all his life. Gandhi is not alive to criticise supporters of the new citizenship law and condemn the violence that followed demonstrations in Delhi and elsewhere. But we can recall what he taught us.

Gandhi was convinced that despite many social and political contradictions, and the tragedy of Partition, India would become a secular, democratic republic. That it did, though with flaws, is because of the civic and empathetic nationalism Gandhi advocated and practised.

A striking feature of Gandhi's civic nationalism was his insistence that India is not an exclusively Hindu civilisation. His political genius lay in reconciling the complex social and religious fabric of traditional Indian society with the modern phenomenon of nationalism and the struggle for independence. As such, more than being the "father of the Indian nation" he could be remembered as the architect of an inter-faith, inter-cultural India. What Gandhi did was to give different religious communities, for the first time, a sense of involvement in the Indian nation's destiny.

Gandhi did not make the religious element an integral part of his civic nationalism. He abstained from any reference to Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism or Jainism in his definition of *swaraj*. He continually defined and defended Indian nationalism through his belief in the truth of all religions. One is not surprised, then, to see

AN UN-GANDHIAN ACT

The new citizenship law goes against Gandhi's idea of civic nationalism

Gandhi joining the Khilafat movement and calling on Indian Muslims to participate in the independence movement. Gandhi's action was shaped by his conviction that all religious boundaries are arbitrary and false. He was convinced that a mere doctrinaire approach to religion will not help consolidate the foundations of Indian civic nationalism. He knew that independence can't come about by the efforts of the Hindus alone. Gandhi never accepted the argument that Hindus and Muslims constituted two separate elements in Indian society.

Gandhi's involvement with the Khilafat movement helped him secure political authority in the Indian National Congress. He expressed sympathy for Muslims and the Khilafat movement at the Delhi Imperial War Conference in 1918 and later, followed it up with a letter to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford. "As a Hindu", he wrote, "I cannot be indifferent to their cause. Their sorrows must be our sorrows." Two years later, in response to Maganlal Gandhi who was troubled by Gandhi's involvement with Muslims, he wrote: "If I had not joined the Khilafat movement, I think, I would have lost everything. In joining it I have followed what I especially regard as my *dharma*... I am uniting Hindus and Muslims."

The questions of Indian home rule and Hindu-Muslim unity were not separate issues for Gandhi. This was why Gandhi reacted against the spectre of the "Hindu Raj" and the cry of "Islam is in danger". For Gandhi, the communal dispute between Hindus and

Muslims was not confined to religion. According to him, it was due to the lack of truthfulness and transparency in the political realm. It is, therefore, not surprising that he chose to work with individuals whose primary interests were best defined in civic and ethical terms. He once declared that "a true Muslim could not harm a Hindu, and a true Hindu could not harm a Muslim". It was probably in this spirit that Gandhi developed a friendship and a great esteem for both Maulana Azad and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. In 1939, while visiting Ghaffar Khan, Gandhi said: "If you dissect my heart, you will find that the prayer and spiritual striving for the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity goes on there unceasingly all the twenty-four hours without even a moment's interruption whether I am awake or asleep... The dream (of Hindu-Muslim unity) has filled my being since the earliest childhood."

Gandhi's assassin, Nathuram Godse, did not share his dream. Godse said: "Gandhi is being referred to as the Father of the Nation. But if that is so, he had failed his paternal duty inasmuch as he has acted very treacherously to the nation by his consenting to the partitioning of it. I stoutly maintain that Gandhi has failed in his duty. He has proved to be the Father of Pakistan."

Today, Indians have to choose between the Gandhian paradigm of civic nationalism or a second assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.

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IN GOOD FAITH

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DECEMBER 30, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

US VERSUS USSR

US PRESIDENT JIMMY Carter has denounced the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and said that he is dispatching the Deputy Secretary of State, Warren Christopher to London to consult with allies and see what can be done about it. He said that the Soviet argument that the intervention was on the basis of the UN Charter was a perversion of the Charter. He said he has discussed the matter with several heads of state. He also said that he had sent a message to the Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev to convey his criticism of the intervention.

KABUL AFTERMATH

TWO DAYS AFTER the coup in Afghanistan, India does not have a position on the situation in the country. But inquiries show that the Soviet intervention has perturbed New Delhi though it is not saying so. It fears that the intervention will escalate tension in the area. During Morarji Desai's visit to the Soviet Union last June, Moscow did put some pressure on India for evolving a joint Indo-Soviet strategy on Afghanistan. Although India agreed to the incorporation of a paragraph on the statement Brezhnev and Desai issued, it fell short of Soviet expectations. Moscow

has been rubbing in the point that it came to India's help during the war in Bangladesh in 1971 and as such it should back the Soviet stand in Afghanistan. Now Delhi has not appreciated the analogy.

RAM'S PROMISE

THE JANATA PARTY leader Jagjivan Ram has said that if voted to power his party will provide allowance and work in social service programmes for poor unemployed graduates. He also reiterated his party's determination to ensure that each family in the country had at least one earning member.

