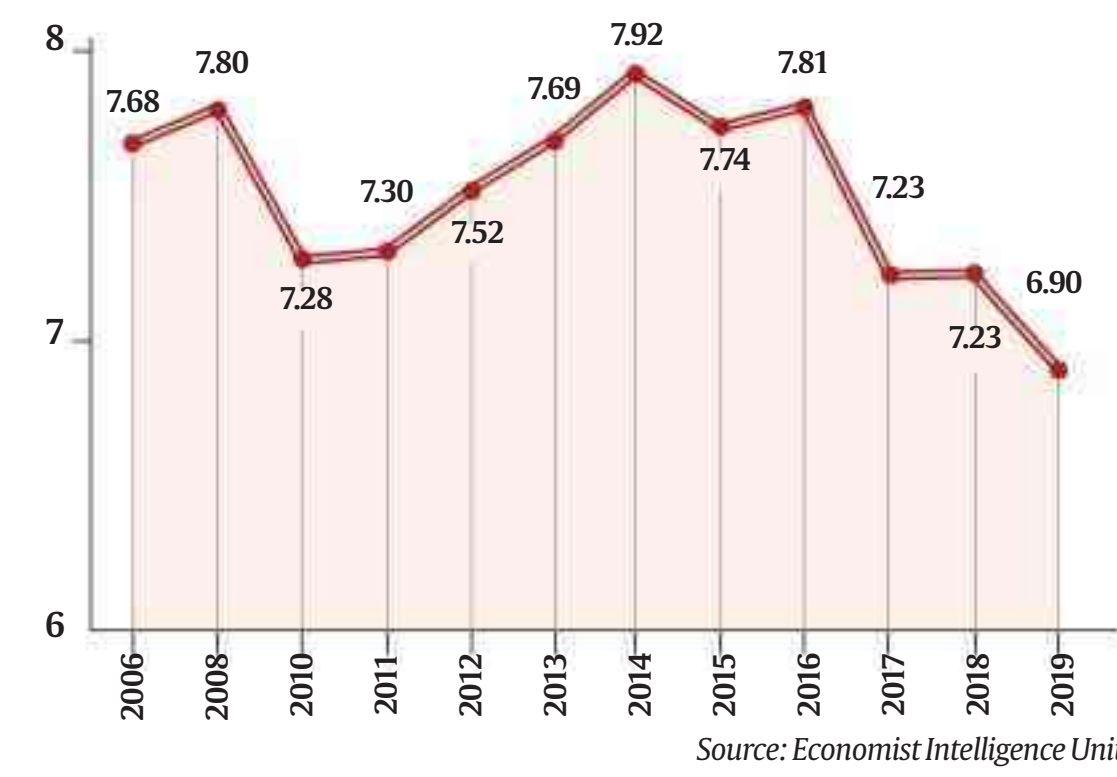


TELLING NUMBERS

In Economist's Democracy Index, India at its lowest ranking ever

INDIA'S SCORES IN DEMOCRACY INDEX, 2006-19



INDIA SLIPPED 10 places to 51st position in the latest Democracy Index global rankings published by The Economist Intelligence Unit. Its score, down from 7.23 in 2018 to 6.90 in 2019, is its lowest ever since the Democracy Index was begun in 2006, the report shows. The report ranks 165 independent states and two territories, covering almost the entire population of the world.

"The primary cause of the democratic regression was an erosion of civil liberties in the country," the report said. It mentioned the stripping of Jammu and Kashmir's special status with the repeal of Articles 370 and 35A, the various security measures that followed the bifurcation of the state including restriction of Internet access, and the exclusion of 1.9 million people from the final NRC (National Register of Citizens) in Assam.

"Civil liberties" is one of five categories on which the Democracy Index is based. The other four are electoral process and pluralism; functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. On a scale of 0 to 10, India's scores were 8.67 in electoral process and pluralism, 6.79 in functioning of government; 6.67 in political participation; 5.63 in political culture; and 6.76 in civil liberties.

Based on the total score, countries are classified as "full democracy" (scores greater than 8); "flawed democracy" (greater than 6 and up to 8); "hybrid regime" (greater than 4 and up to 6); or "authoritarian regime" (less than or equal to 4). By that yardstick, India's score of 7.23 places it in the "flawed democracy" category, which also includes Bangladesh (5.88). Pakistan, with a score of 4.25, is categorised as a "hybrid democracy"; China (2.26) and North Korea (bottom-ranked with 1.08) are categorised as "authoritarian regimes"; and Norway (top-ranked with 9.87) is counted as a "full democracy".

Following Norway at the top of the rankings are Iceland (9.58), Sweden

SELECTED COUNTRIES, 2019

Country	Score	Rank
Norway	9.87	1
Iceland	9.58	2
Sweden	9.39	3
New Zealand	9.26	4
Germany	8.68	13
UK	8.52	14
France	8.12	20
United States	7.96	25
Israel	7.86	28
India	6.90	51
Brazil	6.86	52
Sri Lanka	6.27	69
Bangladesh	5.88	80
Nepal	5.28	92
Pakistan	4.25	108
Myanmar	3.55	122
Russia	3.11	134
China	2.26	153
Saudi Arabia	1.93	159
North Korea	1.08	167

BREAKUP OF INDIA'S SCORE

Electoral process and pluralism	8.67
Functioning of government	6.79
Political participation	6.67
Political culture	5.63
Civil liberties	6.76

6.90 India's final score, which is the average of its scores in the five categories

(9.39) and New Zealand (9.26). Other "full democracies" include Germany, the United Kingdom and France. The United States, with a score of 7.96 that is just below the benchmark for a "full democracy", is a "flawed democracy", in the same category as India.

In 2019, the average global score fell from 5.48 in 2018 to 5.44, the worst result since 2006.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

How MBS hacked Bezos

A UN report has confirmed that a WhatsApp video sent by the Saudi Crown Prince to the Amazon founder contained code that stole data from the latter's phone. Pegasus spyware was likely used in the hacking

SHRUTI DHAPOLA

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

A MALICIOUS file attached to an encrypted video message sent on WhatsApp is believed to have been used in hacking Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos's iPhone in May 2018. The sender of the message: Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammad bin Salman (MBS).

The *Financial Times* and *The Guardian* reported on Wednesday that a forensic analysis of Bezos's phone showed that it was compromised via the WhatsApp message.

A United Nations report released late on Wednesday evening confirmed the hacking and provided extensive forensic details. It said Bezos was "subjected to intrusive surveillance via hacking of his phone as a result of actions attributable to the WhatsApp account used by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman", and linked the break-in to criticism of the Saudi regime and Prince Mohammad personally by *The Washington Post*, the media organisation that Bezos owns.

The report has concluded the Pegasus spyware developed by the Israeli firm NSO Group was "most likely" used in the hacking. Pegasus was used last year to target some 1,400 devices in 20 countries across four continents, including at least two dozen academics, lawyers, Dalit activists, and journalists in India.

The UN report called for further investigations into the contravention of the "fundamental international human rights standard", as evidenced by the targeting of Bezos.

Why was Bezos's phone hacked? What exactly happened?

That Bezos's phone had been compromised was reported last year, and it was suspected that Saudi Arabia had a hand in the hacking. What has now been confirmed is the vector, and the method used for the hacking — and that Prince Mohammad was personally involved.

In February 2019, Bezos wrote a blog post alleging he was being blackmailed by David Pecker, the CEO of American Media Inc (AMI), which owns the tabloid *The National Enquirer*. The tabloid had published intimate text messages that Bezos had sent to his friend Lauren Sanchez.



Jeff Bezos with Mohd bin Salman in the US in March 2018. [Twitter/SaudiEmbassyUSA](https://twitter.com/SaudiEmbassyUSA)

WHAT IS PEGASUS?

IT IS a spyware that can infect both Android and iOS phones. It is usually deployed by sending a specially created link to the target device. Once deployed, the hacker has complete access to the data on the victim's phone. The spyware can be used to monitor the device, and even turn on the camera and microphone to eavesdrop on targets.

ALL DATA collected from the device are sent back to the NSO Group's Pegasus servers. NSO has in the past claimed its software is only licensed to law enforcement agencies, and not

used to spy on users. It is believed that the cost of a license for Pegasus is exorbitant enough to ensure that only governments are customers.

IN OCTOBER 2019, it was revealed that the NSO Group had exploited a vulnerability in WhatsApp's voice/video calling protocol to plant the spyware on phones. All that was needed was a voice or video call to the victim's phone on WhatsApp — the victim didn't have to take the call; a missed call was enough. Some two dozen devices used by Indian activists and journalists were targeted.

phone, and that the Saudis were responsible.

So how was WhatsApp used to hack into Bezos's phone?

The UN report says that on May 1, 2018, "a message from the Crown Prince account (was) sent to Bezos through WhatsApp". The message was an encrypted video file, and "the video's downloader infect(ed) Bezos's phone with malicious code". The spyware then stole "gigabytes worth of data" over months.

An analysis of the suspect video file initially did not reveal the presence of malware; this was only confirmed by further analysis.

Why mounted police are back in Mumbai

SRINATH RAO

MUMBAI, JANUARY 22

ON SUNDAY, Mumbai Police announced the return of the force's Mounted Unit after a gap of 88 years. For the last four months, the force has been training 13 horses and their riders for the Republic Day Parade at Shivaji Park, Dadar.

Why was the Mounted Unit discontinued?

In 1932, Bombay Police Commissioner Sir Patrick Kelly noted that the rising number of motor vehicles left little space for police horses to move about. Retired Assistant Commissioner of Police and police historian Rohidas Dussar said Kelly decided to replace the animals with patrol cars. The same year, a Motor Transport Unit replaced the Mounted Unit, and stables in South Mumbai, were replaced with garages, fuel pumps and parking spaces.

So, why revive the Mounted Unit?

A constable astride a horse is seen as more able to command fear and respect from an unruly crowd, which he or she might not have



Mounted police practise at Shivaji Park, Mumbai. [Ganesh Shirsekhar](https://www.facebook.com/ganeshshirsekhar)

commanded on the ground. "Just because it is an old idea, that does not mean it is obsolete. All major cities of the world have mounted units. When used judiciously, they help a lot in crowd control," said Pranaya Ashok, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Operations) and Mumbai Police spokesperson.

Among the states, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, MP, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu,

Telangana, Uttarakhand, UP and West Bengal have mounted units, some of which date back to the 18th and 19th centuries.

Subedar (Retd) R T Nirmal, of the 61st Cavalry, who is training the Mumbai Police's horses and riders, says the horses will be able to navigate Mumbai's congested roads better. "A rider on a horse will be able to reach a spot much quicker than a police car and report back."

How large is the unit?

In 2018, then Mumbai Police Commissioner and Subodh Kumar Jaiswal (now Maharashtra DGP) submitted a proposal to acquire 30 horses at a cost of Rs 1.5 crore. The government sanctioned the proposal in March last year, and a 2.5-acre plot at Mumbai Police headquarters in Andheri East was identified to build stables, a riding school, a sand bath, a swimming pool for horses and an administrative unit for riders. Additional provisions were made in the police budget for the upkeep of the horses.

In the week leading up to Republic Day, the horses have been staying at makeshift stables in Shivaji Park. From next week, they will return to stables in Karjat in Raigad dis-

trict until the new facility is ready.

In a video tweeted by Mumbai Police, the riders wore a blue *sherwani* with silver trimming, white breeches and a *pagdi* designed by Manish Malhotra.

How and when will the unit be deployed?

The present stable of 13 — seven thoroughbreds named Padmakosha, Shivalik Skies, Divine Solitaire, Beekwerk, Severus and Golden Orchid and six Marwaris named Veer, Toophan, Shera, Chetak, Baadal and Bijli — is still several months away from being deployed. Schedules and details of deployment are yet to be fixed.

Since last year, Subedar Nirmal has been getting them acclimatised to patrolling on the beach, walking in water and among dense crowds at Dadar Chowpatty. He also plans to get the horses used to walking on tar, concrete and paver-block surfaced roads, but they will not do so full time. "As and when a law and order situation arises, we will transport the horses to the spot by car and deploy them to bring crowds under control," an official said.

How new tech is raising the bar for lab-grown and vegetarian meats

POOJA PILLAI

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 22

AT CES 2020 tech showcase in Las Vegas earlier this month, Impossible Foods, the California-based alternative meat producer, unveiled the "Impossible Pork", a plant-based pork substitute that is kosher and *halal*, and which claims to have the taste, texture, and mouthfeel of the real thing. Also unveiled was the Impossible Sausage, a plant-based and pre-seasoned alternative to actual sausages.

In 2016, Impossible Foods launched its flagship Impossible Burger, a plant-based replacement that "smells, handles, cooks and tastes like ground beef from cows". Soon afterward, Impossible Burger was available at major fast food chains, in some restaurants in the United States, Hong Kong, Macau, and Singapore, and in a few American grocery stores.

Who else is manufacturing alternative meats?

Startups around the world are presenting technological solutions to replace traditional meat, seafood, milk (and dairy products), and eggs. Beyond Meat, also

based in California, has created beef-substitute burgers, beef, and beef crumble, as well as a "Beyond Sausage" meant to replace pork sausages. The company supplied McDonald's first plant-based burger, PLT (Plant Lettuce Tomato), which was rolled out in select Canadian outlets in September last year. Beyond Meat is also partnering with other fast food chains such as Dunkin', Del Taco, Subway, KFC, and Carl's Jr.

Barcelona-based Novameat, and the Israeli food tech startup Redefine Meat are making 3D-printed, plant-based meat. Some lab-grown meat startups are creating meat from chicken, pig, and cow cells — Memphis Meats, based in California, created the first cell-based meatball in 2016; the Dutch company Meatable has developed a commercially viable process of using stem cells to make cheaper, fast-growing meat in its labs.

In India, Udaipur-based startup Good Dot is making "vegetarian meat" using plants. The Institute of Chemical Technology, Mumbai has partnered with nonprofit The Good Food Institute India to set up a centre to research and develop cell-based meat.

Perhaps the biggest indicator of alternative meats having moved beyond being just a fad, is that even food industry giants such



'Alternative meat' is a small market but expected to grow.

as Tyson, Perdue, Nestlé, and Smithfield have jumped in. Nestlé launched its meatless Awesome Burger in September last year.

What is the science of alternative meat?

Plant-based alternative "mock meats" made of soya, jackfruit, mushrooms etc., have been around for a while; what is different now is the extent and sophistication of the technological intervention to create "meat" that is remarkably similar to the real thing in taste and texture. Reviews for Impossible Pork are unanimous that it is as good as real pork

Many plant-based meat companies achieve this by combining plant proteins derived from rice, beans etc. with fats from coconut or sunflower oil, cocoa butter, etc. Some, like Good Dot, use derivatives from yeast to get the meaty flavour. The European Union-funded Smart Protein project is using spent yeast and other byproducts of the manufacture of pasta, bread, and beer.

Impossible Foods says it has created vegan heme (or haem), the iron-containing molecule that is found in all living organisms and is believed to be what makes meat taste meaty. Impossible Foods says that its products "get their heme from the protein soy leghemoglobin, which is naturally found in soy roots", but which it produces through "genetic engineering and fermentation". This, the company says, makes Impossible meats taste like actual meat, and also causes them to "bleed".

How big is the alternative meat market?

Barclays said in a report last August that alternative meats are still only 1% (\$14 billion) of the \$1.4 trillion global meat industry; they are, however, expected to grow to 10% over the next decade.

With rising availability and consumer demand in the US and Europe, investors are backing what is seen as the next big thing in food tech. When Beyond Meat went public in May last year, it soared 163% over its IPO price, becoming the best-performing first-day IPO since 2000. In the same month, Impossible Foods raised \$300 million in its Series E round; in all, it has raised \$687.5 million in various rounds of funding since 2011.

Earlier this month, cell-cultured meat startup New Age Meat raised \$2.7 million in seed funding, and Gathered Foods, the makers of plant-based seafood Good Catch, raised \$32 million in Series B funding. Beyond Meat shares gained over 27% in the week ended January 10 — its best performance since July last year.

Industry stakeholders will be hoping the promise does not fizzle out like the dotcom bubble of the late 90s.

But why eat alternative meats?

Environmental sustainability is the most compelling reason. Industrial livestock farming is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and is a huge drain on land and water resources. Plant-based and lab-grown meats on the same scale will

have a much smaller carbon footprint.

Health is another: aside from high cholesterol, antibiotic resistance is a concern, since animals on factory farms are given massive doses of antibiotics to stave off diseases. However, heavily processed alternative meats may not be as healthy as is often claimed. A single serving (113 g) of the Impossible Burger 2.0 has 370 mg sodium, more than four times the 75 mg/100 g on average in traditional lean, ground beef patty.

The third reason is moral. Arguments for vegetarian or veganism as a way to reduce cruelty to animals may find more takers if alternative meats that closely mimic the taste and texture of real meat is easily available. Then there is food security. An example is playing out currently in China, where the culling of millions of pigs in the wake of the African swine flu epidemic has led to a severe shortage of pork. In the world's biggest producer and consumer of pork, prices in December 2019 were double that of December 2018, and are bound to cast a shadow over the Spring Festival/New Year celebrations that will begin on Friday. At the launch of the Impossible Pork, company CEO Pat Brown said the next step would be expansion into Asia, with a particular focus on China.



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

3-CAPITAL THEORY

Andhra Pradesh is to have a lot of logistical headaches and not much decentralised development to show for it

IN 2009, FANTASY writer China Miéville bowled over readers with *The City and the City*, set in two metros which exist in each other's space — and there are rumours of a third city hidden in the interstices. Now, in Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has green-lighted a story just as fantastical — the passage of the Andhra Pradesh Decentralisation and Equal Development of All Regions Bill sets the stage for three capitals. While Miéville's cities intrigued by violating geometry to share the same space, Reddy's scheme baffles because of the distances involved. The executive capital, Visakhapatnam, is 700 km from Kurnool, the judicial capital, and 400 km from Amaravati, the legislative capital, which is 370 km from Kurnool. By Euclid's principles, the day-to-day business of government in Andhra Pradesh is about to become a logistical nightmare.

While the Mughals and the Raj had contented themselves with two seasonal capitals, to protect top officials from extreme weather, geographically splitting the arms of government has not been attempted before. The government argues that the idea of decentralisation dates back to the Sri Bagh pact of 1937, and that the development of Hyderabad into an IT hub rivalling Bangalore by N Chandrababu Naidu has starved other regions of the state of development. The Justice BN Srikrishna Committee of 2010 and the K Sivaramakrishnan Committee of 2014 had suggested more even development. The GN Rao Committee of 2019 suggested three capitals and the Boston Consulting Group had recommended the locations. The government also argues that officials could easily travel to Amaravati to brief ministers when the legislature is in session. However, they would have to stay put there for the duration, abandoning their day-to-day duties in Visakhapatnam. Meanwhile, police officers would have to travel from their headquarters in Mangalagiri to the secretariat in Visakhapatnam. And since much of important litigation involves the administration and the police, everyone would have to travel regularly to Kurnool. The travel bill would be steep, and the inefficiencies generated by the system would rapidly erode possible gains in decentralised development.

This illogical scheme may be explained by political rivalry. In 2015, N Chandrababu Naidu, the first chief minister of divided Andhra Pradesh, had laid the foundations for a new capital in Amaravati in the presence of the prime minister and the vice president. However, the scheme faltered for lack of central support and when Reddy's YSR Congress swept to power, the three-capital theory replaced it. If the intention was to dilute Naidu's idea of Amaravati — itself an inefficient choice, since well-developed Vijayawada is nearby — satisfaction will come at an exorbitant cost. Reddy should use his energies in dealing with farm distress, the issue that had swept him to an absolute majority last year.

PARTIAL REDEMPTION

SC decision to reinstate employee who charged ex-CJI with misconduct is welcome. Now set up institutional mechanisms

THE SUPREME COURT has done well to reinstate in service the woman staffer who had, in April last year, raised allegations of sexual misconduct against the then Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi. The complainant, a junior assistant, had also claimed that she was victimised after making the accusations — her services were terminated and her husband and brother-in-law suspended from the Delhi Police. The suspension orders of the court staffer's relatives were revoked in June last year. And on Wednesday, this paper reported that the SC has cleared the employee's arrears and she has proceeded on leave, after joining duty. All these may signal an end to some of the complainant's travails. The question, however, remains: Has the court done enough to bring satisfactory closure to the case that raised crucial issues of institutional propriety?

A three-member panel comprising Justices SA Bobde, Indira Banerjee and Indu Malhotra was set up to probe the charges against CJI Gogoi. Given that a junior official of the court was ranged against the institution's highest functionary, the panel's first task should have been to institute procedures to mitigate this power asymmetry. But the panel seemed insensitive to this calling. It wound up the investigation in four days, three of which were spent in questioning the complainant. On the fourth day, the complainant withdrew from the probe, accusing the committee of not informing her about its procedures, denying her legal help and not providing her with a copy of her depositions before it.

The SC does have a Gender Sensitisation and Internal Complaints Committee. But its mandate does not extend to "any female who is governed by the Supreme Court's service regulations". Women employees of the court can ask the CJI to invoke the "In-House Procedure" to address sexual harassment complaints. But this procedure, formulated in 1999 is, at best, a self-regulatory method to pull up sitting judges for "bad behaviour". Moreover, it's an arbitrary method which allows the panel to devise its own processes — that is what seems to have happened in CJI Gogoi's case. After the complainant withdrew from the probe, the panel proceeded *ex parte* and did not reveal its report that exonerated Gogoi. In doing so, the panel not only went against the jurisprudence on gender justice encapsulated in several of the SC's own verdicts, it also flouted the principles of natural justice. The Court's decision to reinstate the complainant is a partial redemption. The Supreme Court remains poorer for the lack of an institutional mechanism to address any complaints of sexual misconduct against its highest functionaries.

RIP, BERNARD

Derek Fowlds will be remembered for the many ways in which he said 'Yes, Minister'

A COMMON EXERCISE among theatre practitioners is to say a line in many ways, altering with subtleties of accent and expression its meaning. So, whether the emphasis is placed on "be" or "not" in "to be or not to be" makes all the difference. Derek Fowlds, who died last week, at 82, managed to say so many different things with just two words, when he played Bernard Woolley, the junior civil servant and private secretary to minister and later British Prime Minister Jim Hacker, in *Yes, Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister*.

Yes, Minister and its sequel had, and continue to have, a particular resonance in India. This is in part due to the fact that this country shares the Westminster system with the British and much of the Commonwealth — the obfuscations of British bureaucratic language, the compositeness of civil servants, have deep resonance with anyone who has interacted with *babus* or the *sarkar*. But what truly set apart *Yes, Minister* — and even its Indian remake, *Ji Mantriji* — was that the agents of the state were not villainous. Each of them — the minister, the private secretary and the senior permanent secretary, Sir Humphrey — had a logic to their actions. The politician, answerable to the people, wanted quick-fixes and the civil servant wanted things to stay the same.

In *Yes, Minister*, we never find out which party Hacker belongs to, nor the political leanings of Bernard and Sir Humphrey. But the show illustrated for the world an important lesson about the nature of the state: The steel frame is conservative. And it can find ways to circumvent the politician. The ways in which Fowlds managed to say "Yes, Minister" and "Of course, Sir Humphrey" were a subversion of all the preening and certainty that the powerful deploy.



MAITREESH GHATAK

Where demand has gone

With a huge informal economy, government should increase spending, not worry about deficit

THAT INDIA IS in the midst of a serious economic slowdown is no longer in question. The debates are now mostly about what to do about it: Whether to opt for a fiscal expansion to boost demand or to carry out deep reforms to raise productivity and the growth potential of the economy. As per the recent release by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the growth rate of the GDP in real terms is now 5 per cent, the lowest in more than a decade, and that of the nominal GDP is 7.5 per cent — the lowest in four decades. Technically, this is being called a slowdown and not a recession, since in absolute terms GDP has not fallen.

Yet, the leaked National Sample Survey (NSS) consumer expenditure data — a report that was withheld and now has been officially withdrawn — shows that real monthly per capita expenditure has in fact fallen in absolute terms between 2011-12 and 2017-18. In rural areas, consumption expenditure decreased by 8.8 per cent, while in urban areas it increased by 2 per cent, leading to an all India decline of 3.7 per cent.

This is a striking fact as there has never been a decrease in the average level — a contraction rather than growth — in all the NSS consumer expenditure surveys since liberalisation. If average consumer expenditure is down, then where is the GDP growth coming from? After all, according to National Accounts Statistics (NAS) that produce the estimates for national income, consumer expenditure is around 60 per cent of the GDP. Investment (or gross fixed capital formation, to be precise) is about 30 per cent of the GDP, and its growth rate has plummeted to less than 1 per cent according to latest estimates. And while government expenditure has grown at a high rate (around 10 per cent), it is only about 10 per cent of the GDP. Accordingly, growth in investment and government spending contribute 1.3 percentage points to the overall GDP growth rate, and so to get an overall 5 per cent growth rate, consumer expenditure should be growing at higher than 5 per cent.

This is a genuine puzzle: How can consumption expenditure be going down in absolute terms according to the NSS estimates and be growing at more than 5 per cent according to the NAS? That these two types of

estimates of consumption expenditure do not match is well-known, and that is the case in other countries as well. However, as has been noted in a recent column by C Rangarajan and S Mahendra Dev, it is a puzzle as to why the gap between the two estimates has widened so much over the last few decades in India. In the very latest round, they note, the discrepancy had reached alarming proportions: In the 1970s, consumer expenditure according to NSS estimates was around 90 per cent of consumer expenditure according to NAS, but in 2017-18 it was only 32.3 per cent. It is as if we are looking at data from two different countries, one where consumption expenditure growth is positive and propping up the GDP growth rate and the other where it is actually falling.

There is scope for criticism of both data sources and to get to the bottom of this issue making the NSS report available in full is a first step. However, a few inferences can be drawn that pertain to the debate around the state of the economy and the policy options.

First, as is well-known, the presence of a large informal sector plays a big role in the discrepancy between the NSS and NAS estimates. It accounts for nearly half of the GDP and employs 85 per cent of the labour force. Yet, in national income accounts, growth in the informal sector is estimated by extrapolating from the performance of the formal sector. As the newly appointed chairman of the Standing Committee on Statistics, Pronab Sen, put it in a recent interview, it is largely guesswork.

Second, because of the presence of the informal sector, expansionary fiscal policy will be more effective than what would appear from official statistics, as a big part of its impact will be felt in the informal sector. Indeed, the expansionary effect will be larger than what can be guessed from the formal sector expansion. The reason is that a big segment of the population is located in the informal sector; they are poorer and tend to spend a much higher fraction of their income on consumption. This group has been seriously affected by the economic slowdown. Calculations by S Subramanian, based on the draft NSS report, confirm that there was a rise in the rate of poverty between 2011-12 and 2017-18, with

a pronounced spike in rural areas.

Third, it is true that the fiscal space is quite tight for an expansion, given the size of the existing deficit and the limited scope for raising more tax revenues or borrowings. However, the effect of an expansionary policy on the budget deficit will look much worse than what it would be since the estimates of its effect on income expansion and tax collection will be largely based on the formal sector. But, some of the income generated in the informal sector will boost demand in the formal sector through consumer demand for mass-consumption items (for instance, biscuits, as opposed to automobiles). Therefore, in the medium term, once the engine of the economy starts moving, the income expansion and deficit numbers will look better.

Finally, policies such as personal and corporate income tax cuts, which are being talked about, will achieve precious little. To start with, they will affect barely 3-5 per cent of the adult population. Also, income tax revenues amount to around 2.5 per cent of the GDP and corporate income taxes around 3.3 per cent. So, irrespective of the number of people affected, and even if they spend the entire increase in their income as a result of the tax cut, the overall economic impact will be small relative to the GDP. Moreover, most of the tax is paid by the richest among these groups (the top 5 per cent taxpayers contribute 60 per cent of individual income tax revenue), and the rich tend to spend a smaller fraction of their income (and save more). Also, leveraged firms and households will possibly use the money to save or repay loans rather than consume. Therefore, a tax cut for the rich would be less effective in raising spending compared to an equivalent amount being given to poorer groups who spend a much higher fraction of their incomes.

To sum up, fiscal pessimists and hawks are underestimating the role of the informal sector. To get the engine of the economy revving, an expansionary fiscal policy that harnesses the energy of the informal sector to boost aggregate demand is the order of the day.

The writer is professor of economics at London School of Economics

Fiscal pessimists and hawks are underestimating the role of the informal sector. To get the engine of the economy revving, an expansionary fiscal policy that harnesses the energy of the informal sector to boost aggregate demand is the order of the day.



VALSON THAMPY

A HYMN IN RETREAT

Removing 'Abide with me' from Beating Retreat legitimises politics of exclusion

WE SHALL BEAT the retreat differently this year. The universally loved hymn, *Abide with me*, by Henry Francis Lyte and set to the tune of Eventide by William Henry Monk, shall not be heard in the eventide of January 29. The secret of the enduring appeal of the hymn, which Alfred Lord Tennyson deemed worthy enough "to rank among the really perfect poems of the English language", is that it embodies the universal human longing for companionship in perilous situations such as the soldiers, more than others, face. But, it is a Christian hymn. Also, its incorporation into the solemn ceremony has a colonial background — like the railways, postal service and many an aspect of our legal system and governance.

So, it offends that in Narendra Modi's New India, an ingredient of Christian flavour remains like a colonial relic in a solemn national ceremony. The deletion of this hymn is an issue; but it is hardly a Christian issue. It would be hypocritical for Christians to sound aggrieved for the reason that most Christians hardly value it. Of course, the hymn is still sung on occasions, but the less said about how hymns are sung, the better. No one pays heed to what hymns mean. No one feels their lyrical, spiritual, emotional value. So, this does not bother me as a Christian problem.

But it is a problem and that problem pertains to the "India of our dreams". It is, on the contrary, a shot in the arm for those who endorse the New India in the making, the hallmark of which is hostility to alterity or other-

ness. The India of our dreams was, in contrast, hospitable to alterity. In the emerging scheme of things, the core Hindu value of hospitality — openness to the "other" as distinct and different from oneself — was a basic *dharma*. The right thing was not to thrive by excluding or subjugating the other, but by co-existing harmoniously with all. Admittedly, we have been remiss in taking for granted this value in a multi-religious society and secular society. We did little to nurture or promote it. So, hospitality to otherness ceased to have ethical vibrancy. The idea of tolerance became sterile.

Emmanuel Levinas, who narrowly escaped the Holocaust — he lost his parents, siblings and grandparents in the Nazi ethnic cleansing — points out that to move from an outlook of alterity to alterity, for one to feel at home in the given national context, one has to "possess" the nation. The state of "possessing" remains incomplete and unstable until all manifestations and markers of otherness are nullified or eradicated. This psychological compulsion, and the cacophony of its operations, are now in evidence. So, the candidates list in various BJP-dominated states were sanitised of otherness. This latent process of "exclusion" was followed up with measures of discrimination. This explains, besides, the sense of power and consolidation in re-naming cities, roads and, in due course, monuments. The significance of the exclusion of the hymn is metaphorical. The problem is not that a hymn is excluded; the problem is that the principle of arbitrary exclusion

is legitimised.

But this allergy to otherness is not exclusive to Hindutva. Muslims and Christians are the alter egos of Hindutva in this respect. I took a stand, two decades ago, against conversion and advocated a moratorium on it. I was troubled by its underlying attitude. Conversion is, in theory, a liberating outreach to victims of socio-cultural exclusion. But, in practice, it reeks of negativity to otherness. It is more the excitement of facilitating a shift from a different religious constituency to one's own. The conversion of an affluent and influential gentleman is a greater hit than the conversion of a subaltern. Also, the demographic and political dividends of conversion matter more than its religious worth. The proof? Well, converts lose their value soon after conversion. They remain discriminated against within the Christian community.

The vision of the Constitution of India has an instinctive hospitality to otherness, which is the essence of pluralist democracy. The values foregrounded in the Preamble — liberty, equality, fraternity, justice — hinge on alterity. India as unity-in-diversity is now under challenge and not merely at the political level. A new paradigm — unity as hostility to diversity — is on the rise. A hymn is in retreat; let it be. A way of living together as "We, the people of India" also is. That matters.

The writer was principal of St. Stephen's College, Delhi



JANUARY 23, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

DEFECTION TO CONG (I) HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER Bhajan Lal, along with 38 MLAs of the Janata and Lok Dal, defected to the Congress (I). Haryana is the first state to defect under the Congress (I) threat to dissolve state assemblies in the non-Congress (I) states. Mukhtiar Singh, president of the state Janata unit, along with five party general secretaries and professor Sher Singh, former Union Minister, has also resigned from the Janata Party and joined the Congress (I).

SOCIALIST SUPPORT SOCIALIST COUNTRIES SUPPORTED the developing countries at the UNIDO conference

in New Delhi by speaking in favour of the proposals made by the "Group of 77" which met in Havana recently. In contrast, some of the representatives of developed countries emphasised the need to adopt a realistic attitude in achieving mutually agreed goals. The difference in the stand was visible in the speeches of the delegates from the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Italy and the commission of the European Economic Community.

BANGLA RIVER ISSUE THE BANGLADESH PRESIDENT, General Ziaur Rahman, said that the detailed discussions he had with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi

would "surely" help resolve the border problem, and the question of the sharing of river waters. Speaking to newsmen before his departure for Dacca after a two-day visit, General Zia said "we hope to reach a solution on the issues of border and water."

BHAJAN LAL BETRAYAL SWAMI AGNIVESH, JANATA MLA and former education minister of Haryana, has condemned chief minister Bhajan Lal for "betraying the Janata Party" and "blackmailing" legislators into joining the Congress (I) camp. He said that Lal was largely responsible for the poor showing of the Janata Party in the recent Lok Sabha elections in the state.

Re-make the mentor

Athlete-coach relations have bordered on a feudal paternalism that can foster predators. That culture must change



MEENA GOPAL

THE REPORT BY the *Indian Express* (January 16) on the cases of sexual harassment — unearthed via RTI — of women (mostly minor) athletes training in the Sports Authority of India (SAI) centres is outrageous and painful. What is most shocking is that the majority of cases are complaints against those who mentor, teach and train the athletes: Twenty-nine of the 45 cases of sexual harassment in 24 centres of the SAI over the past 10 years, with numerous complaints pending, are against coaches.

While sexual harassment within institutions is not new and the burden to complain and call to account has been shouldered by women undergoing the trauma, the concerns raised by India's own #MeToo campaign are now finally resonating in the sports arena. It has revealed the underbelly of rampant corruption that goes on not just by way of doping but sexual harassment — two of sports' most deep-rooted problems. Just as in the cases of gymnasts and figure-skating athletes in the US, where young women, and sometimes men in their teens, had to undergo years of sexual abuse and harassment with debilitating impact on their minds, bodies and futures, the report uncovers this horrific experience in the Indian sports establishment, and, points to the urgent need for recourse to justice.

In the last couple of years in India, young women in educational spaces have been clamouring for the implementation of due processes to obtain justice in sexual harassment cases. And when that has frustrated them, they have resorted, legitimately, to calling them out, by what is referred to as naming and shaming of professors and academics. This manner of response from women from some educational institutions has not been easy. However, the act of coming out to name perpetrators after undergoing trauma for years is doubly painful for those in institutions as rigid and removed from the mainstream as sporting centres, where the stakes are much higher. Arriving at a sporting institution, being mentored, prepared and coached is a stepping stone in terms of class and status mobility. It is with tremendous courage, and following immense suffering, that these women have called out their perpetrators. Hence, more reason why due processes and accountability measures have to be in place.

When young women come to sport, it's very much like, and yet quite unlike, how young men come to sport. Their subsequent trajectories vary as well. But when both do well, women's specific journeys are hardly charted. Many young individuals see sports as a way out of their marginality, be it class, caste, gender or sexual expression. The sports quota admissions in colleges and universities are a sure way to nurture your talent which will then land you a decent job again via sports quotas in banks, the railways or any public sector corporation — a definite way of ensuring social mobility.

As a 16-year-old, a third place in the combined track-and-field event, heptathlon, in a national competition, landed me a place in the 1982 Asian Games preparatory camp at



CR Sasikumar

the National Institute of Sports, Patiala, of the pre-SAI days. Coming from a school where the principal observed promising youngsters before sending them to train in local clubs and, thereafter, through local competitions into the state and national events, I was unaware of the "culture" of national sporting camps and centres — the same kind of culture that the former director-general of SAI mentions in another report in this publication (IE, January 17). Athletes paid "respect" to the coaches, touched their feet at the beginning of the day, and often had individual mentor-mentee relationships, instead of training as part of a group. At first, I took this to be a pattern geared to infuse drive and dedication for international competitions. But later, I realised that these were remnants of feudal practices of subservience, service, and loyalty that bound athletes to their coaches, bordering sometimes on quid-pro-quo traps for the athletes. It is shocking that this culture continues to date, as reported in the numerous "extractions" that coaches seek out of their mentees.

In India, we have been unable to adopt the model perfected in European countries, where schools become catchment areas for sporting talent, which are then nurtured through training and competition at district, state, and national levels. The setting up of the SAI in 1984, and its development via schemes and centres for training, was the only way to reach out to vast sections of young aspirants who have no access to private avenues for sporting excellence. In fact, around the same period, states such as Kerala

At present, many international and celebrity sports men and women have emerged out of elite academies with individual attention and mentoring — they are lauded in the media and in public discourse, leading to a marginalisation of the institutional mechanisms that draw talent from schools, and upwards from that point. The SAIs were an attempt to retain an institutional and a purportedly democratic outreach for talent, but instead, it now reflects a redundant culture of mentorship which continues to retain shades of feudal relations.

had indeed nurtured, through their own sports schools and sports hostels, similar talent: Some of my contemporaries of that time include PT Usha, Shiny Wilson, and Mercy Kuttan, all products of these state sports institutions.

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Casting out this masculinist and feudal ethos, sports mentoring needs to embody genuine care and encouragement. The sports coaching centre and the coach should act as a fulcrum between society that throws up talent via schools or private associations, and athletes, who emerge not just as champions winning laurels for the country but as individuals who receive the right nurturing, and are committed to their sport. This is what we expect in coaches as mentors, rather than the brand of paternalism that paves the way for predators.

The writer teaches women's studies at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai and is a former Indian Universities record holder in heptathlon

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Bangladesh is a proud nation where communities of different faiths have lived side by side for centuries. Any move that threatens that harmony should be actively protested against. We hope the Bangladesh government will convey these concerns to the Indian side." — DAILY STAR, BANGLADESH

Constitution, not Parliament

Making unclear statements about state governments being duty-bound to implement CAA may be construed as showing disregard for people's struggle



PRABHAT PATNAIK

DISTINGUISHED LAWYER (AND my old college friend) Kapil Sibal is reported to have expressed the opinion that state governments are constitutionally obliged to implement the Citizenship Amendment Act, an opinion reportedly seconded by another distinguished lawyer, Salman Khurshid. Being an economist and not a lawyer, I feel hesitant to contest the views of these legal luminaries. But I am convinced that they cannot be right, for what they are saying violates a basic principle of jurisprudence — the Nuremberg principle — so named because of the trial at which it was enunciated.

At the Nuremberg trial, where Nazi officials accused of various war crimes were being tried, the defence plea was that the accused were merely carrying out orders. This argument was rejected, and sentences were handed down on the principle that a person, no matter what the orders were, has to take responsibility for his or her actions. If an order was "illegal" or violated universally-accepted norms of basic humanity (such as not killing innocent people), then a person could not escape culpability simply by claiming that he or she was carrying out an order.

The Nuremberg principle was not enunciated just to punish war criminals of a bygone era. It forms a cornerstone of any democratic jurisprudence, including our own. In its absence, nobody would ever be held culpable for any atrocity: A would say that he or she was acting under orders from B, B would likewise shift the blame to C and so on, until the ultimate source of authority is traced, if at all, to someone who may well be dead by then, as Hitler was at the time of the Nuremberg trial.

The Nuremberg principle has a positive and a normative aspect. The positive aspect ensures that nobody escapes culpability for doing something illegal or inhuman. The normative aspect is that everyone must examine the legal and moral justifiability of any course of action that he or she is asked to follow. This is essential in a democracy if the exercise of "power without responsibility", by merely pretending that the source of power lies elsewhere, is to be avoided. In fact we get exercised about "corruption", and rightly so, but the exercise of "power without responsibility" is a massive form of corruption in the deepest sense. This is what the Nuremberg principle seeks to prevent.

What is true of persons is also true of other entities, like state governments in the present case. If they consider an order to be against the law, or humanity, or, in the present instance, the Constitution, then they cannot be obliged to act upon it unquestioningly, even if the order has the sanction of Parliament. They would have to first test the constitutionality of the order in the Supreme Court (SC), as the government of Kerala has done with the CAA.

Even if the SC eventually holds the Act to

be constitutionally valid, but the state governments believe otherwise, the Nuremberg principle would still suggest that the latter not implement the Act, though they would then be going against the "deemed" law of the land and, hence, would have to face the consequences of their refusal. Of course, instead of facing such consequences, such as dismissal under Article 356, they may decide to implement the Act; but then, too, they would be held accountable for such implementation. There is, in short, no question of blind obedience to any law just because it has been passed by Parliament.

Hence, when these legal luminaries say that state governments are obliged to implement the CAA, it is not clear what exactly they mean. It cannot mean that state governments have no right to consider the Act unconstitutional and no right to approach the SC. What it could perhaps mean is that when the SC has finally decided on the issue, if it holds the Act to be constitutionally valid, then the state governments are duty-bound to implement it. But then this proviso should have been mentioned in the first place; and why talk about it now when the SC is still a long way from its decision?

A jurisprudence based on the Nuremberg principle is the diametrical opposite of a jurisprudence that invokes a hierarchy, with the lower echelon in the hierarchy being asked unquestioningly to follow orders from the higher echelon. The latter typifies an authoritarian society, while the former, by going against the very concept of unquestioning obedience, is characteristic of a democratic society.

It is democratic for two distinct reasons: One, it attributes "subjecthood" to all tiers of government and all individuals. Two, it underscores that every institution, including Parliament, operates within limits. To overlook this fact would amount to institutionalising majoritarianism. Parliament, no doubt, is supposed to express the will of the majority; but it is itself limited by constraints imposed by the Constitution.

The CAA is being widely seen as a sinister instance of Parliament crossing its limits, and impinging on the basic structure of the Constitution by distinguishing between religions in granting citizenship. The claim of the Union government and BJP that no citizen has anything to fear from the CAA is doubly wrong: First, even if every existing long-term resident of the country is given a guarantee about obtaining citizenship rights, the Act would still be invidious because of the distinction it draws between religions in granting citizenship at the margin. Second, the whole point of the NRC, being planned for the entire country, is to decide who is a citizen — when this very decision is at stake, to say that no citizen should fear is a meaningless proposition.

There are protests across the country against the CAA and NRC, with non-BJP state governments standing with the people. At this juncture, respected lawyers like Sibal and Khurshid making unclear statements about state governments being duty-bound to implement the CAA, may be construed as showing disregard, even if not intentionally, for the people's struggle.

The writer was professor of economics at JNU, Delhi



NONICA DATTA

A poet of many worlds

To reduce Faiz to a single identity is to crush his universal language

FAIZ AHMED FAIZ visited Kurukshetra in 1978. One of the holiest cities for Hindu pilgrimage, Kurukshetra is also known as Dharmakshetra, as it is believed that the battle of the Mahabharata was fought here. Faiz expressed his desire to visit the most sacred tirtha, Jyotisar, in Kurukshetra — where the sermon of the Bhagavad Gita is said to have been delivered by Krishna. Stepping into the precincts of Jyotisar, Faiz, along with his wife Alys, bowed to Lord Krishna and stood for long under the auspicious banyan tree. Faiz was deeply moved. In the temple visitors' book, he wrote beautiful lines expressing his reverence for the Gita and Krishna. The Bengali priest in Jyotisar blessed Faiz. This incident is part of my childhood memory. Future historians will someday look into the visitors' book at the Jyotisar temple and gain much from what Faiz wrote in adulation of Krishna — the omnipresent hero of the Bhagavad Gita.

There is a lot to be learnt from such hitherto overlooked historical truths which have been silenced in the recent cacophony around Faiz and his legendary nazm, *Ham dekhenge, Lazim hai ki ham bhi dekhenge*. We've heard the ghazal umpteen times in the sonorous voice of Iqbal Bano. There is something uniquely universal about this piece of poetry as it has touched the hearts of generations across the world in so many different ways that it is difficult to fix its deeper

meaning and describe its magical impact. Some layers remain unexplained. But that's the mystery of poetry and the poet's esoteric sentiments conveyed through metaphors and symbols. Isn't it? Faiz's nazm does not hurt any religious sentiments, and never intended to. In fact, it inspires people of all hues against authoritarian regimes and serves as a beacon of hope.

What recent debates do not recognise is that poets cross national boundaries. That's poetic freedom. What the current noise seems to ignore is that Faiz, who began his career as a lecturer in English literature in the holy city of Amritsar in 1935, could travel many different worlds through his popular poetry and draw upon many rich traditions across religions. Faiz was not restricted by any one ideology. To reduce Faiz to a single frame or identity is to kill and crush his universal language of love, hope and human pathos. There is more than one Faiz that we discover as we read and savour his nazms, and relish his soul-searching renditions. But in all these forms, Faiz appears more inclusive and open-minded than any other writer of his generation.

Faiz would have been disturbed by the present battle over his nazm that he wrote against the Pakistani dictator Zia-ul-Haq in 1979. He would be shocked to find himself being labelled as anti-Hindu or Islamist. Like many poets, Faiz had no religion, but a reli-

gion of universal love and longing. The line between beloved and divine love was blurred in his poetic compositions. His poetry heals and inspires, provokes and resists the powers that be. For instance, his poem, *Subh-e-Azadi* (Dawn of Independence), on the horror and sorrow that followed Independence, became one of most poignant expressions of the festering wound of Partition and the onset of freedom tainted with dark patches.

People across the new border were completely overwhelmed listening to it. And the echoes of the famous lines, *Yeh daagh daagh ujala, yeh shab-gazida sahar, vo intizar tha jiska, yeh vo sahar to nahin* (this stained light, this night-bitten dawn, that which was awaited, this is not that morning), could be heard in the streets of Amritsar and Lahore long after Partition. Faiz questioned the very politics of division and expressed excruciating pain over the loss of his homeland in 1947. The poem was criticised by both the right and the left in Pakistan. The right-wing forces said that Faiz had not appropriately celebrated freedom, while the left objected that the nazm had too many romantic symbols that obscured its political meaning. What these contending forces failed to understand was that the poem was mourning the loss of a human community and the trauma of violence, dislocation and perpetual exile. They refused to acknowledge that the poet had every right to reveal and ar-

ticulate his own truths and unmask the complex reality.

To judge Faiz for hurting Hindu sentiments is an unfair indictment of his composite vision and heritage that was shaped by India. Poets like Faiz are above political ideologies and affiliations. Looking at the present squabble over the meaning of his powerful nazm, one can perhaps cite his famous lines: *Vo baat saare fasane mein jis ka zikr na tha, vo baat un ko bahut na-gavar guzri hai* (What was never mentioned in the entire story, is the very thing that offended most). So, what's all this fuss about?

Today, Faiz may like to be left alone. His poetry is beyond petty politics and mere conflicts over words pulled out of context. He empathised with people's beliefs, sentiments, visions and broken dreams. Let us start the new year by appreciating this great poet who has only united, enraptured and enchanted the people of the subcontinent through his heart-rending nazms that convey the joy and catastrophe of human existence and condition. His words celebrate the human predicament and frailty. They soothe the raw wounds pierced by the daggers of inequality, injustice and unrequited love. Let us remember Faiz's visit to Kurukshetra and his darshan at Jyotisar.

The writer teaches history at JNU

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SHRINKING POWERS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Target madhyam' (IE, January 22). Indian media is divided into secular and the rest categories in the public mind. A section of the secular group is vociferously anti-Narendra Modi. As such, the prime minister's apathy towards such madhyam is understandable as long as it does not result in retaliatory action against them. What the secular media should be worried about is this: Despite its vigorous ongoing campaign against the Modi-led BJP the party won two consecutive national elections. Why is the capacity of media to influence public opinion shrinking?

YG Chouksey, Pune

NARROW BHARAT

THIS REFERS TO THE REPORT, 'Protesters can protest, but won't withdraw CAA: Shah' (IE, January 22). Amit Shah said SP chief Akhilesh Yadav can criticise him or his party but if he "speaks against Bharat Mata" he "will be put behind bars". Dear Home Minister, why does your imagination of Bharat Mata not include Muslim mothers protesting against the CAA and NRC at Shaheen Bagh or those women from JNU protesting against the fee, who were attacked by goons on campus? Your myopic view of Bharat is not meant for a diverse nation like India.

Aditya Rao, via email

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.

ANTI-INDIA LAW

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The republic's defenders' (IE, January 21). The writer has amalgamated bits and pieces to establish his Muslim subordination hypothesis. The perils of cow vigilantism and lynchings engulfed innocent Dalits as much as it did Muslims — so the menace is not community specific. Concerned citizens have expressed their anguish nationwide against the CAA and hence no attempt should be made to brand the CAA as a solely anti-Muslim legislation.

Passang Tsering, Delhi