

18 AKHILESH & RAHUL
TOGETHER TO CONQUER

42 BUDGET 2017
A ROAD TO MODI'S INDIA


FEBRUARY 12, 2017 ₹40

THE WEEK

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**COAST
GUARD**

WOMEN
OFFICERS IN
COMBAT ROLES 58



**DONALD TRUMP
MAKING
AMERICA
HATE
AGAIN**

The unpredictable president
GENE ROBERTS, former
managing editor, New York Times

What awaits Asia
SHASHI THAROOR, MP

I'm in limbo
BUSHRA AL FUSAIL,
Yemeni refugee in the US

Un-American refugee policy
DAVID MILIBAND, former British
foreign secretary



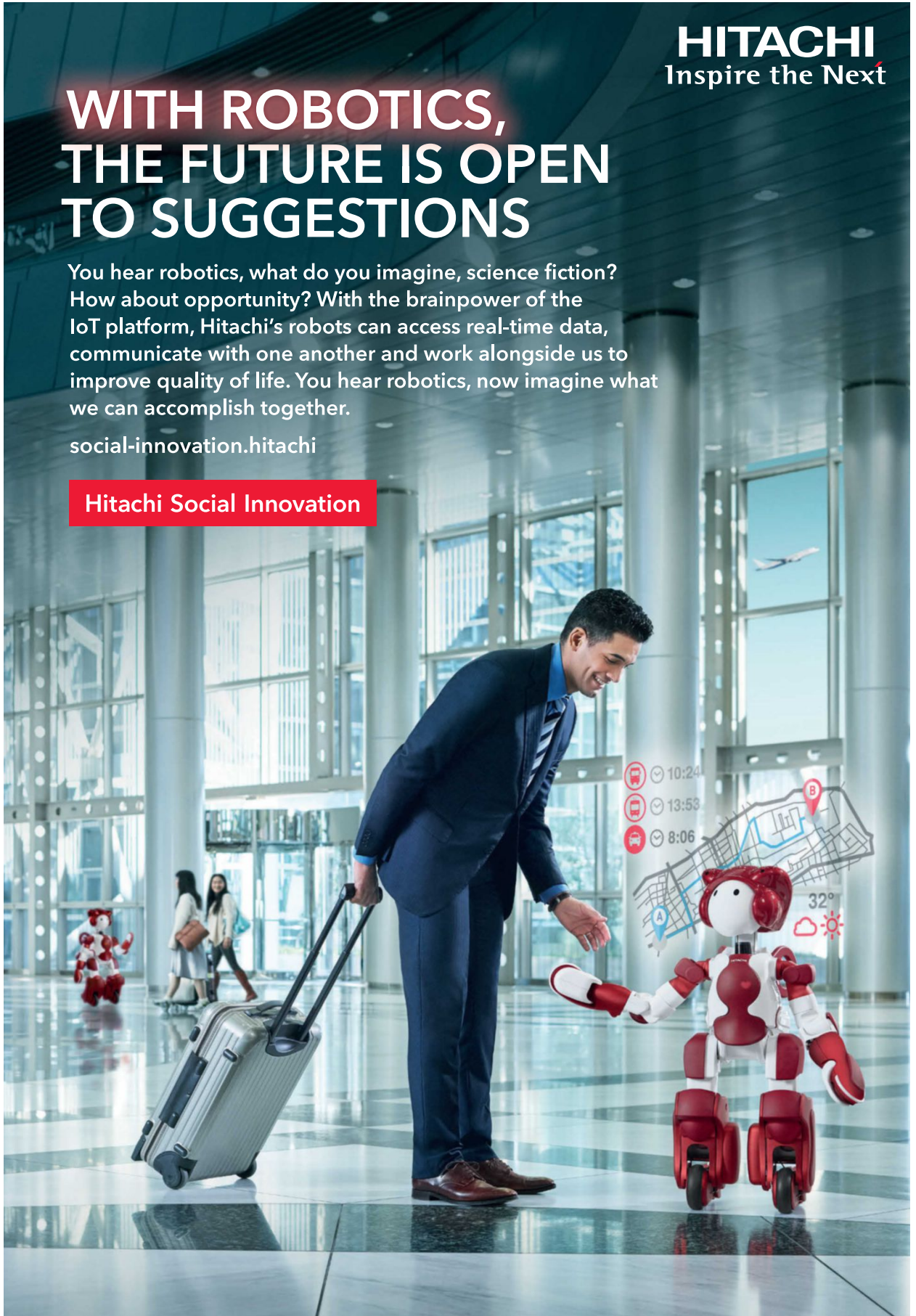
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(1) World Bank Report on Assessment of State Implementation of Business Reforms (2) World Bank Report (3) SWAN: State wide Area Network; CSC: Common Service Centres

COVER STORY
30MERCHANT
OF HATE

Politicians in India are known for not keeping their poll promises. But the scene is different in the US. Barely two weeks into his presidency, Donald Trump is going through his list like a man in a hurry. From building the Mexico border wall to repealing Obamacare, Trump has done more than what some politicians do in their entire term. However, his decision to ban refugees from seven Muslim countries has resulted in a huge outcry. Why is Trump going after these countries that have zero history of attacks on US soil? And, would his actions destroy America's image of being the leader of the free world?

- Choosing sides between the US and China would be difficult for India, says Shashi Tharoor
- 'Unpredictable' is how Gene Roberts, former managing editor of *The New York Times*, describes Trump
- An un-American refugee policy, says former British foreign secretary David Miliband
- HIB visas and worries of a young Indian techie
- American Civil Liberties Union—leading the fightback



Wheels of change: Bushra al Fusail, a Yemeni refugee in the US, feels her life is in limbo. Back home, she was actively involved in women's rights issues. In 2015, she organised the first-ever women bike race in Sana'a

COVER DESIGN: BINESH SREEDHARAN || COVER PHOTO: AP

- 18 Uttar Pradesh:** It is not an "opportunistic alliance", insist Congress and Samajwadi Party
- Who would demonetisation-hit Muslim and dalit voters pick?
 - Turncoats make hay as political parties fight to claim the upper hand ahead of the polls

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**Feeling breathless?
It could be Idiopathic
Pulmonary Fibrosis**

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- Actors never know truly who they are, says Dev Patel

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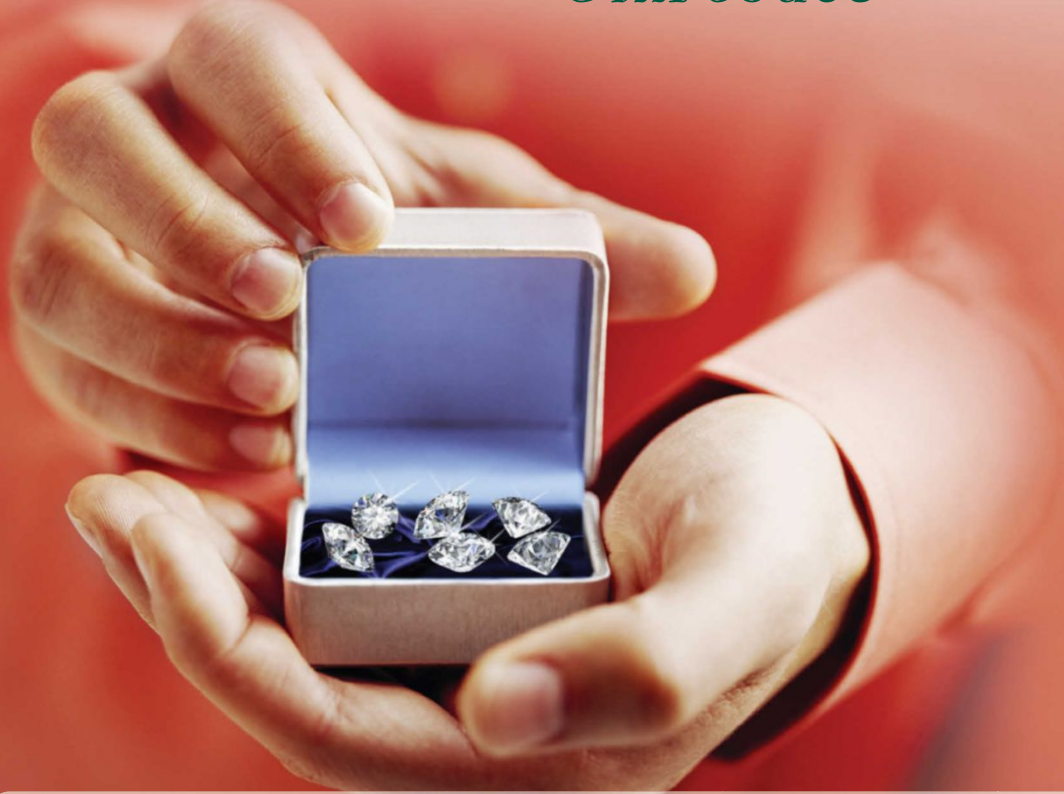
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LETTERS



RIGHT CHOICE

N. CHANDRASEKARAN is a man steeped in the Tata ethos, and he is definitely the right choice for the position of the chairman of Tata Sons ('A nice man to know', January 29). Integrity has been the hallmark of the Tata Group, and Chandrasekaran needs to re-establish the lost credibility of the group.

Ratan Tata should ensure that his involvement in the group's day-to-day affair is minimal. Chandra has the ability to lead a highly competent team, and the members of the Tata Trusts should give him the freedom to take decisions, for the betterment of the company as a whole.

Bal Govind,
On email.

CHANDRASEKARAN, OBVIOUSLY, enjoys the confidence of the board as his selection was unanimous. He is expected to lead from the front a group that has not been in the pink of health in the recent

times. An unassuming, self-effacing leader like Chandrasekaran, who believes in shouldering responsibility and in sharing the credit for success, is what the Tatas wanted at this stage. All the best, Chandra. C.V. Aravind,
On email.

CHANDRASEKARAN'S JOURNEY to the biggest corporate job in India has been phenomenal. The appointment of Chandra as chairman of Tata Group will ensure that Tata comes out of its worst crisis in quick time. Chandra will have to take some bold steps for the well-being of the group. We don't expect him to be Ratan Tata's remote control. Tigin Thomas,
On email.

CHANDRA, I am sure, would not buckle in adverse conditions. It will be interesting to see what he would do about the mounting debt of Tata Group. He will have to take a hard look at the investment and returns from some of the businesses. Tatas will regain its lost glory soon. P.K. David,
Chennai.

Unpleasant ROOSTERS BEING made to fight against each other to fight against each other is not a pleasant sight to look at ('Aperitif', January 29). I fail to understand what fun we Indians get from making animals fight against each other. Let's get over such insane

habits, people! Vrinda Gopi,
On email.

You are safe

I DIDN'T know that Karan Johar was a homosexual ('Point blank', January 29). I don't agree with his statement that he could possibly be jailed for revealing his sexual identity. There are so many important people in the country who have revealed their homosexual desires and are safe. Gopinath G.
On email.

Welcome UBI

THE UNION budget, this year, will have an eye on the 2019 Lok Sabha elections ('A balm budget', January 29). I feel there will be a slew of pro-poor measures in the budget, and the thrust will be on job creation and other social welfare schemes.

The universal basic income for the poor would be a good move. But I am not sure if it can be implemented in such a large scale, at one go, across the country. Manoj Trivedi,
On email.

Junior player

THE DESPERATION of the Congress to somehow stitch an alliance with the Samajwadi Party will harm it in the long run ('Hand on handle', January 29). It is sad to see the Congress almost surrendering before the SP and accepting the seats which it was offered, regardless of its strongholds.

What a twist of time it

has been for a national party to turn junior to a regional party, merely to revive its residual fortunes. However, the pertinent question is whether the SP-Congress alliance will be able to mobilise Muslim votes and stop the Modi juggernaut. Interesting days are ahead. We will wait and watch. P.K. Srivastava,
On email.

THE HILARIOUS part of the whole Samajwadi Party drama is the absence of Amar Singh and Jaya Prada. They have quietly escaped from the scene, as there is no future for them under Akhilesh Yadav.

Akhilesh, by riding the bicycle alone, has clearly established that in the SP 'dangal', it is he who is the king. The BJP is left with turncoats. The dream of the BJP to rule in Uttar Pradesh remains shattered here onwards. Rajiv Boolchand Jain,
On email.

Treat them well

MEENAKSHI LEKHI has made a valid point in her column, while offering support to the Central Armed Police Forces ('Forthwrite', January 29). CAPFs should be treated as valuable assets. They play a more important role than the Army. The government, urgently, needs to look into the issue of stagnation in paramilitary forces. Gaurav Kalsa,
On email.



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LETTERS

I like fountain pens

THERE IS NO substitute for a fountain pen for writing a decent letter ('Perfect pen drive', January 22). It would bear character. A ball-pen or Biro is casual. It ruins handwriting. Whereas fountain pen lends dignity to the letter. It is like a warm handshake across a mountain that stands between two friends. A Biro letter is flat, cold and stale. Krishna Narayanan, On email.

Ms Motivator HATS OFF TO

Swarnalatha J. for making her disability a source of inspiration ('Driven by destiny', January 22). She should

continue to educate the public on disabilities and motivate those affected by them. We need more people like Swarnalatha who can encourage people to make the best of an adverse situation by being positive and happy. Gaurav Malik, On email.

Is it safe?

THE APPLICATION

BHIM is very simple to use and has a clean interface ('App for all reasons', January 22). But I hope such applications are safe and secure from hackers. Vijay N., Chennai.

Champion Harendra

THE STORY BY Neeru Bhatia on Harendra Singh, coach of the

junior hockey team, was interesting and inspiring ('Champion coach', January 8). Harendra has shown us that India has tremendous talent spread all over, and hard work with full dedication can bring good results.

All of us should support such tough and no nonsense coaches. India can become a sporting superpower if sports administrators could spot and support such coaches in each sport. Mahesh Joshi, On email.

Error

IN THE COVER story 'Vote for instability' (February 5), Kiran Bedi has been inadvertently mentioned as Kabir Bedi. We regret the error. Editor

FROM THE WEB

On Cithara Paul's article, 'Perfect pen drive', published in the issue dated January 22

Thomson George: I thought 'save a tree' by reducing the use of paper was the phrase of the day. Now, they are cutting down the use of ball-point pen to create environment awareness. I am surprised as then what is digitisation and why is the need of it emphasised.

Hemant Sharma: A very good initiative. It should be applied in whole of India. It would also promote calligraphy. We are forgetting such arts. It needs skill to get used to writing with ink-filled pens.

Salvin Nair: A very encouraging move to reduce one's carbon footprint. It will bring a flair to writing and inculcate in youngsters the need to be eco-friendly.

Jeevan Dinesan: Are ink pens, nowadays, made of plastic? The government should

strive to establish plastic recycling units instead of adopting gimmicks and quick fixes.

Beenu Rajesh: I am confused whether to like it or not. There are more serious issues that need immediate remedial measures.

On Nandita Das's column, 'Lest the eyes adjust', published in the issue dated January 22

Subhash Abbi: You are right, but you have not spelled out what a citizen can do in a democracy except vote for or against somebody. At least social media allows you to interact with your friends and like-minded persons without being abused or persecuted. Another problem with people who are rational and mature is the lack of democratic choices. Street protests and violence are inherently counterproductive and generally worse than the original problem.

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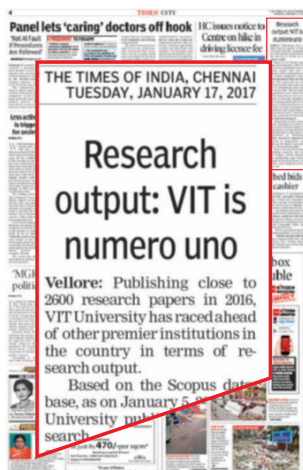
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Reviving counterterrorism ops

During the swearing-in ceremony, US President Donald Trump, in keeping with his electioneering pledges, declared the intent to eradicate radical Islamic terrorism from the face of the earth. In just a week after assuming office, he signed executive orders for strengthening the homeland security architecture and for reviewing military's combat power to ensure its readiness and relevance to accomplish the mandated roles. The urgency underscores the concerns of the new administration on the increasing home-grown Islamic radicalisation and a belief that the US is no longer winning the war on terrorism. The global war on terrorism, launched post the 9/11 strikes, has failed to contain the scourge. Islamic fundamentalism has continued to proliferate and even penetrate the western societies.

2016 witnessed some of the deadliest attacks by the Islamic terrorists in Europe and the US. In just three major attacks by Islamic State terrorists in Belgium, France and Germany, more than 130 innocent lives were lost and 830 got injured. The US, too, saw a rise in the violence perpetrated by the Islamic 'lone wolves' in which 50 people were killed and 102 injured. The most gruesome incident was the Orlando nightclub shooting, wherein a gunman, owing allegiance to Islamic State, shot dead 49 people and grievously injured 53. Till late last year, the federal authorities were reportedly investigating more than 1,000 cases related to Islamic State terrorist network on the US soil.

To achieve President Trump's

counterterrorism vision, the US will have to revive its operations overseas in concert with the host countries and coalition partners. The current battlefields in Afghanistan-Pakistan region will have to be reinforced and not abandoned till the mission is accomplished. Iraq-like premature pullout from Afghanistan and other future battlefields could be disastrous, not just for the affected regions, but also for the entire international community. It is equally important that the Afghan security forces are empowered to fulfil their constitutional obligations before any drawdown. Islamic terrorists' sanctuaries in the North African region and West Asia must also receive the requisite attention in the president's new counterterrorism strategy.

The reported presence of sleeper cells formed by home-grown radicalised and subverted elements on the US soil, along with the infiltration-prone border with Mexico, calls for strict measures in the realm of homeland security. With the signing of executive orders on 'Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the US' and 'Border Security and Immigration

Enforcement Improvements', actions are already afoot.

The orders on homeland security, besides the construction of a wall with Mexico, bar immigration from countries with ties to terror, viz Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Iran and Libya, for a period of 90 days. The authorities have been instructed to suggest additional names of countries after a detailed review. However, the new administration is unlikely to consider the countries that serve the president's business interests and Pakistan in the review. Today, despite being the 'breeding ground' of jihadi terrorism, Pakistan has emerged as a critical success factor in the ongoing US operations in Afghanistan.

Eradicating Islamic terrorism would require a sustained and comprehensive approach, which in addition to intelligence, military, civic and law enforcement operations would demand addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. The support of the Muslim world in the multilateral campaigns would be a strategic imperative. Therefore, the US administration will have to be cautious in its approach and refrain from painting the entire Muslim community with a broad brush. The hastily worded executive orders have already created avoidable turbulence on the domestic and international fronts.

Winning a war of minds and ideas will be an extremely long haul. The US would do well to remain wedded to the vision and not change it with the change in guard.

Singh is former chief of Army staff.



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YOGA ROCKS || Travellers from the UK practise yoga at the Morjim Beach in Goa. Imminent elections in the state and related restrictions have not affected the inflow of foreign tourists.

PHOTO BY BHANU PRAKASH CHANDRA

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Modi ji doesn't listen to anyone. He says listen to my 'Mann Ki Baat'. He never says tell me your *mann ki baat*.

RAHUL GANDHI—Congress vice president, on the prime minister

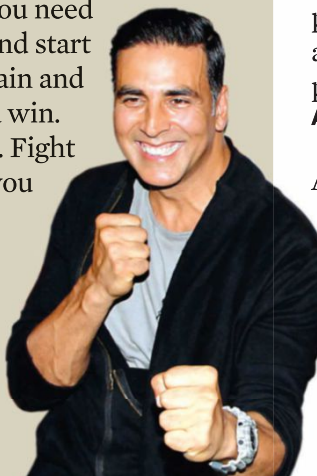
I invite Bollywood to come and shoot in the historical, glorified, culturally rich and developing Bihar. We will extend all sorts of help all the way.

TEJASHWI YADAV—Bihar deputy CM, after filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali was attacked in Rajasthan

I used to do street fighting in Bangkok and sometimes I lost. But then you need to get up and start all over again and strive for a win.

This is life. Fight for it and you will surely achieve your dreams.

AKSHAY KUMAR—Actor



If Rahul Gandhi has a child, there is no confusion who will be the next Congress president. But you won't be able to guess who is the next president of the BJP.

AMIT SHAH—BJP president

Alliance with the Congress will jeopardise Samajwadi Party's political future. Akhilesh Yadav should consider calling off the alliance.

MULAYAM SINGH YADAV—Samajwadi Party leader

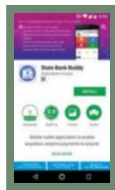


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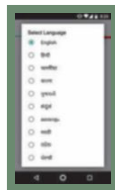
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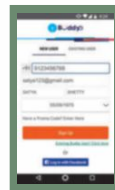
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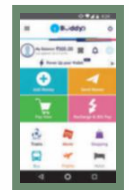
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The 30 per cent nation

The government is thrilled that 99 out of 100 adults in the country have enrolled in the Aadhaar programme, giving credit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad for the success of this brainchild of the UPA, which was embraced by the NDA. But two other statistics are very disquieting. The Bar Council of India chairman Manan Kumar Mishra has reiterated before new Chief Justice of India and his brother judges that 30 per cent of lawyers have fake degrees. The council's call for substantive documentation from 14 lakh registered lawyers has elicited response from only half of them.

Last year, Delhi law minister Jitendra Tomar was arrested for having a law degree from an unrecognised law college, even though the Aam Aadmi Party had called it vendetta by the BJP as the Delhi Police was controlled by the Union government. Some lawyers argue that Mishra's arithmetic suffers from multiple registrations in many states and the non-listing of colleges and universities, which had been giving degrees prior to 1990. Like many matters involving the legal profession, the council's plan to weed out bogus lawyers has been challenged in some High Courts.

Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari has raised alarm on another front. He says 30 per cent of driving licences in the country are fake. After a rapid survey on the functioning of regional transport offices across the country, Gadkari blames the human factor for giving driving licences to millions of applicants who had not

taken a driving test or had failed it. He wants to computerise the entire operations so that the machines, which cannot be influenced by power or money or threats, would certify only those who can actually drive. Once the driverless cars promised by companies like Tesla and Google hit



DENI LAL

the Indian roads, driving licences will become part of nostalgia. Sceptics feel exaggerated numbers have been provided to persuade the government to make huge hardware and software investments, blowing a big hole in the exchequer.

Interestingly, anti-Aadhaar activists are saying the government is blowing up the coverage figures as the political leadership wants the unique identity to be the basis for delivery of all government services, and for stealing the privacy of citizens. At a future date, some minister or monitor may say 30 per cent of Aadhaar registrations are not genuine!

sachi@theweek.in

WORD PLAY

You meet a stranger at a bus shelter. You smile; he smiles. "Terrible weather," he says. You nod. "This time of the year, it always is," you say. Pause. You look at your watch. He asks for the time. You reply, and ask whether the bus is running late. "I'm not from around here," he shrugs. "Where are you from?" you ask, as you crane your neck to see whether the bus is coming. He replies. You nod again. "Never been there," you say. And then the bus arrives, and the **nonversation** ends. A nonversation is a conversation that is short, meaningless and instantly forgettable. Nonversations usually happen when strangers try to strike up a conversation. As it often happens at bus shelters.

MILESTONES

► **Fed express:** Roger Federer beat Rafael Nadal in the Australian Open final to win his 18th Grand Slam title. In the women's final, Serena Williams defeated sister, Venus Williams, for a record 23rd Grand Slam title.

► **Numero uno:** Lucideus, an IT risk assessment and digital security provider, won the Best IT Startup of India award at the National Entrepreneurship Award 2016 organised by the ministry of skill development and entrepreneurship. The company provides security for Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM), an Aadhaar-based mobile payment app.

► **Crowning glory:** Miss France, Iris Mittenaere, won the Miss Universe contest. A dental surgery student, Mittenaere beat 85 other contestants at the pageant held in Manila. Miss Haiti, Raquel Pelissier, was the first runner-up and Miss Colombia, Andrea Tovar, the second runner-up.



SLAYING IT, LAYER BY LAYER

There's a turf war brewing on Twitter. @HalfOnionInABag recently joined the social media site with just one mission: "Just here to get more followers than @realDonaldTrump." With 21.8 million people following the United States president, that's going to be as easy as peeling an onion! Like Trump would say, "It's yuge!" Gradually though, Twitterati is coming out in support of the account, which has 2,16,000 followers as of now. Like @Jamie_Heather tweeted, "Make America Grate Again @HalfOnionInABag."

'IT'S OVER' DRIVE

He fell in love and proposed with an expensive ring; she said 'yes' and dumped him later. Kevin Acutt was left with a broken heart and a ring that he bought at a price "that was steeper than the side of a chicken's face". But instead of wallowing in self-pity, the New Zealander posted an ad on Trade Me to sell the ring. He plans to buy an 'ute' [a two-wheel drive with a cargo tray in the rear integrated with the passenger body] with the sale money. "I know I can trust the ute to love me unconditionally," reads his post, adding that he is open to an offer from an attractive woman who loves the outdoors and whose finger will fit the required measurement.



LYING IN THE WIND

What are the most common excuses for speeding? An emergency, needing a toilet, or not seeing the sign? Well, this Australian driver gave an excuse so bizarre that even the police tweeted about it. They posted a picture of the ticket with the caption: "And the excuse of the day goes to..."

So, what was the excuse? Apparently, when caught, the cheeky driver said, "The wind was pushing me."



CURIOUS CURE

If you're in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and have 10 euros to spare, you can get an old woman to lick your eyeball clean. It's said to be a legitimate healing technique, and the lick, Hava Celebic, 80, has apparently cured 5,000 people.

She sterilises her tongue with alcohol and removes pieces of coal, sawdust and glass lodged in eyeballs. "I've been told that people will cut out my tongue when I die so that the treatment continues," she said.

APERITIF party snacks



CHENNAI'S CASTRO

Dravida parties in Tamil Nadu are known for awarding epithets to their leaders. E.V. Ramaswamy, who founded the Dravida movement, was known as Periyar, or the respected one, while C.N. Annadurai, the founder of DMK, was called Thennattu Gandhi, or the southern Gandhi. M.G. Ramachandran, the former chief minister, became *puratchi thalaivar* (revolutionary leader) and his political successor, J. Jayalalithaa, was called *puratchi thalaivi*. DMK chief M. Karunanidhi's followers call him *kalaigarnar*, or the artiste. His son M.K. Stalin is called *thalapathy*, or commander. Stalin's recent elevation as the DMK's working president, however, seems to have won him a new title. A poster that appeared recently in Chennai hailed him, to the surprise of many, as the Fidel Castro of south India.

Raiding votes

In poll-bound Uttar Pradesh, all parties have been banking on their star campaigners. Ajit Singh's Rashtriya Lok Dal, however, has sprung a surprise by inducting Malkhan Singh, a dacoit who was active in the Chambal region in the 1970s. If all goes well, Malkhan will be the RLD's star campaigner.

Future tense

Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy recently flew into Visakhapatnam to take part in an agitation for special category status for Andhra Pradesh. But police officers at the airport prevented him from entering the city, citing prohibitory orders. The YSR Congress chief and his followers would have none of it, and they turned aggressive. "You are touching a CM," Jaganmohan told the officers. "Do you know that you are stopping a CM?" The officers were perplexed. After a while, Jagan told them that he would become chief minister in 2019. "And then I won't forget you people who are stopping me now," he warned. The officers smiled, but refused to budge.



ILLUSTRATIONS: JAIRAJ T.G.



Coming up smiling

His trademark smile raised many a laugh when he was Karnataka chief minister. Sometimes he took the jokes as a compliment; sometimes he bristled in anger. Now as Union minister, D.V. Sadananda Gowda has learnt to take snide remarks in his stride. A recent public function in Bengaluru saw the release of a souvenir about Gowda, called 'Sada Smitha' (forever smiling). Gowda himself was present on the occasion, much to the amusement of those who had seen him lose his cool at the mention of his smile.

Singh, back on song

Rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh's song in praise of freedom fighter Bhagat Singh failed to strike a chord with his fans when it was released a few years ago. Singh himself admitted as much in an interview sometime ago. Now, however, it has got a fresh lease of life, thanks to the Congress campaign in Punjab. It is regularly played at the party's election rallies to give the audience a dose of patriotism.

Word play

With his one-liners, Navjot Singh Sidhu never fails to amuse. As the Congress candidate from Amritsar East, he is now deploying his wit against the Akalis. He has been playing on a five-letter word, *sukha*, which is a common nickname in Punjab. Sometimes, he stretches the first syllable of the word, which changes its meaning to drought. Using his tone and body language, he makes it clear that he is using it to refer to Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Badal. "Sukha's sewa [service] is 10 per cent sewa; the rest is *mewa* (sweet for self)," he quips, leaving his audience in splits.

HOW TO REACH US

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UTTAR PRADESH

Past tense, present perfect

At least that is how Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav portray the alliance as they begin joint campaigning

BY AJAY UPRETY

The chemistry was palpable. Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi offered chewing gum to Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, who reciprocated with chocolates. Before the first joint roadshow of the Samajwadi Party-Congress alliance in Uttar Pradesh, on January 29, both leaders tried to impress upon the voters that this was not an “opportunistic alliance”, but a “pact of hearts”. They launched a



- ❖ “The alliance is historic. The pact for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections is not certain, but all options are open,” said Rahul.
- ❖ Rahul and Akhilesh seem keen to forget an acerbic past and come together to stop Modi from winning in Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ The duo seems to have already struck a chord with the Muslims, who form 19 per cent of the state’s population.

ILLUSTRATION: JOB P.K.



PAWAN KUMAR

theme song with the line—*UP ko yeh saath pasand hai* (UP likes this togetherness) and posters showing them together sprang up at various places.

Both leaders seem confident of winning the assembly elections—starting on February 11—forming government and stopping the march of “communal forces”. Said Rahul: “The alliance is historic. At present, we have spoken about 2017; the pact for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections is not yet certain, but all options are open.”

“Rahul and I are two wheels of a bicycle,” said Akhilesh. “We have met on many occasions, like during Lok Sabha sessions and in other functions. Now, we have the chance to work together and, once he joins us, our work will pick up pace.”

The two have a lot in common—both are in their 40s, have studied abroad, are three-time MPs and are seen as tech-savvy and pro-development leaders. The longevity of their alliance, however, depends on how much of the past they are willing to sweep under the carpet. It is an open secret that Mulayam Singh Yadav formed the Samajwadi Party by taking a cue from the anti-Congress



First steps:
Rahul Gandhi
and Akhilesh
Yadav (wear-
ing red cap)
in Lucknow

stance of Ram Manohar Lohia. In fact, at times, the Congress has been a fiercer rival of the party than the BJP. Mulayam, for instance, did not support the Congress when it fared badly in the 1996 Lok Sabha elections. In 2004, Congress president Sonia Gandhi did not invite Mulayam's emissary, Amar Singh, to a dinner thrown for UPA allies.

Rahul and Akhilesh, however, seem keen to forget the past and come together to stop Prime Minister Narendra Modi from winning in Uttar Pradesh. If they form the government, Akhilesh would be able to take forward his development agenda and have a firmer grip on the party. However, his major challenge would be to persuade his father, Mulayam, who has openly opposed the alliance. "The alliance has been executed just to grab power," said Mulayam. "It was not needed. I will not go for campaigning." He has asked cadres to file nominations in all 105 constituencies where the Congress will be contesting.

"To the Congress, the alliance will provide much needed oxygen in the state," said a senior Congress leader in Uttar Pradesh. "It has been

facing a kind of political exile in UP for the past 27 years. If Rahul and Akhilesh are able to form government, the Congress will have a chance to share power by becoming part of the government."

Congress strategists said the party would not have fared well had it contested alone in Uttar Pradesh. The alliance might give the Congress a few more seats than in 2012 and would help it win over the Muslim and dalit voters.

The Rahul-Akhilesh duo seems to have already struck a chord with the Muslims, who form 19 per cent of the state's population. During the road show, which was strategically planned so as to pass through Muslim-dominated areas of Lucknow, hundreds of people waited for the leaders with rose petals and garlands. Even burqa-clad women were on the streets to greet them.

The challenge, however, would be to make the alliance acceptable to party leaders and cadres. "The pact will ensure three Ps—prosperity, progress and peace—in the state," said Rahul. "I would like to add a fourth P, which means it will be a people's alliance," added Akhilesh.

Initially, when the possibility of an alliance was discussed, several Congress leaders, including state party president Raj Babbar and campaign committee chairman Sanjay Singh, had voiced apprehensions. They were also miffed at being kept out of the loop while finalising the alliance.

Another irritant could be the confusion over the seat-sharing arrangement in Amethi and Raebareli. Though the Congress announced that it would contest in all 10 assembly seats in its bastion, the Samajwadi Party announced candidates in five. Rahul, however, said this was an "operational matter that would be sorted out internally".

Opposition parties have also criticised what they call an opportunistic alliance. Said BJP state president Keshav Prasad Maurya: "If Akhilesh claims that he has done a lot of work during his five-year tenure, why does he need the Congress this time. Neither of them has a clear roadmap for the development of the state."

Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati, too, has spoken against the alliance. "We will have to be cautious of this alliance; this is an opportunistic pact and has been executed at the directions of the BJP. The alliance will benefit the BJP. Rahul and Akhilesh are trying to misguide the people to get their votes, publicly putting on a friendly appearance. In fact, they do not gel at all."

Rahul, interestingly, has been soft on Mayawati and has avoided attacking the BSP, perhaps keeping open the option of a post-poll alliance, if needed. ♦

UTTAR PRADESH

Community kitchen

The Muslim and dalit vote broth is boiling. Who will emerge as the master chef?

BY PRATUL SHARMA /Khurja, Aligarh and Agra

Zaheer Ahmed belongs to a family of award-winning potters. His father won a state award and his uncle a national award in ceramics, which has put Khurja on national map for the eponymous blue pottery.

However, Ahmed and his ilk have been experiencing the blues over the past three months, thanks to the demonetisation. Work and payments have come to a standstill.

But, the angst will not influence his vote, says Ahmed. "We have nothing against the BJP; we will decide based on the candidates fielded by the parties," he says.

His son, Tanveer, however, is certain that he would vote against the BJP. But, he does not say which party he would vote for.

"There is still some confusion on how Muslims would vote," says former vice chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University Mahmoodur Rehman, a retired IAS officer. "The Samajwadi Party and the BSP use Muslims as pawns."

The demonetisation hit Muslims and dalits hard, as most of them survived on small-scale industry and daily wages.

It is not just about notes. The Muslims view the demonetisation as a polarising exercise. "The note ban was hailed as attack on terror funding," says Sajid Ahmed Khan, a businessman in Aligarh. "This was interpreted by many as tarnishing the Muslim community." Most Muslims are likely to vote for candidates who can give the BJP a tough fight. Though traditionally inclined towards the Samajwadi Party, Muslims, this time, are likely to vote on a seat-to-seat basis.

This sentiment could benefit the BSP, which

Population in UP*

Muslims

19.3%

Dalits

20.5%

*Census 2011

2012 vote share

Dalit

SP

31.6%

BSP

27.3%

BJP

14.4%

Muslim

SP

39%

BSP

20%

Congress

18%



has fielded strong Muslim candidates. The traditional votes of dalits and significant chunks of Muslim votes could give the BSP the upper hand in regions where these communities are numerically strong.

Notably, not a single Muslim candidate in Uttar Pradesh won in the 2014 general elections. The Muslim votes were divided between the Samajwadi Party, the BSP, and the Congress. "However, the Bihar assembly elections in 2015 showed that, if the community chooses carefully, it can make a difference," says Prof Mujahid Beg, president of the Aligarh Muslim University Teachers' Association.

In the 2012 Uttar Pradesh assembly election, it was the strong Muslim support that helped the Yadav-dominated Samajwadi Party win.

Anwar Khan, who runs a business of frozen foods in Khurja, has been active in the daily *chaupal* conversations of ordinary people. "There is concern that the BJP could emerge



SANJAY AHLAWAT

strong in the polls,” he says. “It will lead to change in the Rajya Sabha numbers, thus helping the BJP push its agendas. This fear stems from irresponsible statements made by some local BJP leaders.”

The only options available for the Muslims are the Samajwadi Party and the BSP, says Anwar, whose elder brother and uncle are former MPs. “The Yadavs filled all the administrative posts despite their relatively small population under the Akhilesh Yadav government, just as the Jatavs [a dalit community] had done during Mayawati’s rule,” he alleges. “Yet, the Muslims have no other choice.”

Jasim Mohammad, director of the Muslim Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Aligarh, says 476 riots have occurred during Akhilesh’s rule. He claims that the Samajwadi Party and the Congress have never fulfilled any of the promises made to the community.

“Muslims are intelligent now. I think they

Midst of a lather: Muslim-dominated areas such as Khurja (in pic above) are likely to vote on a seat-to-seat basis for candidates who can beat the BJP

would move towards the BSP,” he says.

But the general mood one gets among the Muslims is to vote for the Congress-Samajwadi Party alliance. “Muslims are comfortable with the Congress-Samajwadi Party alliance,” says A.K. Verma, director of Kanpur-based Centre for the Study of Society and Politics. “During the 2014 elections, most Muslims voted for the Samajwadi Party. Our studies show that Muslim support for the Samajwadi Party has gone up.”

He also notes that the BJP, which used to get 3-4 per cent of Muslim votes, managed to notch up 10 per cent in 2014. “This time, it will get only 1 or 2 per cent,” says Verma.

However, the sentiment of keeping the BJP away may not translate into reality. “The BJP may win majority,” says Aftab Ahmed of Aligarh. “The Muslim vote could get split between the BSP and the SP-Congress alliance. Also, parties such as Asaduddin Owaisi’s MIM, too, are fielding candidates.”

The BJP has not fielded any Muslim candidate. The party counts on non-Yadav OBCs, non-Jatav dalits, and upper castes such as Brahmins, Thakurs and Vaishyas.

Rameshwar Chaurasiya, the BJP’s co-in-charge of Uttar Pradesh, begs to differ. “The Modi government believes in *sabka saath, sabka vikas* (collective efforts, inclusive growth). The BJP’s constituency has changed,” he says.

The BJP has high hopes of getting a significant chunk of the dalit votes, which was clear with the Union government invoking B.R. Ambedkar and naming its new payment app after him (BHIM).

The 2014 elections gave the BJP the maximum number of dalit MPs; it won all 17 reserved seats. But, subsequent issues such as cow vigilantism cracked the party’s interface with dalits.

In Agra’s Kazipara area, most dalits say they would rally behind Mayawati’s BSP. “This [Akhilesh Yadav] government made many announcements, but there has been little for us,” says Narender Singh Sutail, a shoe manufacturer. “Whenever Mayawati comes to power, the dalits get their due.”

The BJP, however, hopes that the youth would rise above caste considerations like they did during the Lok Sabha elections. Its spokesperson G.V.L. Narasimha Rao says the BJP appeals to all communities alike. The party, he asserts, would pull off an encore of the 2014 elections, courtesy the performance and image of Modi. ♦

Rebel swell

Turncoats make hay as political parties fight to claim the upper hand ahead of the polls

BY PRATUL SHARMA

On January 21, Bahujan Samaj Party leader Mayawati called a press conference in Lucknow to denounce both the Samajwadi Party and the BJP. Before it got over, veteran SP leader Ambika Chaudhary walked in, presented her with a bouquet and expressed his desire to join her party. Mayawati seated him next to her and announced that he would contest the Uttar Pradesh assembly election from Phephna, replacing the candidate she had announced earlier.

The drama was aimed at projecting Mayawati as the dominant player in Uttar Pradesh. Chaudhary, who had been in the SP for more than 40 years, switched sides to save his political career after being sidelined by Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav.

Last August, prominent OBC leader Swami Prasad Maurya left the BSP to join the BJP. But, to his dismay, people close to him found no place in the BJP's first list of candidates. As he began backchannel talks with the SP, the BJP placated him with tickets for him and his son and included him in the list of its star campaigners.

"We did not come to the BJP with a condition," Maurya told *THE WEEK*. "I did recommend a few names; some got through, some didn't. My son got the ticket because of his work. There is a rebellion in the BJP which should be dealt with a strong hand. There is too much democracy here. To win elections, we should be firm in maintaining discipline."

This election season has seen parties openly welcoming 'rebels' of rival camps. The BJP, in particular, has inducted a number of them. It has allotted them tickets in UP, Uttarakhand and Manipur, even at the expense of its longtime members. When questioned about giving tickets to 'turncoats', BJP general secretary Arun Singh said, "All of them are now BJP members, and the tickets have been given to BJP members only."

For political parties, embracing turncoats serves a strategic purpose. "It shows that our party is the frontrunner in elections. So we welcome



PAWAN KUMAR

leaders from other parties to signal that we have the edge over our rivals," said a senior BJP leader.

In Punjab, 30 Congress rebels have filed their nominations as independent candidates after they were denied party tickets. Former cricketer and BJP leader Navjot Singh Sidhu, who earned his political stripes by denouncing the dynastic Congress, recently joined hands with Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi. "I was a born Congressman," Sidhu said. "This is a *ghar wapsi* for me."

Pargat Singh, Shiromani Akali Dal MLA and former captain of the national hockey team, also joined the Congress. "This shows our strength and the wave in our favour," Congress leader Sunil Jakhar told *THE WEEK*. "There have been grievances about some people not getting tickets. But, as made clear by Captain Amarinder Singh, winnability is the only factor for giving tickets."

Veteran Congressman and former Uttarakhand chief minister N.D. Tiwari, 91, and his son Rohit Shekhar joined the BJP after meeting party chief Amit Shah at his residence in Delhi. Their entry left the BJP deeply embarrassed, as social media went abuzz with Tiwari's controversial past.

The BJP has also given tickets to nine rebel Congress MLAs in the state, led by former chief minister Vijay Bahuguna. In all, 14 former Congressmen in Uttarakhand have been given BJP tickets. "All those Congress leaders who joined us are now in our party," BJP state president Ajay Bhatt told *THE WEEK*. "They have been given



Switching sides:
(Clockwise from left) Ambika Chaudhary with Mayawati; Navjot Singh Sidhu (right) with Congress leader Ajay Maken; Amit Shah with N.D. Tiwari; Swami Prasad Maurya at a BJP rally in Lucknow



ARVIND JAIN



PAWAN KUMAR



PTI

tickets after weighing the pros and cons. Every family has some upsets, as many were vying for tickets. We hope to solve the issues soon.”

By giving tickets to turncoats and overruling the claims of local leaders, Shah seems to be pinning his hopes on candidates who can win. While this strategy was a huge success in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, it paid little dividend in the Bihar assembly elections the following year.

In Goa, former state RSS chief Subhash Velingkar floated the Goa Suraksha Manch to

take on the BJP. He has entered into a grand alliance with former BJP allies Maharashtra Gomantak Party and the Shiv Sena, making the assembly polls a four-cornered contest. The Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party are the other two major political forces.

The MGP has fielded rebels from the BJP and the Congress, while the BJP has so far given tickets to three Congress leaders. The AAP, too, has fielded several former BJP leaders and workers.

In Manipur, most of the 31 candidates announced by the BJP are former members of the Congress, the Trinamool Congress or the Communist Party of India. “The Congress was following the divide and rule policy,” said former minister N. Biren Singh. “Many of us have now joined the BJP as we are getting what we wanted.” ♦



BHANUPRAKASH CHANDRA

GOA

A bright future: Kids seen wearing Aam Aadmi Party caps at Cuncolim in South Goa

AAPtitude test

The new entrant offers Goans a good alternative, but whether the buzz translates to votes remains to be seen

BY KARTHIK RAVINDRANATH/Goa

On January 28, Narendra Modi addressed a public meeting in Panjim, said all the right things and appealed for a “comfortable majority”.

Around the same time, about 45km away, in Cuncolim—the home turf of the Aam Aadmi Party’s chief ministerial candidate Elvis Gomes—only about 200 people participated in the AAP’s rally. Modi’s event was attended by about 20,000 people.

These numbers indicated the magnitude of the task at hand for the AAP, despite a generally positive response towards its candidates.

The AAP, which is making its debut in the coastal state, has urged the voters to bring in change by voting in its “honest, young and energetic team”.

Its manifesto has identified key areas of concern and addresses them comprehensively. It pledges to create jobs, ban casinos, end gambling, drugs and prostitution, “bring back the old glory of Goa” with eco-friendly tourism, and support local taxis and shacks. It has also promised to continue grants to English medium schools.

The party is trying to win over Christians in particular. They form 27 per cent of Goa’s population, and are unhappy about the corruption in the Congress and the BJP’s failure to fulfil promises.

The projection of Gomes as CM candidate and the fact that he hails from Cuncolim—a village of Christian warriors who opposed the Portuguese—has helped galvanise Christian voters.

“I think they are a good alternative,” said Margaret Jeanette, 63, a resident of Cuncolim.



समाज और सरकार का सामूहिक संकल्प



शिवराज सिंह चौहान
मुख्यमंत्री, मध्यप्रदेश

मध्यप्रदेश की जीवनदायिनी
माँ नर्मदा की सेवा को
उमड़ा जनसैलाब

- 16 जिलों के 1100 गाँवों में 3350 किलोमीटर की यात्रा।
- नर्मदा तटों पर एक किलोमीटर के दायरे में व्यापक वृक्षारोपण।
- अपने खेतों पर वृक्ष लगाने वाले किसानों को दी जायेगी 3 वर्ष तक 20 हजार रुपये प्रति हैक्टेयर की दर से सहायता।
- नर्मदा के दोनों तटों पर पांच किलोमीटर की सीमा तक नहीं होंगी शराब की दुकानें।
- नर्मदा तटों पर स्थित समस्त नगरों में सीवेज ट्रीटमेंट प्लांट हेतु 1500 करोड़ की राशि स्वीकृत।
- नर्मदा तटों के दोनों तरफ 1 किलोमीटर की सीमा में स्थित सभी ग्राम होंगे ओडीएफ।
- नर्मदा सेवा कार्यों को स्थायित्व देने के लिए प्रत्येक ग्राम पंचायत में नर्मदा सेवा समिति का गठन।

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“Even if they are not able to replicate what they did in Delhi, we will at least have a good opposition.”

Prithvi Reddy, the AAP’s national executive member, said: “Goa has very small constituencies. The Congress and BJP MLAs know almost every voter in their constituency. So, it is difficult for the voter to switch. Sometimes they are even intimidated.”

He said that though North Goa was generally seen as a challenge for the AAP, it had got good responses in some of their rallies there. “It is confusing, even to us,” he said.

Congress general secretary Digvijaya Singh told THE WEEK that Goans would not take the AAP seriously. “The AAP is a one-man army [Arvind Kejriwal],” he said. “Many of their MLAs and ministers are facing corruption charges, including their deputy CM. The AAP will be a non-starter in Goa.”

Hundreds of volunteers have descended on Goa from neighbouring states and overseas for the AAP campaign. Their energy and enthusiasm during door-to-door-campaigns and *jhadu yatras* have created excitement among the Goans—normally so laid back.

Most Goans are against casinos. Abdul Rehman, a taxi driver in Panjim, said the casinos were destroying Goan values and identity. The BJP had promised to ban floating casinos in 2012. Now both the Congress and the AAP have made the same promise. “But these are big businessmen. I don’t know whether any party will actually do it,” said Keni Fernandes, a hotel owner in Panjim. Casino owners declined comment.

While the AAP’s efforts seem to be bearing fruit in the cities and Christian villages of South Goa, the story is different in the hilly regions and in North Goa.

Constituencies such as Churchorem and Sanguem, upcountry areas in the south, are standing firmly behind the BJP. During a BJP rally in Churchorem, sitting MLA Nilesh Cabral said, “Last time I won by a margin of more than 8,000 votes [in a constituency of 26,000 voters] and I don’t think there is any challenger this time.”

One of the major issues that could have hampered the BJP’s chances in the hills was the mining ban that was implemented during its regime. A good number of the residents here have lost employment and about 6,000 trucks are idle.

But, Sada Doifode, 33, a former truck owner and driver from Chiravand, a village in Sanguem, which was badly affected by the mining ban, said the ban was good for the environment.

“The government gave packages to rehabilitate truck owners, so where is the problem? The Salaulim dam, which gives water to half of Goa, is behind our village, but we had no water till the BJP came to power,” said Doifode, now a farmer.

Surprisingly, the AAP’s rallies even in Mandrem—Chief Minister Laxmikant Parsekar’s constituency—recieved good support. But the voters here do not seem ready to experiment yet.

Thomas, 65, a fisherman from Pernem, said: “The new party [AAP] might win in one or two constituencies. We will see what they do in these places in the next five years. Why should we experiment now?”

Satish Morje, 35, owner of Boom Shack in Morjim Beach (Mandrem), said, “After Parsekar became CM, he has been very busy and has not done much to help tourism here.”

Morje said the BJP was going to foreign countries and spending money to advertise Goa, but not doing anything to improve basic facilities for tourists. “When tourists come here, what do we have other than beautiful beaches? There is no parking, no public toilets or showers and no proper garbage disposal system.”

The AAP, he said, might be a force to reckon with next time. “This time they have no chance, even though they are doing good work. They will disturb the Congress and BJP, and, if they win something, that might be a good base to build on,” said Morje.

Even if the AAP does not achieve its electoral targets, it will not be because of a lack of effort. No matter what the result is, it has established itself as a credible alternative—the third front in Goa. ♦

**The AAP campaigns
have created
excitement among
Goans—normally so
laid back**

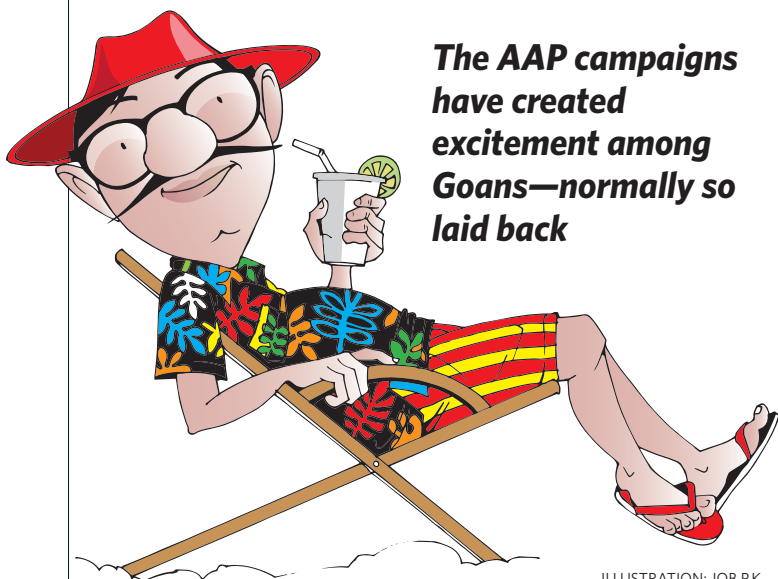


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Downside of upgrade

Imagine a batch of students appearing for their tenth standard exam and the rule is set that whatever marks the topper gets, the rest of the class would get the same marks, on condition that they wait for two years. Sounds crazy? Well, that is exactly how the Indian bureaucracy rewards itself through something called Non Functional Upgrade, which has become a bone of contention between the civilian group A officers and officers of the armed forces, who have been denied the same by the civilian bureaucracy.

So what is Non Functional Upgrade? As per a circular issued by the department of personnel and training, Government of India, 'Whenever an Indian Administrative Services Officer of the State of Joint Cadre is posted at the Centre to a particular grade carrying a specific grade pay in Pay band 3 or Pay band 4, the officers belonging to batches of Organised Group A Services that are senior by two years or more and have not so far been promoted to that particular grade would be granted the same grade on nonfunctional basis from the date of posting of the Indian Administrative Service Officers in that particular grade at the Centre.' This scheme was introduced by the United Progressive Alliance government in 2008 and was extended to 49 organised Group A central services for time bound pay promotions of every officer till the higher administrative grade (thus ensuring 'one rank, one pay' for most), irrespective of capability, performance or vacancy.

Therefore, in a country where every prime minister, chief minister, MP, MLA or municipal councillor has to face the electorate every five years, where every student has to compete and work hard for each mark he scores in board exams or competitive exams and where every company chief's performance is evaluated in three months, our bureaucracy is exempted from such scrutiny. Performance and vacancy be damned, they would get time bound promotions. While barely 1 to 2 per cent of Army officers get to reach the apex scale of lieutenant general and upward, an IAS, IPS or IFS officer is guaranteed to reach the rank of director general of police.

Today, India has a ridiculous situation where every state police force has innumerable director generals and additional director generals, one

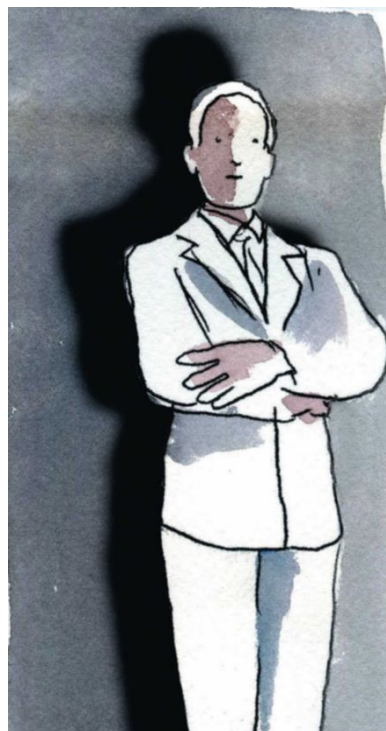
each for prison, CID, home guard, training and so on, and yet the constabulary and subordinate officers face stagnation in terms of promotion because no one thinks of them. How has such a top-heavy structure helped India's administration? Has any feasibility study ever been done on it? Is there any precedence of such Non Functional Upgrade anywhere in the world?

Today, the armed forces and the central armed police forces cannot be blamed for asking for similar benefits because the UPA rocked the apple cart and created major fissures in the civil-military relationship. If NFU is good then it should be given to all, including the armed forces and employees in Group B and C categories. It cannot be exclusively for the babus.

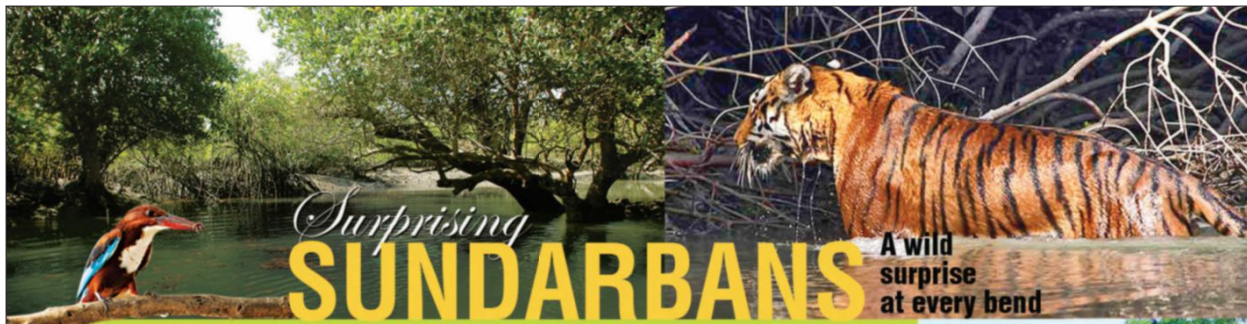
How would an officer, who has won a Param Vir Chakra, feel when he sees an IPS or IAS officer being promoted just because he appeared for an exam and qualified in it? Doesn't an army or central police officer face a much bigger challenge of dodging the enemies' bullets? Wouldn't it be demotivating for the officers in the armed forces to be stagnating in one position while the civilian officers enjoy promotions?

In a resource-scarce nation, where the priority of the state should be to spend every penny on the people and cut out wasteful administrative expenditures, NFU should be scrapped. Merit alone should be the criterion for promotion. The feudal system of exclusive benefits has to end. PERIOD.

Lekhi is member of Parliament.
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BHASKARAN



A wild surprise at every bend

The Sunderbans are a part of the world's largest delta, formed by the mighty rivers Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna. Situated on the lower end of Gangetic West Bengal, the Sunderbans is criss-crossed by hundreds of creeks and tributaries. It is one of the most attractive and alluring places remaining on earth, a truly undiscovered paradise. The Sunderbans is the largest single block of tidal, halophytic mangrove forests in the world. The name can be literally translated as beautiful jungle. The name may have been derived from the Sundari trees that are found in the Sunderbans. The Sunderbans is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It spans a vast area covering 4,264 sq. km in India alone. It is the largest Tiger Reserve and National Park in India.



How to reach

The Sunderbans is only accessible by waterways. The nearest railhead is Port Canning, from where organized group trips start. There are several other entry points, but Port Canning is most popular. The other route is through Basanti that is connected by bus service to Kolkata. From here, one can take boats to Sajnekhali. One can also come via Port Canning and Gosaba or from Sonakhali to Sajnekhali. From Kolkata, there are Sunderban trains to Canning and buses to Namkhana, Raidighi, Sonakhali, and Najat, from where motor launch services are available for Sunderbans.

Best time to visit: Sunderbans is open to visitors from October to March. The best month to visit Sunderbans is between December and February.

Where to stay

Sajnekhali Tourist Lodge run by West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. Tourist Lodge (03218-214960) and forest rest houses are available at Sajnekhali. There are some private lodges also.

Sundarbans Package Tour

West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation organises regular Package Tours to Sunderbans in the luxury AC/NAC Vessels MV Sarabjaya and MV Chittrarekha for 1 Night 2 days & 2 Nights 3 days during October to April. Details available in website www.wbtcd.gov.in

What to see

Sajnekhali Watch Tower:

Sajnekhali Watch Tower is counted among the most renowned watch towers in the park. The reason behind its popularity is its close proximity to a number of resorts in the Sunderban area. This place also serves as the head office of the forest department. A tourist can obtain the permission to enter the national park from this spot only. The watch tower can accommodate 20 people at a time. The major attractions in this region are Bono Bini Temple, Mangrove Interpretation Center and the tourist lodge of the Bengal Tourism Department. This watch tower makes exploring the wilderness fun and easy. Especially, the bird lovers get a special spectacle of avifauna species such as Pelican, Kingfishers, Plovers, Lap Wings, White Bellied Sea Eagle, Whimprel, Curlews, and Sandpipers.

Sudhanyakhali Watch Tower :

Sudhanyakhali Watch tower is the perfect place from where a wildlife freak can spot a tiger. The watch tower can hold 25 people at a time. There is a pond having sweet water behind the watch tower. Wild animals use to come and drink water at this point. There is vast grassland behind the pond which endows an invigorating site of the wilds. Other than the tigers, one can also spot other wildlife species such as crocodiles, wild boars and axis deer.

Do Ban Ki Watch Tower: This watch tower renders canopy walk that a tourist can carry out to view the riveting flora and fauna. This canopy walk is at an elevation of 20 feet from the ground and is about half a kilometer in length. Apart from tigers, tourists may also encounter Bahmini Kites and Chital Deer.

Netidhopani Watch Tower: This watch tower is linked with the famous tale of Lakhindari and Behula. It is said that on the extreme right of the woods, there is a road edified by King Pratap Aditya in order to protect the coastal area. The tower can accommodate 20 people at a time and it also embraces a sweet water lake in close proximity.

Bhagatpur Crocodile Project: This area is an abode of the largest estuarine crocodiles. It embraces a famous hatchery and sanctuary making it a well-liked tourist charm in Sunderban.

Piyali: It is a small area or town on the trail to the Sunderban National Park. It is an extremely scenic place that also offers a doorway to Sunderban.

Halliday Island: These isles are positioned on the southern side of Sunderban Tiger Reserve. Halliday Wildlife Sanctuary is also located within the region. The sanctuary has the honor of being the last retreat of the rare barking deer. The Lothian Island Wildlife Sanctuary situated nearby is no less than a paradise for those who love to relish the sight of exotic birds.

Kanak: The crystal clear waters and shores in Kanak are counted among

the most preferred basking spot for Olive Ridley Turtles. There are many myths connected with Kanak these turtles. It is said that they travel in upright position to a distance of about 100 kilometers from the mouth of the sea to the Sunderban National Park.



Watch out for

Flora: The Sunderbans Mangroves ecoregion on the coast forms the seaward fringe of the delta and is the world's largest mangrove ecosystem, with 20,400 square kilometres of area covered. The dominant mangrove species *Heritiera fomes* is locally known as sundri or sundari. Mangrove forests are not home to a great variety of plants. They have a thick canopy, and the undergrowth is mostly seedlings of the mangrove trees.

Fauna: The Sunderbans forest is home to more than 250 tigers. The Royal Bengal Tigers have adapted themselves very well to the saline and aqua environs and are extremely good swimmers. As you enter the adventurous wild land of the Sunderbans, you will be thrilled to see the chital deer and rhesus monkey. The aqua fauna of Sunderbans include a variety of fish, red fiddler crabs, and hermit crabs. There are crocodiles, which can be often seen along the mud banks. Sunderbans National Park is also noted for its conservation of the Ridley Sea Turtle. An incredible variety of reptiles is also found in Sunderbans – these include king cobra, the rock python and the water monitor. The endangered river terrapin, Batagur baska, is found on the Mechua Beach, while barking deer are found only on Haliday Island in the Sunderbans.



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Barely two weeks into his presidency, Donald Trump has stunned the world by signing into effect some of the controversial promises he made as a candidate. His decision to ban refugees and immigrants from seven Muslim majority nations has deepened the fissures within the United States

BY FARWA IMAM ALI/California

Picture this. A Harvard graduate from Sudan with a green card, pursuing a PhD from Stanford University, in handcuffs. Back from a research trip, Nasrin Omer was held for over five hours at New York's JFK airport by immigration officers. The 39-year-old was questioned about her views on Sudanese politics and was patted down aggressively, upon which she broke into tears. Omer was among hundreds who bore the brunt of President Donald Trump's deci-

sion to ban immigrants from seven Muslim majority countries.

Barely two weeks into his presidency, Trump has stunned the US and the world by speedily signing into effect several of his controversial campaign promises. These include building the Mexico border wall, recommissioning oil pipelines, pulling America out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and repealing Obamacare. But none of them evoked the punch-in-the-gut reaction like the executive order banning refugees from seven Muslim majority coun-

tries. The "extreme vetting" orders were signed on January 27, suspending with immediate effect entry of all refugees to the United States for 120 days, barring Syrian refugees indefinitely, and blocking for 90 days citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. Political pundits were quick to point out that Trump had no business interests in those countries.

Chaos and despair unravelled at airports across the US as the ban went into effect. Sara Yarjani, an Iranian student at the California Institute for

You're fired: President Trump signs an executive order on January 28

COVER STORY

Fighting spirit: Students at Columbia University in New York protesting against Trump's anti-immigration policies

Human Science, was returning after a trip when she was stopped at the Los Angeles airport. She was forced to void her visa on her own, after being threatened with serious consequences if she resisted. Only then was she allowed to use a phone. She was then put on a plane to Oslo, Norway, en route to Austria where her family lived.

Opponents of the ban said it violated the spirit of the US constitution, which ensured protection from all forms of discrimination. Moreover, the seven countries on the list have had no history of attacks on US soil. And yet, the ban spared no one. Not even Hameed Khalid Darweesh, an Iraqi refugee who had worked as an interpreter for the US Army's 101st Airborne Division and saved the lives of several American servicemen. He



H-1B VISAS

What reforms would mean to me

Vinutha Shivanna, final-year computer science engineering student, Bengaluru

THE US move to restrict H-1B visas is bad news for computer science engineering students in India. I wanted to work for an IT company after graduation, but now I feel that it is better to turn to teaching than pursue a career in IT.

As it is, getting into an IT company is very challenging. During one of the campus recruitments, an IT company selected only three out of 700 aspirants. Now, if these restrictions come into effect, IT companies in the US, especially the Indian firms, will be forced to hire locally. This will significantly reduce the chances of these companies recruiting freshers from India.

Also, I feel that job security in an IT company is low, and it is bound to get worse with restrictions in place as the companies may resort to mass sacking if they are under stress. Moreover, many Indian students go to the US to do their master's in the hope of getting a job there. With the proposed restrictions, the prospects look bleak for them too.

AS TOLD TO ABHINAV SINGH

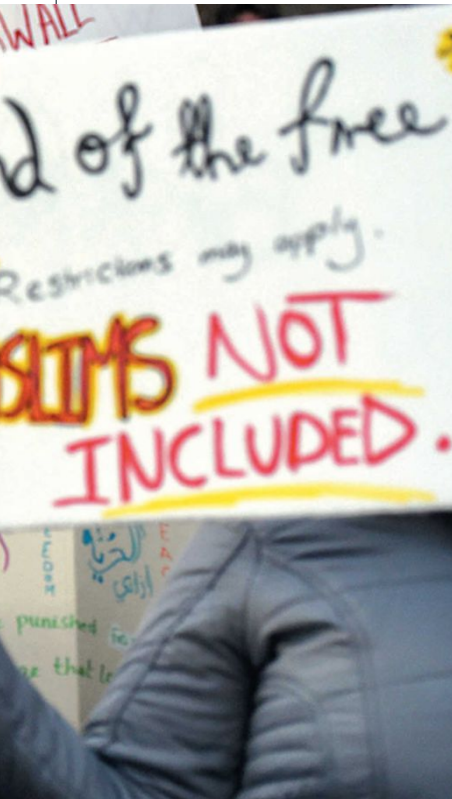
was detained upon his arrival at JFK.

Luckily for Darweesh and many others, the American Civil Liberties Union stepped in and got a stay on certain provisions of the ban from federal district court judge Ann M. Donnelly.

As fear and despair gripped homes

H1-B VISAS

Expected order	Estimated impact
New restrictions on the issuance of H1-B and other guest worker visas	Could lead to mass layoffs of foreign low-income workers in the US
Several bills in the offing, including one that doubles the minimum salary of foreign workers to \$1,30,000	In 2016, the US issued 85,000 H1-B related visas, of which 70% went to Indians The US market is worth \$65 billion to India's tech industry



REUTERS

and campuses, wary protesters were seen flocking to airports, city squares and public places. “We barely rested from the women’s march [against Trump], but had to come here,” said Hamzah Safieh, who was at Battery Park, New York, with friends Sarah and Katie. “These are testing times for American democracy.”

Thousands of academics, including 20 Nobel laureates, have signed a peti-

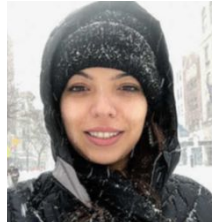
TRAVEL BAN

Order	Estimated impact
Suspension of refugee programme for 120 days	The ban affects about 90,000 visas
Ban on arrivals from 7 Muslim majority countries - Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen	Prevents access to 21.8 crore people US colleges stand to lose \$7 million in revenue, if the ban is enforced permanently

A YEMENI'S PAIN

Not there, nor here

BY BUSHRA AL FUSAIL



I AM A REFUGEE in the US. I came here a year ago, escaping the ongoing war in Yemen. I work for the International Organization for Migration. At the beginning of the war, I organised the first female bike race in Sana'a

to protest fuel shortage and the siege. It was successful but I was criticised, for a woman cannot bike in Yemen even if she dresses properly.

My father died a few months ago in Yemen. My mother lives in a destroyed house there because of the bombing. She was planning to come to the US but now I don't know if it is possible.

I am worried for my future. It is like being uncertain about everything, and feeling trapped—far from your family and your relatives, pushed out by a war from there, and pushed out by selfishness and hate from here. Where should I go? Maybe I will be in limbo, maybe not.

I trusted in the policy of the US; I always dreamt it to be a place where democracy is respected and valued. And now, what do I say?

After the first shock, I said to myself: I always stood up for justice and political activism in Yemen. I should do so here, too. I marched in Washington, DC. I went on TV simply as Bushra, as a refugee. Because I am this thing in America now. I don't know if I am still a person, being a Muslim refugee from one of the seven banned countries.

AS TOLD TO LAURA SILVIA BATTAGLIA

tion against the executive order. They said conducting international diplomacy was completely different from running a presidential campaign. Trump, however, is unrelenting. In an unprecedented move, he fired acting Attorney General Sally Yates for instructing justice department lawyers against making legal arguments defending the ban on immigrants. Miranda Yaver, who taught at Yale University, said there was no other way to interpret the order. “The narratives Trump created of a world out of control are simply untrue. The Muslim ban is about fascism and not democracy,” said Yaver.

The Council on American-Islamic

Relations, America's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organisation, has filed a federal lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the executive order. “It takes two years for a Syrian refugee to come to the US. They are extremely vetted,” said Nihad Awad, executive director of CAIR. “Trump's executive order is not based on national security. It is based on fear-mongering. He is still in the campaign mode,” he said.

Samantha Crane, legal director of Autistic Self Advocacy Network, a disability rights movement based in Washington, DC, agreed with Awad. “Trump's refugee ban is personal,” she said. “My mom came to

COVER STORY

America in 1948 as a refugee from Czechoslovakia. There is extreme vetting and then to be turned away at the airport or prevented from entering the country is very traumatising.”

Such callousness is what the immigrant community is worried about. Safieh said her friends were cancelling their summer vacation plans. Immigrant students said they were scared to leave the country. Boston University, in fact, advised students hailing from the countries on the banned list against travelling.

Wazir Ahmad, a Pakistani American green card holder, who runs a small store in New York, is worried about the annual trip he makes to his homeland to meet his family. He fears that he may no longer be allowed back in, like Marzieh Moosavizadeh, a 75-year-old Iranian American from Phoenix, Arizona. Moosavizadeh, who travels regularly between Iran and the US on a green card, was in for a major shock as she was detained at the Los Angeles airport. With her grandson acting as an interpreter, Moosavizadeh spoke about how she was detained although she was a senior citizen, who had undergone triple bypass surgeries and was suffering from a range of medical issues. She said the detainees were denied food, given just 250ml of water and escorted to and from restrooms, which made them feel humiliated.

Marc Springer, an American citizen, is a worried man. Trump's latest move has unnerved Springer and



Leading the fightback

BY FARWA IMAM ALI

The American Civil Liberties Union is leading the charge against the immigrant ban. In a week that saw immigrants being detained without food and access to lawyers, ACLU worked swiftly to obtain a stay on Trump's executive order. In effect, it handed him his first loss in the political game.

Anthony D. Romero, executive director of ACLU, said judge **Ann M. Donnelly** understood the possibility for irreparable harm to hundreds of immigrants and lawful visitors to the US. “Our courts worked as they should as bulwarks against government abuse or unconstitutional policies and orders. On week one, Trump suffered his first loss in court,” said Romero. The support for ACLU has subsequently been growing. In a matter of days, it received more than \$24 million in online donations.

his wife, who is from Yemen. “It isn't just about visa holders or people with green cards, it is about people with American citizenship as well,” he said. Many of his wife's relatives living in the US are currently travelling abroad, like an aunt who is in Saudi Arabia to meet her ailing mother. Springer said he was not sure whether they would be allowed to return.

He said Trump's policies had made him so worried that he was considering leaving the US for good. “I have been pondering over alternative plans in case the situation here becomes untenable. My wife and I have both lived overseas, so that is a possibility,” he said.

Former attorney and journalist Mark Fass said the fallout from the ban would be serious. “While it is true that Trump is playing to his base, what is being destroyed in the process is the image, reputation and goodwill of the United States as the leader of the free world,” he said. No wonder attorney generals of 16 states, including California and New York, have offered their support to ACLU in its fight against the ban. Even in the senate there appears to be a certain amount of bipartisan consensus against the ban. While Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren said the US was facing a constitutional crisis, seasoned Republicans John McCain and Lindsey Graham observed that the ban was not likely to improve national security.

Senator Bernie Sanders said that telling over a billion Muslims in the world that they were not welcome to the US sent a horrible message and was against American values. “I hope very much that President Trump rescinds that ban.” Trump's unprecedented decision forced former president Barack Obama, who had vowed to be respectful to the new president, to voice his displeasure. He said in a statement that he disagreed “with the notion of discriminating against individuals because of their faith or religion.”

Tanya Selvaratnam, an American

PIPELINES

Order	Estimated cost
Resumption of the construction of two controversial pipelines that were stalled due to protests	Keystone XL to cost \$5.4 billion and will transport 8,30,000 barrels of crude oil a day
1,897km Keystone XL from Canada and 1,900km Dakota Access	Dakota Access to cost \$3.7 billion and will transport 4,70,000 barrels of crude oil a day

MEXICAN WALL

Order	Estimated cost
Build a wall along the US-Mexico border to prevent illegal entry of people and contraband	\$12-15 billion, plus \$700 million as annual maintenance
About 35ft high and 1,600km long	

THE UNPREDICTABLE PRESIDENT

We have never been so divided



BY GENE ROBERTS

TENSION BETWEEN the president and the press is almost traditional in the US. It is primarily because the press runs what the president does not want to be published. In the case of President Trump, this has come out far more than it has previously. It is partly because Trump responds to

things said on television or published in print, and he responds in a vigorous way. This escalates tension.

It is, however, not right to say that the media is totally biased against Trump. Even in moderated debates, Trump was saying things and the media was covering it. Things are moving faster in this administration than they normally do. Subsequently, the relations also deteriorate faster than they usually do. However, there are four more years to go in his term. There are going to be some ups and downs.

While there is a view that Trump is voicing the concerns of the average American, Americans are completely divided about his policies. People who support Trump seem to be moving closer to him, and people who are opposed to him see his administration as more dangerous than they thought it would be. I am 85 and I have watched protests all my adult life. I have never seen the country as divided as it is now. We have a sizeable segment of the country applauding what Trump does and we have an equal number or more opposing, and being fearful of, what he does. While this country has always had a Democratic or Republican opposition, they have never even remotely been as extreme as

they are today. So you could expect any sort of reaction, like the secession movement in California.

Regarding the move to restrict migration by changing the rules on visas like the H-1B, we don't know how it is going to play out. If there isn't some relaxation of the proposed changes, it will undoubtedly affect workers in IT and other technical jobs in the US.

The move to build a wall on the Mexican border to keep out illegal immigrants is another issue on which the entire country is divided. Many people applaud it, but many do not. I think it will be a mistake. We are already seeing a rockier relationship with Mexico. This will escalate. We don't know about Trump's plans. A 20 per cent border fee or a general increase in tariffs? The move will exacerbate the already troubled relations with Mexico and we will go back to the kind of ties we had before World War I.

As far as Trump's foreign policy is concerned, we need to wait and see. We need to see the US policy towards NATO under Trump. He has said he is 100 per cent in support of NATO, but in the past he had said NATO was obsolete. I think that is the eye of the whole European relations and not just US-Russia relations. The big question is whether Trump can strengthen US-Russia ties without weakening our relationship with western Europe.

Coming to China, like with many things Trump, we can't be sure how his policy will play out. I feel ties with China are likely to get very, very rocky. And if that happens, the fallout would be serious and severe. In the Middle East, the move to shift our embassy in Israel to Jerusalem is certain to increase tensions. There is concern even in Israel about doing so quickly.

Back home, the challenge, especially to the Democrats, remains. Barack Obama or Bernie Sanders is unlikely to be a rallying point for them. Over time, a new leader is likely to emerge. You never had this sort of tension and polarisation in the US. No one can be too confident about how this will play out. It is too early to say whether this will revitalise the Democrats and offset Trump's support.

**Roberts was managing editor, The New York Times
AS TOLD TO MATHEW T. GEORGE**

citizen of Sri Lankan origin, who had exposed many of the malpractices of the Rajapaksa regime, said democracy in the US was hijacked by a regime which refused to listen to immigrant and citizen voices. The New York-based actor and writer said that after attacking the immigration policy, the Trump administration would clamp down on public protests and the media. "The US is on the verge of a civil war of a different kind," she said.

Huddled in coffee shops, on col-

lege campuses and local hangouts, immigrants and citizens are in a collective fight for the soul of America. Some of them have doubts about their "settled lives in America." Like Ahmad and Moosavizadeh, they fear that even a green card cannot protect them against the "unconstitutional or un-American" measures imposed by a government devoid of empathy. Worse still, they worry that the ban has alienated the US from its allies and has played right into the hands

of terrorist groups like Islamic State.

"Isolationism will not serve us well," said Yaver. "Regime stability is crucial. But I don't feel optimistic until we preserve a free press in addition to the mutual co-existence of the executive, legislative, judicial branches. But with the White House refusing to comply with the judiciary's orders regarding the ban, America finds itself at the edge of a socio-political precipice."

WITH LAURA SILVIA BATTAGLIA

COVER STORY

REFUGEE CRISIS

A distressing departure



BY DAVID MILIBAND

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S executive order suspending the entire resettlement programme for 120 days and banning indefinitely the arrival of Syrian refugees is a repudiation of fundamental American values, an abandonment of the United States' role as a humanitarian leader and a propaganda gift to those who would plot harm to America.

The order also cuts the number of refugees scheduled for resettlement in the US in the fiscal year 2017 from 1,10,000 to just 50,000. Founded on the myth that there is no proper security screening for refugees, the order thus thrusts into limbo an estimated 60,000 vulnerable refugees, most of whom have already been vetted and cleared for resettlement here.

Refugees coming to the US are fleeing the violent extremism that the US and its allies are fighting in the Middle East and elsewhere. Based on recent data, a majority of those selected for resettlement in America are women and children. There are also thousands of Afghans and Iraqis whose lives are at risk because of the assistance they offered to American troops stationed in their countries. Of all the refugees that my organisation, the International Rescue Committee, would be helping to resettle this year, this group, the Special Immigrant Visa population, makes up a fourth.

Compared with other types of immigrants, refugees are the most thoroughly vetted group to enter the US. The resettlement process can take up to 36 months and involves screenings by the department of homeland security, the FBI, the department of defence, the state department, the National Counterterrorism Center and the intelligence community. According to the Cato Institute, the chances of a US citizen being killed by a refugee are one in 3.64 billion. An American is far more likely to be killed by lightning than by a terrorist attack carried out by a refugee.

When the US abjures its responsibility to the world's most vulnerable people, it forgoes its moral authority to call upon the countries of Europe, as well as poorer nations like Lebanon, Turkey, Kenya and Pakistan, which host over five million refugees among them, to provide such shelter.

Terrorists are strategic in their work and their messaging. The civilised world must be equally strategic in its response. Where extremists seek to foster a clash of civilisations, democratic governments should not play into their hands.

That is what a ban on specific nationalities does. It is not right and it is not smart.

In 1980, when Congress passed the Refugee Act with bipartisan support, President Carter's secretary of health, education and welfare, Joseph A. Califano Jr, said the refugee issue required the US to "reveal to the world—and more important to ourselves—whether we truly live by our ideals or simply carve them on our monuments".

That still resonates today. Expert review of the resettlement vetting process is part of good government. Hasty dismissal of carefully developed systems is harmful and a distressing departure from fact-based policymaking.

Miliband is former British foreign secretary and president and chief executive of the International Rescue Committee.

For full text log on to www.theweek.in

INDIA VIEW

Friend or foe?

BY REKHA DIXIT

The Indian and Hindu community will have a true friend in White House..." This grandiose promise of Donald Trump's will be used to calibrate every move he makes, that could even have a ripple effect on India.

Trump's twin moves, however, show that despite the warm telephone call he had with Narendra Modi [notably one of the first few leaders he called after inauguration], his foreign policy vis-a-vis India remains unpredictable.

Trump put a temporary ban on immigration from seven Islamic countries—Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Iran, Iraq and Libya—identified as exporters of terror. While other countries quickly condemned the move, India remains quiet. Any list of state sponsors of terror that does not feature Pakistan is pointless for India.

Vinay Sahasrabudde, director of Bharatiya Janata Party's Public Policy Research Centre, notes, "While the idea of ban by religion is not acceptable, the fact remains that some countries are factories of terror. If Trump is serious about curbing terror, he should have Pakistan on his radar. That he has not hit where it should hurt most is worrisome."

Even as the White House ban is being contested in American courts, Pakistan made some quick moves, detaining Hafiz Saeed, architect of the 26/11 attack in Mumbai, putting Jamaat-ud-Dawa and Falah-e-Insaniyat Foundation on an anti-terror watch list. New Delhi quickly discounted these efforts as cosmetic. Foreign ministry spokesperson Vikas

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COVER STORY

Swarup said Pakistan had made such moves earlier, too, and it did not reflect its seriousness. “Only a credible crackdown on Saeed and the organisations involved in cross border terror would be proof of Pakistan’s sincerity,” he stated. The ministry, while not commenting on the seven-nation ban, said that regarding H-1B visas, “India’s interests and concerns have been conveyed both to the US administration and the US Congress at senior levels.”

Observers say it is too early to make sense of the direction Trump’s foreign policy may take, but India needs to be alert, not complacent. “In this age of multipolarity, new associations are being formed. Our own policy has shifted from ‘equidistant’ to ‘equiproximity,’” said Sanjay Pulipaka, senior consultant, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations. “No one helps anyone, we have to look out for ourselves.” He, however, said Indo-US defence and economic ties were strengthening. India purchased C-17 Globemasters from the US and landed them at the junction of India-China-Pakistan. The significance would not have been lost on anyone.

Rakesh Sood, former deputy chief of mission, Embassy of India, Washington, said, “Clearly, Trump’s approach to foreign policy is unusual and disruptive. He excluded Saudi Arabia, too, despite 9/11. But Pakistan’s action on Saeed could mean some signals were conveyed from Washington. Predicting Trump’s behaviour so far has not been particularly productive. India’s best bet is to respond to areas as per our interests and not read any patterns in Trump’s initial moves.” ♦

In deep waters: Chinese missile frigate Yuncheng launches an anti-ship missile during a military exercise near Hainan Island and Paracel Islands. Trump’s nominee for secretary of state had said that China should be prevented from dominating the islands it claims in the South China Sea

ASIA WATCH

I am laughing no

Trump’s hostility to China could put India in a spot

BY SHASHI THAROOR

Getting used to Donald Trump in the White House has not been easy for any government. Aside from his ‘unpresidential’ rants on Twitter and elsewhere, his refusal to answer inconvenient questions at press conferences and his pugnaciously adversarial relationships with anyone he doesn’t care for (which seems to be a large portion of the global population), there have been his dramatic decisions in his first days in office: the ‘Muslim Ban’, denying entry to the US for people from seven largely Muslim countries; the suspension of refugee

admissions, notably from war-torn Syria; and the draft executive order on the H-1B visa policy, which has sent Indian IT stocks plummeting. Foreign countries have barely absorbed one shock when the next one comes out of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. We are all reeling.

The first realisation is that the initial reassurances we were all given by wise Americans—that we should take Trump seriously, but not literally—are all hokum. It seems we must take Trump both seriously and literally, for he appears determined to fulfil every one of the campaign promises that astonished foreigners derided him for. I had laughed at the



more

prospect of America actually building a wall along the Mexican border; I am laughing no more.

What, then, awaits us in Asia? The H-1B visa issue should come as no surprise: it is one of very few Trump threats that enjoys broad bipartisan support in Capitol Hill. If he goes ahead and toughens work visas for non-Americans, imposing a higher skill and salary threshold, he will find himself popular with Americans of both parties. Lower skilled Indian workers will suffer because they will be denied visas; Indian companies that used the H-1B programme to supply less-expensive techies to American projects will find it no longer pays to do so. It will dramatically reduce, if not eliminate, much of the cost advantage that Indian IT

firms enjoy in the US marketplace. No wonder the shares of companies like Infosys and Wipro took a dive. But in the end India will learn to compete in the US on the basis of higher quality and not merely lower costs.

The geopolitical prospects are a little more uncertain. Of Trump's hostility to and suspicions of China, there is little doubt; he has appointed a number of close advisers who are notoriously hawkish on Beijing. During his confirmation hearings, his nominee for secretary of state expressed the view that China should be prevented from dominating the islands it claims in the South China Sea. With a defence secretary known by the sobriquet "Mad Dog" Mattis, might this cabinet combination lead to an armed confrontation? Already a Chinese general has been quoted as saying he expects a war with America under Trump. Trump will not shy away from conflict; whether he will provoke it is another matter altogether.

But his early steps, or missteps,

have been somewhat alarming. Tweeting publicly about a friendly call with "the President of Taiwan" was unwise: it was a slap across China's face with a red rag. Countries like India and the US have long come to a convenient arrangement on Taiwan: we maintain friendly relations with it, but we call our de-facto embassies there trade legations, and we don't recognise the Taiwanese government officially in any way. Trump broke this unwritten code. If he goes too far, he risks provoking a severe backlash from China, which has frequently demonstrated its extreme sensitivity to slights (real or imagined) against its sovereignty.

Was he just unprepared, or did he intend to send a deliberate signal to Beijing that he was ready to upset the apple cart? Either way, anything is possible now. One can imagine Trump inviting the Dalai Lama to the White House, for example. The 'One China' policy is sacrosanct to the Communist mandarins in Beijing. If Trump seems to be questioning it, China's own fury might be difficult to contain.

Should either the South China Sea or Taiwan (or for that matter Tibet) result in a flare-up of tensions between the US and China, India will have a delicate path to tread. Our sympathies are instinctively on the side of the status quo; our wish would be that Trump not rock the boat. But in his blunt way he might demand we choose sides; he is even more capable than George W. Bush was of asking "are you with me or against me?". With China on our doorstep and parked in a number of ambitious naval and infrastructure projects in all our neighbouring countries, we don't want to make an overt enemy out of it. But nor can we afford to alienate a newly assertive Washington.

The situation, as Trump himself (inadvertently) put it, is "unpresidential". India will have to navigate with caution and finesse. And this time, whether we take him literally or not, India must take Trump seriously. ♦



KARNATAKA

Mellow, no yellow

S.M. Krishna's resignation could restart the "originals" versus "outsiders" fight in the Karnataka Congress

BY PRATHIMA NANDAKUMAR

Leaving one's home of 45 years is not easy. But, the resignation of S.M. Krishna, 84, from the Congress, which gave him an illustrious career—as chief minister, governor and foreign minister—raises as many questions about the current leadership as it does about his commitment to the party.

On January 29, a day after he sent his resignation letter to Congress president Sonia Gandhi, Krishna called a press meet on the lawns of his sprawling residence at Sadashivanagar, a plush locality in Bengaluru. The stream of visitors were treated to hot and crispy *masala dosas*, sweet dishes and *badam* (almond) milk. This harked back to the days when he was the popular chief minister, the foreign-educated charismatic leader, the book-lover and tennis enthusiast, the Gandhi loyalist and the Union minister who had direct access to the party high command.

After a long telephonic conversation with Congress leaders in Delhi, Krishna said: "I quit the Congress and I will not change my mind. I

consulted only my wife. I am hurt and anguished. But I quit because my dignity and self-respect were at stake. I have not ditched the party, but have only quit. I am not retiring from active politics. A politician, just like a soldier, never retires."

Not naming party vice president Rahul Gandhi, he said: "Today, the Congress feels the party can be run by managers and there is no need for time-tested mass leaders and loyal workers. A party that does not respect seniority will not survive."

Krishna's career took a downward turn in 2012, when he was removed as foreign minister. He was then denied a Rajya Sabha ticket and finally sidelined ahead of the 2013 assembly elections. With "migrants" taking over the state government, there was a gradual loss of clout within the party and also in his home turf of Mandya.

Krishna's exit might dent the Congress's prospects in urban areas, especially Bengaluru; Krishna was nicknamed the "Bangalore chief minister". Ironically, the Congress government today is accused of neglecting the capital. Another pertinent question is whether the corporates, who had set up shop in the sleepy city during Krishna's tenure, would turn their backs on the Congress.

Though Krishna never positioned himself as a caste leader, a marginal impact on the Vokkaliga voter base cannot be ruled out. "I was a worker of the Congress incidentally born into a Vokkaliga family," said Krishna. The Congress's loss could be the BJP's gain as the latter does not have a tall leader in the Vokkaliga heartland of old Mysore. Also, the recent sacking of Srinivasa Prasad, a prominent dalit leader, from the state cabinet has upset the dalit vote, which will adversely affect the Congress.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has lost favour among party cadres for promoting "tainted" ministers like K.J. George and H.C. Mahadevappa, while dropping performers like Kimmane Rathnakar and Prasad. The recent cabinet rejig brought in younger blood, but upset some MLAs as some of the new entrants were children of senior Congress leaders.

Prominent caste leaders such as Prakash Hukkeri (Lingayat), Jaffer Sharief (Muslim), Janardhana Poojary (backward class) and A.H. Vishwanath (Kuruba) have been vocal in supporting Krishna. And, with the disgruntled brigade growing by the day, the party is bracing for a showdown between the "originals" and the "outsiders" (led by Siddaramaiah) before the 2018 assembly elections. ♦



Moving on:
S.M. Krishna

BCCI

Game is on

BCCI administrators appointed by the Supreme Court hit the ground running

BY NEERU BHATIA

Vinod Rai landed in Mumbai within hours of the Supreme Court appointing him as chairman of the four-member committee of administrators tasked with running the Board of Control for Cricket in India. On January 31, the former comptroller and auditor general met two of his colleagues in the committee—Vikram Limaye, CEO and managing director of IDFC Ltd, and Diana Edulji, former captain of the Indian women's cricket team. The fourth member of the committee, historian Ramachandra Guha, was in Kerala. He joined the trio through videoconference as they met in Limaye's office.

BCCI treasurer Anirudh Chaudhry and CEO Rahul Johri briefed them on the forthcoming meeting of the International Cricket Council in Dubai and its significance to the BCCI. Rai, apparently, got down to business straightaway. "The reputation of each member is on the line," said a source who witnessed the committee in action. "Each one is therefore determined to ensure that the Supreme Court's orders are carried out."

Rai has described his role as that of a night-watchman. "We need to put in place good governance structures to ensure a smooth transition to an elected body, which will bring about good administration in the BCCI," he said.

Edulji said she was happy that a woman cricketer was made part of the committee. "It's such an important juncture in Indian cricket; a representative of woman cricketers had to be there," she said. Forming a players' association, she said, was a top priority.

Guha was present when the committee met again in Delhi the following day. The meeting went on for more than seven hours. Up for discussion there was the biggest challenge it faced—organising the tenth season of the Indian Premier League. A BCCI official who was removed by the court said a failure by the committee "to organise the high-profile league will be the best way for the world to realise that cricket in India is best left to



The change agents:

(From left) Vinod Rai, Diana Edulji and Vikram Limaye in Mumbai

veteran officials".

The committee is aware of the challenge. "We are very determined to ensure that things run smoothly," said a member. "That is why IPL is a top priority. We are aware that many in the BCCI would rather not have us organise it."

The committee encountered the first 'speed breaker' on January 30 itself—in the form of Amitabh Choudhary, BCCI joint secretary and chief of the Jharkhand Cricket Association. Choudhary had flown into Delhi to convene a meeting of the senior selection committee to pick the squad for the Test between India and Bangladesh in Hyderabad on February 9. But Rai advised him to let Johri convene the meeting. An angry Choudhary argued that he was eligible to do it, but Rai stood firm. The meeting was finally convened by Johri via videoconference after a delay of six hours.

The tussle arose from the ambiguity in the Supreme Court order regarding the eligibility criteria for BCCI officials. The court, in its order on January 2, had held that a person "who has been an office-bearer of the BCCI or a state association for a cumulative period of nine years" was ineligible to continue. This has become open to interpretation. Gopal Subramaniam, the amicus curiae in the case, interprets it as nine years either in state associations or in the BCCI, while BCCI lawyers say it allows an official a total of 18 years (nine each in the BCCI and state associations).

Choudhary, who falls in the latter category, has argued in court that he is eligible to continue in the BCCI. But it does not help him that Justice Dipak Misra, who heads the bench handling the case, has observed that any official who contravenes the eligibility criteria "would do so at their own peril". ♦

AFP

BUDGET

His master's voice

The biggest gainers in Arun Jaitley's budget are Narendra Modi's pet projects

BY VIJAYA PUSHKARNA,
SOUMIK DEY & VANDANA

Hardly had Finance Minister Arun Jaitley left Parliament after presenting Union Budget 2017-18, when the Sensex zoomed up by 485 points. It was not unexpected, as Jaitley had made an earnest effort to nourish his prime minister's pet schemes, embarking on huge government spending but maintaining the fiscal deficit at 3.2 per cent of the gross domestic product and without throwing away freebies. Be it the huge allocation for agricultural cred-

it or the big push to digital economy, Narendra Modi's favourite projects have all received the money they need to grow, flower and fruit by 2019.

A day earlier, the Economic Survey said the demonetisation would shave off 0.25 to 0.5 per cent of the growth in GDP. "The longer-term costs of demonetisation are yet to be assessed and therefore some uncertainty remains about economic and policy climate," said Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian. Jaitley, however,

Income tax rate reduced to **5%** (from 10%) for slab of **₹2.5 lakh to ₹5 lakh**
Surcharge of **10%** for those whose annual income is **₹50 lakh to ₹1 crore**
Agriculture credit target fixed at a record **₹10 lakh crore**



sounded optimistic. He said the pain would be temporary and the surplus liquidity in the banking system would lower interest rates.

The political discourse during the first month of demonetisation was around the small number of income tax payers, and they were expected to be rewarded in the budget. It came in the form of a 50 per cent cut in the lowest income tax slab and a rebate of ₹12,500 for all tax payers.

Also, the budget gave teeth to the prime minister's talk on black money by stipulat-

ing that a political party can receive no more than ₹2,000 in cash from one donor. Higher donations will have to be by cheque or digital payment.

Jaitley seems to have got his numbers right. "Limiting revenue deficit to 2.1 per cent of the GDP and pegging fiscal deficit for 2017-18 at 3.2 per cent while focusing on rural India and infrastructure, the budget has drawn a road map for bringing the economy back on track and accelerating it in the medium term," said S.C. Ralhan, president, Federation of Indian Export Organisations.

Those who expected freebies in the budget, especially because of the assembly elections in five states, were in for a disappointment. Not because the finance minister wanted to avert a run-in with the Election Commission, but the goodies had all been announced on the New Year's eve by the prime minister.

3,500kmrailway lines
to be laidRail safety fund: corpus of
₹1 lakh crore to be created
over five years**500** railway stations to get
lifts and escalators**1 crore**houses for the
poor by 2019Allocation for infrastruc-
ture: **₹3.96 lakh
crore**, a recordCombined
allocation for
rural, agricultural and
allied sectors:**₹1.87 lakh crore**

Allocation under NREGA:

₹48,000 crore

—an all time high

Village first

With the aim of doubling farmers' income by 2022, Jaitley allocated a record ₹10 lakh crore for agriculture credit and an additional grant of ₹47,000 crore for National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development. He increased the allocation for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme to ₹48,000 crore from ₹38,500 crore, and the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana aims to build 133km of road a day. "The focus on rural infrastructure and rural electrification will improve demand and boost employment," said Rathin Roy, director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy.

Digital push

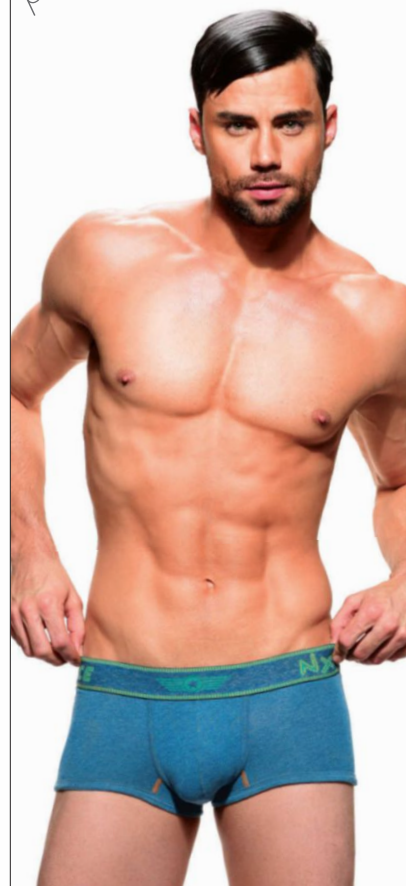
The allocation for Bharat Net has been hiked to ₹10,000 crore, and 1,55,000km of optical fibre has so far been laid under the project. Started by the UPA government, it aims to provide high-speed broadband in 1.5 lakh panchayats at low tariffs.

Aadhaar-based payments facility for merchants, excise duty exemptions on point-of-sale machines, iris readers to encourage digital payments, a payment regulatory board in the Reserve Bank to regulate electronic payments, and withdrawal of service charge on railway e-tickets will add flesh and muscle to Digital India. "The convenience of digital payments will spur on the consumers to spend more and it is a positive sign for us," said Manu Agarwal, founder and CEO of e-tailer Naaptol.

Manufacturing boost

Small and medium enterprises that mostly use cash for business have been hit hard by the demonetisation. Taking note of this, Jaitley reduced corporate tax burden on firms with an annual turnover of less than ₹50 lakh by 5 per cent, to 25 per cent. Banks were also allowed relaxation on their non-performing assets limits for allowing better flow of credit to smaller industries. A financial relief package and a separate employment package were announced for textiles and leather goods sectors.

"The decision to make India a global manufacturing hub for electronics would go a long way in creating jobs in the sector," said C. Salunkhe, president, SME Chamber of India.

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BUDGET

Defence expenditure excluding pension: **₹2.74 lakh crore**

Fiscal deficit target: **3.2% of GDP**

36% increase in FDI. Forex reserves **\$361 billion** in January—enough for 12 months

Aadhaar Pay—an app for merchants—to be launched. **Twenty lakh points** for Aadhaar-based payment systems by September 2017

A bigger benefit to the sector could be the reduction in the lowest income tax slab. “SMEs will benefit from it,” said Manika Prem Singh, economist and founder of Orbis Economics. “There need to be more avenues for encouraging consumption as well as encouraging growth and business.”

Trade challenges

A demand increase in European and US markets and the dual rate hike by US Federal Reserve have renewed trade hopes for Indian exporters. Cross-border trade picked up in the last month from its lows of a negative terrain. The budget relies on the hope that the export markets will improve with demand uptake in developed economies. Jaitley has also announced that presumptive tax on SMEs and small merchants with an annual turnover of ₹2 crore or more will be reduced from 8 per cent to 6 per cent. “A status quo in service tax and excise duty largely is indicative of the fact that we are on course to introduce Goods and Services Tax in this fiscal,” said Ralhan.

He said that while the reduction in current account deficit (from 1 per cent last year to 0.3 per cent this year) was impressive, it would have been better with an increase in exports. “The global challenges highlighted in the budget are very much real and it requires us to be on our toes and revisit our strategy to push exports in such volatile global conditions. It is disappointing that an aggressive marketing strategy by setting up an

export development fund did not see the light of day in this budget,” he said.

Promise to the youth

Because of the slowdown in business and the impact of demonetisation in the informal sector, jobs have been shrinking. The recent data released by the Labour Bureau indicated that the most distressed workers were in the farm sector, where about 40 per cent jobs were lost in the past year. This might be the reason Jaitley has stuck the employment mantra to many initiatives. Emphasising that energising the youth through education, skills and jobs was one of the 10 key focus areas of the government, he extended the skill development scheme to 600 districts through the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras.

A new scheme called Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion Programme (SANKALP) will be launched for providing market-relevant training to 3.5 crore youth. Another programme, a skill strengthening initiative for industrial value enhancement, will be launched in 2017-18 to improve the quality and market relevance of vocational training provided in Industrial Training Institutes and to strengthen apprenticeship programmes through industry-cluster approach. Training in foreign languages will also be encouraged at 100 ITIs.

In an online survey that the finance ministry conducted among Twitter users, a large number of youth said

job creation should be the priority of the budget. Experts, however, say that Jaitley could have done more for job seekers. “Job loss is a global phenomenon and an immediate fallout of increased adoption of automation. India is also witnessing it in employment,” said Richa Gupta, senior economist at Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu.

Banking repair

The finance minister has been not too kind to banks looking for additional government funds to repair their damaged balance sheets. He allocated ₹10,000 crore for refinancing banks, which keeps with the last year but was below expectations. However, there is renewed optimism in the sector that it will get money from the government after the RBI formally writes off ₹500 and ₹1,000 notes as legal tender.

“Going ahead from the budget, banks will still have a lot to be optimistic about. There would be enough opportunities for them to benefit out of demonetisation as well as boost to digital economy through the JAM (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, mobile) model,” said Pinaki Chakraborty, professor at National Institute of Public Finance and Policy. “Already with housing interest rates coming down this quarter it is expected to see a pickup in banks’ retail financing.”

A good thing about Jaitley’s budget is that it has maintained a continuity from his last one. But its impact will fully unravel only when the country moves into the GST regime. ♦

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PASSING



1938-2017

Forever friend

E. Ahamed had the peculiar ability to strike friendships with people across political, religious and national fronts

BY A.K. ANTONY

My friendship with E. Ahamed is more than half a century old. We knew each other from 1964, but got close from 1969 onwards. Our friendship continued through the vicissitudes of Kerala's two-front politics, and also after both of us moved to Delhi. We were partners, colleagues, but above all, friends.

Ahamed had a peculiar ability to strike warm personal friendships with people across political, religious and national boundaries. He had a personal dignity in his dealings with others and that attracted people to him.

In his political convictions, he was quite firm. As partners in the same alliance, we were participants in several political meetings, where I have encountered him putting forth the views of his party—the Indian Union Muslim League—with conviction. But, there was a softness to the style

and manner in which he presented his arguments.

It was this ability, coupled with his innate dignity, that made him one of our finest political diplomats. He dealt with world leaders in the same manner. This quality of his earned him friends across the world, particularly in the Arab world, in Africa and elsewhere. The wide network of friends he had built up helped him during his stint as minister of state for external affairs to handle several of the crises the government faced. In fact, the first foreign policy crisis of the Manmohan Singh government was the issue of a few Indian workers being taken hostage in Iraq. We should recall how deftly Ahamed handled it.

Then, there was the crisis in Libya from where we had to evacuate our citizens. He spent the whole night in his office or near his phone at home during those days, monitoring every moment of the crisis.

Ahamed was mentored by one of Kerala's finest political leaders, C.H. Mohammed Koya, who was chief minister for a short period. Both of them were known for their secular credentials. Yes, they spoke for their community, but not at the cost of other communities.

Following the 1992 Babri Masjid incident, there were riots and violence in several parts of India. But Kerala remained by and large peaceful, thanks to the sagacity of Muslim League leader Shihab Thangal. Ahamed was his right-hand man then. They were particular that the peace and communal harmony of Kerala shouldn't be disrupted.

During a political strife in Kannur in north Kerala, we, in the United Democratic Front, were thinking of boycotting an all-party meeting called by the Left Front chief minister E.K. Nayanar. But Ahamed told us that we ought to do all we could to prevent the situation from getting worse.

Ahamed was a capable administrator. He was one of Kerala's best industries ministers. At the Centre, he handled several portfolios with élan.

He loved to work. Even when he knew his health was deteriorating, he refused to sit idle. He went to Kashmir as part of the all-party delegation a few months ago ignoring his failing health.

Any assignment he was given, he took it up as a mission. That was why both P.V. Narasimha Rao and A.B. Vajpayee sent him several times—I think ten times—to speak for India in world forums whenever the Kashmir issue was raised. Even while in the opposition, where he was critical of policies and measures of the government, he was particular about defending India in world forums.

We have lost a great patriot, a passionate secularist, a fine diplomat and a warm human being.

Antony is former defence minister.



pmo beat • **R. Prasannan**

Thy finger, great anarchy!

Are we voting too often? The President and the PM think so.

A few months ago, Narendra Modi told an interviewer that we are “trapped in a cycle of elections” and it is time to get out. Then he posted the issue on MyGov and sought the views of citizens, parliamentarians, MLAs, MLCs, constitutional experts, academics, bureaucrats, social media “influencers” [sic], think-tanks and other “interested people”. 4,857 were interested.

Now the President is interested. “The time is ripe for a constructive debate,” he said in his Republic Day-address.

Mukherjee and Modi aren’t complaining of too many polls, but of too frequent polls.

We started the democratic process in 1952 with same-time polls to the Lok Sabha and to the assemblies. As new states took birth, as governments lost majority, as assemblies got dissolved before time, the pattern got disrupted. In 1971, the Lok Sabha was dissolved before time; in 1976, it got an (Emergency) extension. In the chaotic late 1980s and the 1990s, legislative life expectancy got so low that President R. Venkataraman mooted ideas such as security of tenure for legislatures and even an all-party government. He called the latter ‘national government’. As if other regimes are anti-national!

Since then several sober statesmen—L.K. Advani, A.B. Vajpayee, B.S. Shek-

hawati, to name a few—have talked about it. Now things are getting official with the President, the PM, a parliamentary committee, the Election Commission, the Law Commission and the old Planning Commission getting interested.

All of them feel we are wasting administrative time, political energy and economic resources by being constantly in a poll mode. Every year, we have a round or more of polls to one or more legislatures. The PM and ministers get distracted, the model code freezes development governance for two months (total seven months lost for three rounds in 2014), the police and the paramilitary get burdened, illegal money corrupts the polity and so on.

Look at the Americans. They vote always on the first Tuesday after November 1 every leap year, come hell, high water or bin Laden; inaugurate the new guy on the next January 20th; and let him rule or ruin them for the next four years. No questions asked, no confidence motions moved.

If we can’t do it like the Yanks, why not copy-paste from the Brits? In 2011, the British legislated that every motion of no-confidence in a PM and

his regime has to be paired with another motion of confidence in a new guy and a new regime. Thus the legislature gets to complete its term, even if the governments don’t, and thus avoids mid-term polls. If we legislate like that, and kickstart the cycle once for all assemblies and the Lok Sabha, we, too, will get into a pattern.

The status-quoists have more fundamental arguments. Tailoring the terms of assemblies to suit the central legislature’s goes against the fundamental principle of federalism. Democracy is not a commodity to be valued on monetary terms. Elections are not a necessary evil, but an essential good by which deprived classes get politically empowered. After all, it was during the chaotic late 1980s and the 1990s that the backwards and the dalits of north India got politically empowered and assertive. Elections are part of the social *amritmanthan* for obtaining the nectar of social and political good.

TAILPIECE: R. Venkataraman and his successor S.D. Sharma, both of who saw four PMs and swore in three, were studies in contrast. RV abhorred chaos; Sharma, the

quintessential politician, viewed instability as part of democratic churning. When THE WEEK’s editors asked him in a rare interview how his presidency would bring about order in the coalition politics, he said with a cheerful smile, “We will muddle through.”

prasannan@theweek.in



BHASKARAN





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From the house of THE WEEK/ Malayala Manorama

THE HOMES MAGAZINE FOR MODERN LIVING
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racket science • Saina Nehwal

Play, rest, play again

Yes, I won the Malaysia Masters Grand Prix Gold, and a win is a win since all wins have a high significance. The last time I won a tournament was in June 2016 at the Australian Open, which was followed by a large gap owing to the injury that you all know about.

After any sports injury, the recovery usually takes six months. Looks like I have recovered well. I am fit and doing all the training schedule as suggested by my coach Vimal Kumar. I hope to do better in the coming tournaments.

A win gives a morale boost to all athletes and that is how it is in my case, too. But then, the Malaysia Open is not a high-level tournament and is only third on the ladder after Super Series Premier and Super Series tournaments. But a win is a win, and I am satisfied.

I played in the Premier Badminton League from January 1 to January 14 and then immediately went to Malaysia, which means I had no rest. This is one of the reasons why I skipped the Syed Modi tournament. This one week of rest will do me good.

Take Ajay Jayaram, a young player who played well at the Malaysia Open and reached the quarters. I think he lost because of lack of rest. He is a good player and will show better results in the coming tournaments. There is no fixed rule about how much rest one needs, but rest is rest. A player will be able to give the best results after a good rest followed by better training.

Recently, I tweeted to Yuvraj Singh, to appreciate his achievements. Yuvraj considers me brave because I came back into the game after the career-threatening injury to

my knee. Since Yuvraj made a century in the ODI after a long absence, I thought it was appropriate for me to praise him and so I tweeted. Social media is interesting and convenient in certain ways!

My term continues at the International Olympics Committee's Athletes' Commission. Usually, there are two meetings each year, and the first one happened in November 2016. I think the next meeting will be held soon.

Now I am preparing for the All England Open in March. Some players do like to play the German Open prior to this one for conditioning, especially in Europe. But then I have never played the German Open in the past, so I am skipping it again.

But the All England Open is important, and maybe I should play one or two major tournaments in between so that I get the practice and the exercise also.

Come to think of it, the All England Open is like any Super Series Premier. I won the Indonesia Open in 2009, which is of the same rank. It is not very difficult. But then if a win is important, it takes a different meaning. My game will remain the same as I have been playing till now. To change technique, I think, may be a bit risky.

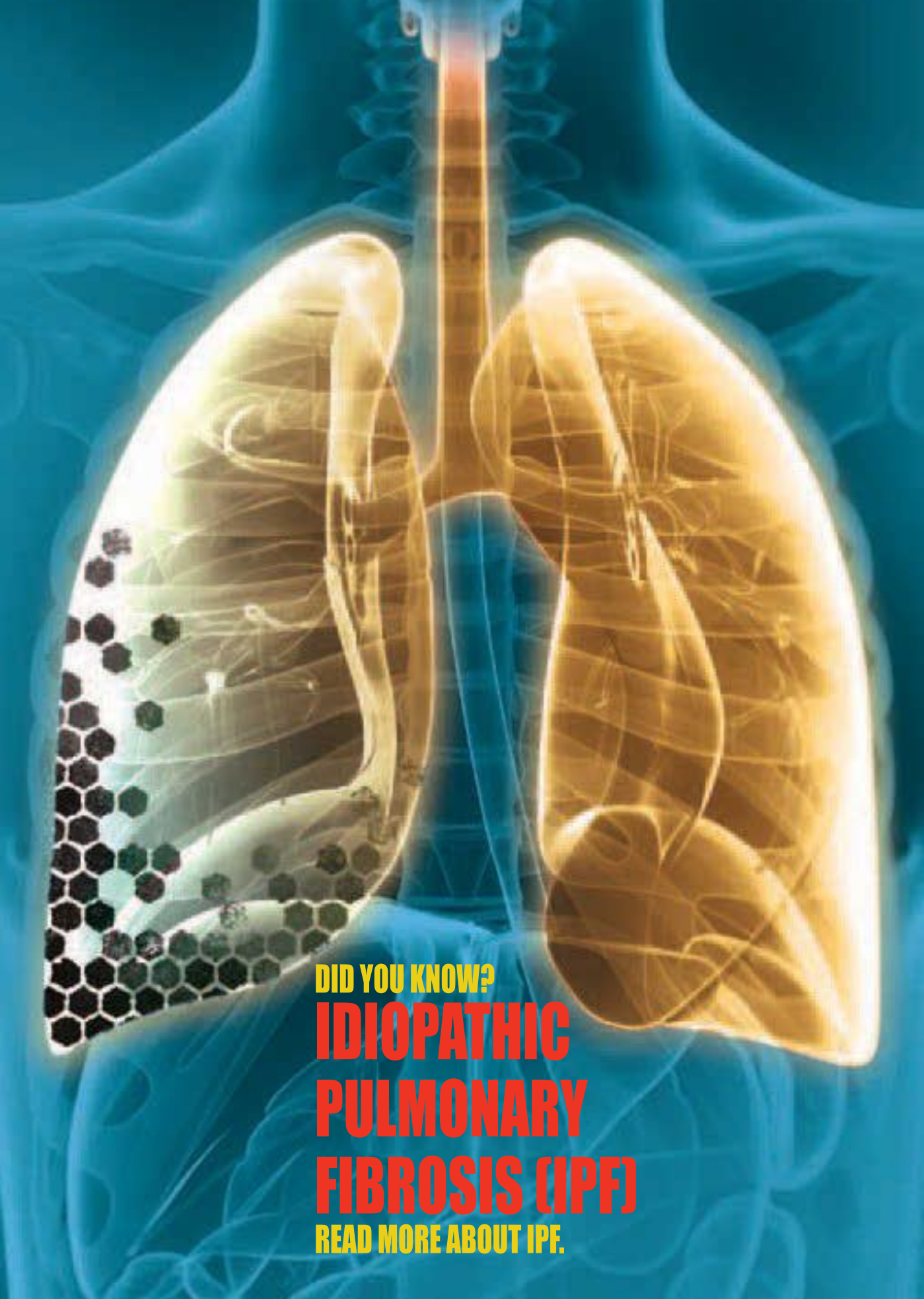
By the way, I watched the finals of the Australian Open (tennis). In fact, I had already predicted that Roger Federer would win this grand slam, and he did. Among the Williams sisters, Serena had an upper hand over Venus. It sure was a pleasure to watch the greats play.

editor@theweek.in

A winning start: Saina with her Malaysia Masters Grand Prix Gold trophy



AP



DID YOU KNOW?

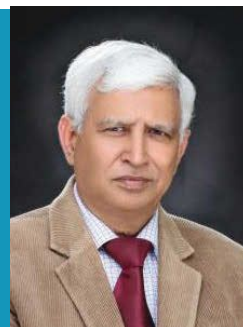
**IDIOPATHIC
PULMONARY
FIBROSIS (IPF)**

READ MORE ABOUT IPF.

Early diagnosis of rare disease-IPF

Dr. Surinder K. Jindal

(Emeritus Professor & Former Head,
Deptt. of Pulmonary Medicine
Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education &
Research, Chandigarh)
Medical Director, Jindal Clinics
Medical Teacher & Scientist



Early diagnosis of rare diseases is a challenge especially in resource limited settings because of the late presentation of patients and unavailability of sophisticated investigations. However, idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) considered as rare in the past, is now increasingly diagnosed. The diagnosis of IPF is based on the symptoms and some investigations. Breathing difficulty is the most common symptom in patients with IPF. Many patients however, do not complain of symptoms until the condition has become severe. They tend to compromise with their work to avoid breathlessness. Most patients complain of reduced working capacity over the period of time due to hampered lung function. Some patients may develop sudden attack of breathlessness without a known cause. There are chances the elder patients may not give enough attention to difficulty in breathing thinking that it is age related problem. However, once the damage is severe, patient develop breathlessness even with minor routine daily activities.

Incessant cough is another distressing symptom. Secondly, many patients develop thickening of mass under the fingernails which makes nails curved. This sign known as “clubbing” occurs because of the reduced oxygen in the circulation. Clubbing can occur in many other disease conditions of lungs and heart or it may be

congenital i.e. since birth. Based on the symptoms and patient profile, clinician suspects the presence of IPF. Some investigations are ordered to confirm the presence of IPF.

Besides routine examination and lung function tests, imaging i.e. high resolution computed tomography (HRCT) is an important investigation which is useful in the diagnosis of IPF. Usually HRCT is sufficient for the diagnosis of IPF, but in some cases, lung biopsy (taking piece of lung for microscopic examination) is required.

Chest physician, radiologist and pathologist are the key medical professionals involved in the process of making accurate diagnosis of the condition. Fall in oxygen saturation of blood immediately after exercise is another important investigation.

Patient should consult the clinician as early as possible for an early diagnosis. This is possible in specialized centers. After detail history, clinical examination and necessary investigations are done to exclude known causes for development of breathlessness and/or clubbing.





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Rare diseases in India: A focus on IPF

Rare diseases also known as orphan diseases have a challenge of epidemiological data (i.e. knowing exact prevalence and incidence), more so in India. The estimated number of patients with rare diseases or disorders in India is over seven crore.

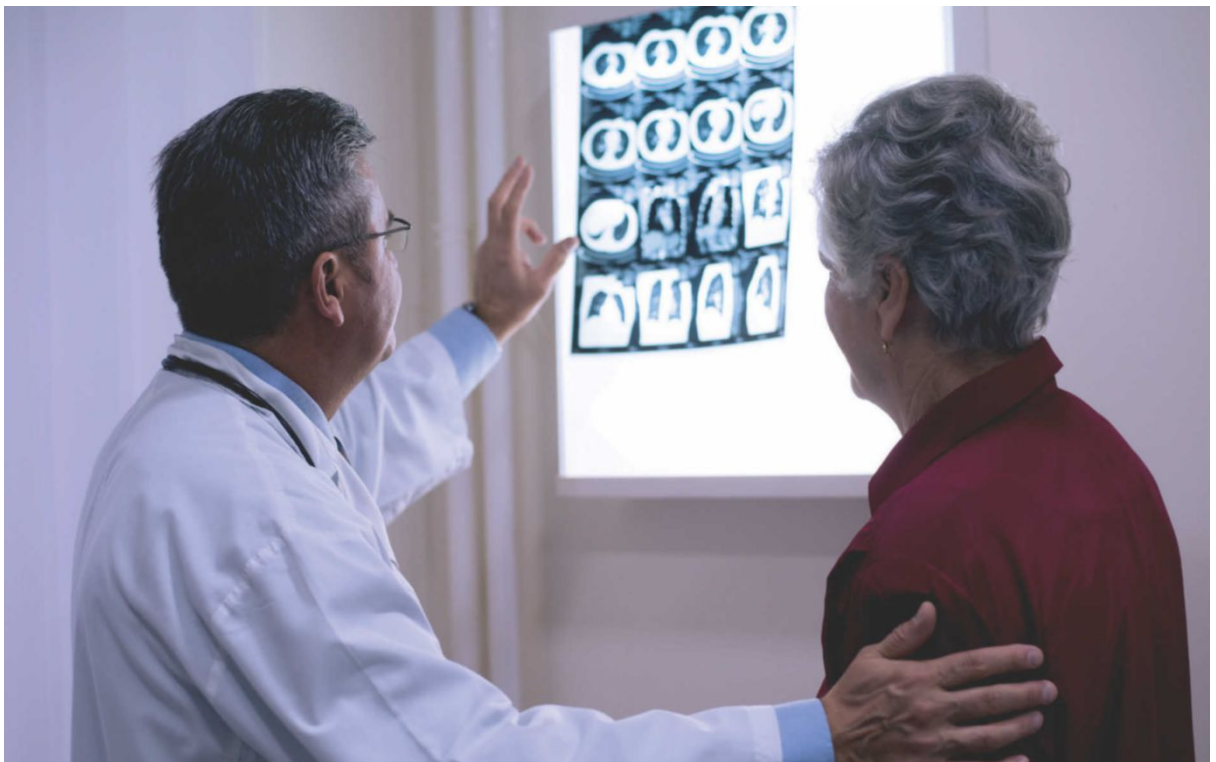
The exact prevalence of Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) in India is not known. The scenario of IPF in terms of diagnosis and treatment has definitely changed over last few years. At one time, IPF was considered as rare disorder, but today pulmonary specialists/chest physicians see many patients with this disorder in their clinical

practice. With increasing number of patients being diagnosed, the disease is no longer rare or unknown in India. The increased number of IPF cases in past few years could be contributed to increased awareness and sophisticated diagnostic facilities such as high resolution computed tomography (HRCT), fiberoptic bronchoscopy and surgical lung biopsy.

The exact cause of IPF is not known. Several factors such as cigarette smoking, exposure to some viruses or environmental drug/chemicals are known to be associated with IPF. In some cases, genetic factors may be responsible for the development of IPF.

The dominant treatment of IPF is with antifibrotic medicines. Nintedanib and pirfenidone are conditionally recommended agents by international guideline. With better management strategies, the response to medical management is improving and overall results are promising.

Lung transplantation is the surgical treatment option for patients with IPF. Surgical management can improve quality of life and also prolong life. However, because of several limitations most of the IPF patients in India are managed with medical therapy.



Rare disease scenario in India and management

Dr Jayachandra

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Governor - India - South

American College of Chest Physicians



Over seven thousand genetic and acquired rare diseases are known.

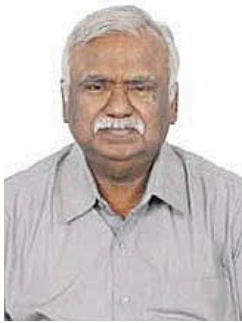
Lifelong disorder with prevalence of <1/1000 population is considered as a rare disease. However, different countries have different cut of limits of prevalence for definition of rare disease. Globally, patient group organizations of rare diseases raise their voice of needs which result in official programs to help these patients and make such diseases a subject of public health importance. The pharmaceutical companies are encouraged by the government to conduct research on orphan drugs by providing incentives.

India is far behind in terms of research on rare diseases and development of orphan drugs resulting in several barriers for the access of effective and safe treatments of many rare diseases. In India, rare diseases pose unique challenge to all sectors including regulatory authorities, patients as well as physicians. The challenges for the management of rare diseases in India include lack of focused research on these diseases, insufficient information about disease and treatment, lack of formal training programs on diagnosis and treatment for the physicians. As most

rare diseases involve multiple systems of the body, coordination between different disciplines/specialties is required for both diagnoses and treatment. All these complexities potentially may result in inaccurate diagnosis or delay in diagnosis. For many rare diseases, drugs are not available in India. Through early access programs of pharmaceutical companies, such drugs may be imported for the benefit of patient.

Coordinated efforts between government, pharmaceutical organizations and patient advocacy group are required to increase awareness about rare diseases and to make the treatment accessible to the needy patients. There is a need of a national policy or program dedicated to rare diseases so that sustained treatment can be provided to the patients. By utilizing resources and skills, research on rare diseases and orphan drugs should be fostered in India which will benefit several patients.





Dr. P. K. Thomas
Consultant Pulmonologist
at Apollo and Fortis Hospitals at Chennai

IPF: Disease and its management

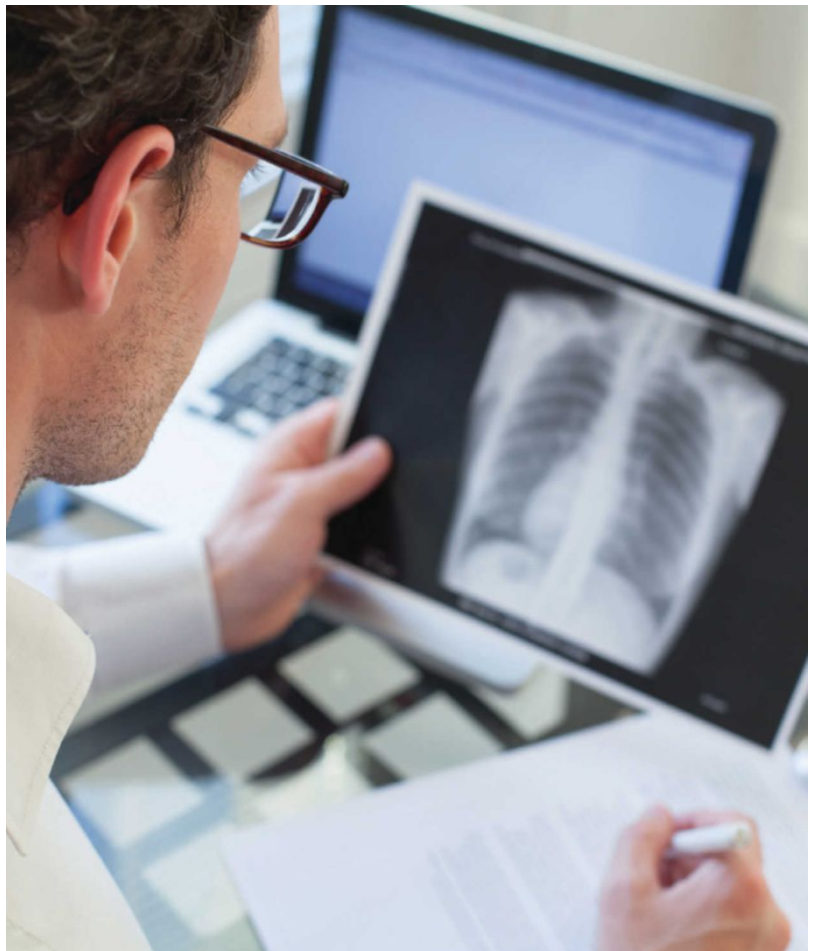
Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) is unique pulmonary disorder in terms of its pathogenesis, clinical features, diagnosis and management. The disease is characterized by thickening and fibrosis of lung tissue resulting in progressive difficulty in breathing. Lung functions deteriorate over the period of time resulting in fatigue or weakness even after performing routine activities. There are different phenotypes of the disease and the exact cause of the disorder is not known.

Diagnosis of IPF can be done in centers having facilities of high resolution computerized tomography (HRCT), fiberoptic bronchoscopy and surgical biopsy. Team of experts i.e. radiologist, pathologist and pulmonary physicians are involved in the diagnosis of IPF. Medical management of the disease is done by pulmonary physicians/ chest physicians while surgical treatment i.e. lung transplantation is a team approach with multi-specialty experts.

As with other disease areas, the major challenge for development of new medicines for the treatment of IPF is high failure rate of efficacy. There was no specific treatment for IPF until recently. The conventional treatment options of medical management include corticosteroids and immunosuppressive agents. In 2011, a medicine known as pirfenidone received approval in Europe whereas in Oct 2014, another medicine i.e. nintedanib has been

approved by US FDA. Clinical trials with these two medicines have shown slowing of reduction of lung function. At the moment, long-term prognosis of the disease is not known. Currently, understanding the long term prognosis of IPF while on treatment with these newer medicines is an unmet therapeutic need. Moreover, collaborative efforts at international level are needed for development of newer medicines for the treatment of IPF.

Surgical management i.e. lung transplant (cadaveric lung transplant or living donor transplant) is suitable treatment option for IPF, but it is not very commonly used unlike medical treatment because of shortage of organs. Patients have to remain on waiting list for long time for cadaveric lung transplants. Given the limited years of survival of patients with IPF, cadaveric lung transplants pose practical difficulties.



Knowing IPF- A rare disease

Dr. Sandeep Nayyar

Senior Consultant & Head
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New Delhi



Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) is a rare non-cancerous disease in which patients develop scar i.e. fibrotic tissue in their lungs. The lungs become stiff and thickened. The ability of lung to supply oxygen to other parts of body decreases significantly. It is estimated that about 50 lakh people worldwide suffer from this disease. Exposure to environmental contaminants, cigarette smoking, genetic predisposition and certain lung infections may be associated with IPF; however, exact cause of this condition is not known. Typically, the disease is diagnosed in patients in their 50-60 years of age. Proportion of male patients with IPF is slightly more compared to female.

Initially patients with IPF develop shortness of breath after exertion which progressively increases and become more severe. Fatigue becomes persistent over the period of time. Patients with IPF often have non-productive cough (cough without sputum). Other symptoms include loss of weight and inability to take care of self due to physical disability and weakness. The disease significantly affects the quality of life and functions of patients. This life threatening condition progresses relatively faster with mean estimated survival of about four to six years after the diagnosis. The most common cause of death in IPF is respiratory failure.

The goals of management include providing relief from the symptoms, reduce the progression of disease, prevent development of complications, improve quality of life and increase survival. Broadly the treatment can be divided into medical and surgical management. Nintedanib, pirfenidone and antiacid are the recommended (conditional recommendation) medicines for use in IPF. The surgical treatment of IPF is lung transplantation. Lung transplantation can improve the quality of life of the patients with IPF and also help in prolonging life. However, lung transplantation is associated with several limitations including shortage of donors, dysfunction of the transplanted lungs and recurrence of disease.





Dr. Sushmita Roychoudhary
Consultant Pulmonologist,
Apollo Gleneagles Hospital Kolkata

Coping with IPF

Coping with rare diseases such as idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) may be a challenge to most people because of several reasons including physical and emotional problems, limited treatment options and poor prognosis. Because of restrictions in the activities, quality of life is significantly impaired in patients with IPF.

Patients can do many things to maintain or improve their quality of life. Regular exercise, healthy diet, other lifestyle changes such as cessation of smoking and positive attitude are some of the measures to cope with the disease. Patients with IPF experience weakness which makes them to adapt inactive lifestyle which further makes them weak. Patients should engage in regular exercises which help to increase the stamina, strengthen muscles and reduce weakness. Smokers should quit smoking so that further damage to lungs is prevented. Not only self smoking, but patients and family members should make sure that there is no exposure to passive smoking. Adequate rest is also equally important for coping with the disease. Patients with IPF should eat healthy diet i.e. more fruits, vegetables and less saturated fat to have sufficient energy and avoid other complications. Learning relaxation techniques helps to face difficult situations such as panic attack which may occur because of sudden shortness of breathing.

Emotional support from family or caregiver is critical in these patients. This is as important as other treatment. Patients need to understand their physical limits and know which activities they can perform and which they cannot. Treatment initiation and change in therapy depends upon patient's overall health. Therapy needs to

change as disease progresses or if current therapy does not work. Patients should not change the medicine or consume other medicines without consultation with healthcare provider. Over, living with IPF becomes easier with changes in lifestyle, active involvement in treatment and emotional support from the family members.



COAST GUARD

Hover to her

An elite group of first-generation women hovercraft officers of the Coast Guard are now assigned combat roles

BY NAMRATA BIJI AHUJA

The sea is rough as gusty winds blow over the Gulf of Mannar, a strip of sea off Mandapam on the east coast of Tamil Nadu, the point closest to Sri Lanka. Assistant Commandant Shirin Chandran of the Indian Coast Guard turns on the wipers to clear the windscreen of her favourite machine. It is that time of the year when there is a slight nip in the air in an otherwise hot location, which is nine degrees from the equator.

Shirin and her colleagues Anuradha Shukla, Vasundhara Chouksey and Sneha Khatayak belong to an elite group of first-generation women hovercraft officers of the Coast Guard, who have

mastered the amphibious machine so well that they are now assigned combat roles at sea. While Shirin and Deputy Commandant Anuradha are part of the 79 ACV (Air Cushion Vehicle) squadron at Coast Guard station at Mandapam, Sneha is posted at Haldia in West Bengal and Vasundhara at Okha in Gujarat.

“It is for the first time that women officers are operating hovercraft. It is a proud moment for the Coast Guard to have women in combat



role guarding our international water [borders] and they have excelled in navigational skills and operational capabilities,” says Commandant S. Bhattacharjee of the Mandapam station.

THE WEEK spent two days with the women officers at Mandapam. As we venture into the sea aboard the hovercraft for daily reconnaissance along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), Anuradha, our navigator, recalls how she broke barriers in her journey from Gomti Nagar in Uttar Pradesh to the Gulf of Mannar. “The only river I had ever seen was the Gomti,” says Anuradha, who hails from a traditional family in Lucknow. “I studied in a school where there was no furniture. When I first heard of the National Defence Academy, I wanted to become a soldier. But I was told that I could not do so because I was a girl,” she says. After the rules were changed in 2006, Anuradha appeared for the combined defence services examination. “I could not make it to the Army, but I was lucky and joined the Coast Guard,” says Anuradha, who has now completed six years in service.

As we reach Kundakal point, the team launches its sanitisation exercise. The contingent is led by the two women officers, who, armed with automatic rifles, jump off the craft. The uninhabited island is secured in a matter of minutes and we deboard. This procedure is followed whenever the squadron gets intelligence inputs about nefarious activities on sea or land around the 22 unin-

habited islands in the Gulf of Mannar.

“Once we got an intelligence input that the IMBL was breached and some men from Sri Lanka had entered. Within minutes, the hovercraft was at sea. I felt that my heart would jump out and hit the windscreen. It is, however, good to have fears as you learn how to fight them,” says Shirin, who hails from Palakkad in Kerala. “The island sweeps are conducted twice a month while round-the-clock vigil is kept in the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Bay,” she says.

Apart from reconnaissance and patrolling operations, hovercraft are deployed to assist pilgrims who cross the border into Sri Lanka to attend the Katchatheevu festival at the St Antony’s church. At the boundary line, the pilgrims are handed over to the Sri Lankan navy and upon their return, they are assisted back into Indian waters. The festival is held in February each year.

Commandant K.S. Bora of the 79 ACV Squadron, who trained the women officers, says the transition of women from administrative and logistics roles to combat is historic. Coming from training academies where their ratio to men is 1:20, they have shown the way to future generations, he says.

For the young women officers, it is an exciting challenge. “Every time I enter the hovercraft, it is a challenge,” says Shirin. “It is because whatever I do, it reflects on the person who has trained me. The men whom I am leading are looking up to me for directions.” ♦

Safety first:
(left) The Coast Guard team take positions after landing on an island near Mandapam; (below) Anuradha (left) and Shirin perform pre-flight checks on the hovercraft





forecast ■ By K.K. Vamanan Nampoothiri

FEBRUARY 7 - 13

Aries

March 22-April 20

Artists and choreographers will excel in their professions. This is the time to indulge in your passion for good food and wine. But keep a tab on your expenses, which are likely to rise. Contacts with foreigners will benefit. Scientists can look forward to a bright career. Cupid strikes. So, make the most of the good times.

Lucky day—Sunday: a surprise



Taurus

April 21-May 21

Globetrotters could get ready for a long voyage overseas. Journalists and the literati will be praised for their contributions. Listen to your parents; you stand to gain from them. Animal lovers among you will get a pet dog. Some students will discontinue their studies. Philanthropy will be a highpoint of the week.

Lucky day—Monday: new friends



Gemini

May 22-June 21

Some will pursue the study of the occult. A legal wrangle might end in compromise. The week has in store moments that you will cherish. Insurance agents and bankers will gain financially. An auspicious event will take place in the family. Put off your travel plans as you might suffer from respiratory ailments.

Lucky day—Monday: rise in income



Cancer

June 22-July 23

On the emotional and financial fronts, there is much to look forward to. A member of the opposite sex will be attracted to you. The friends you make now will stand by you through thick and thin. Spend more time with your spouse and children as family is paramount. Health needs special care this week.

Lucky day—Tuesday: gains via partner



Leo

July 24-August 23

Students should pay more attention to studies and spend more time to gain knowledge. For some, a memorable career comes to an end this week. Be judicious while choosing pals. A meritorious deed will bring you fame and prestige. The social calendar will be busy for some time. Sons will make their papas proud.

Lucky day—Wednesday: a long journey

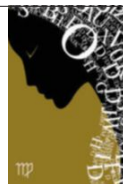


Virgo

August 24-September 23

Bold and assertive, you are made for bigger roles in life. Stop not till you succeed. Some will turn religious and set out on a long pilgrimage. Members of the opposite sex will admire your pleasing personality. Be in control of your life. Chase your dreams, but make time for friends and the people you love.

Lucky day—Friday: new ventures



Libra

September 24-October 23

Journey to a foreign land likely. Enjoy in abundance what money can't buy—honour and reputation. For the white-collared professionals, incentives are round the corner. Some will tie the knot with the person of their dreams. Don't worry about your health; you will have a quick recovery from any illness.

Lucky day—Tuesday: Midas touch



Scorpio

October 24-November 22

Keep aside your lethargy; roll up your sleeves for some hard work. An enjoyable week for music lovers. Health of children might be a cause for worry. A short job-related trip is in the offing. You are romantic this week. Good news for the unemployed—they get their dream job. Architects will do well at work.

Lucky day—Monday: time to go overseas



Sagittarius

November 23-December 22

Those unmarried can start looking for the person of their dreams. An elderly member of your family will guide you in decision-making. Your love for music and literature will resurface. You stand to gain from your relatives and they will stand by you in times of need. You will be in the pink of health.

Lucky day—Friday: victory over enemies

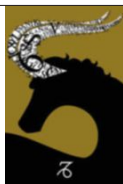


Capricorn

December 23-January 20

Your optimism will help overcome difficulties. Keep parents happy; be courteous and give respect where it is due. Some of you might opt for a career in the armed forces. Those who marry this week will get a faithful and loyal spouse. You will get a chance to meet some of those in power.

Lucky day—Sunday: cousin comes calling



Aquarius

January 21-February 19

Your charming attitude will win you many more chums. Keep on hold deals with relatives. Those running holiday resorts will do well. Hit the gym this week and stay healthy. The wise counsel of close buddies will stand you in good stead. Some of you will be promoted or given additional responsibilities at work.

Lucky day—Monday: a gift from mother



Pisces

February 20-March 21

A childbirth in your extended family will raise your spirits. Your ability to forgive and your courteousness will be appreciated and reciprocated. Some of you will be at their persuasive best this week. You might have visitors this week. Some will go on a romantic jaunt with their spouses.

Lucky day—Tuesday: a surprise



THEATRE

Spectacular show

Restored to its former glory, Royal Opera House in Mumbai is all set to take centre stage

BY RACHNA TYAGI

Visual treat:
The Royal Opera House is sheer opulence inside

The words ‘opera house’ invoke feelings of grandness and magnificence in most people, and if the scenes from Francis Ford Coppola’s *Godfather* start playing in the theatre of your mind, you are not alone. But it is not often that one gets the opportunity to be inside an opera house. Mumbaikars just got lucky as the Royal Opera House, built by Maurice Bandmann, along with Parsi businessman Jehangir Framji Karaka, and inaugurated by King George V in 1911, reopened recently after a hiatus of 23 years.

Conservation Architect Abha Narain Lambah, who came onboard seven years ago, has done a spectacular job in restoring the structure. “The Royal Opera House is an early 20th century stone-clad structure; a hybrid construction of Ashlar stone masonry in Malad stone and has decorative friezes carved out of white Porbandar limestone. The sloping roof uses Burma teak rafters and terracotta tiles,” said Lambah.

The Royal Opera House is sheer opulence inside. “We have recreated and restored the historic baroque interiors with detailing in red, gold and ivory dominating the colour scheme,” said Lambah. From the solid teak double doors and the thick carpets to the ornate ceiling painted in ivory, gold and blue and the crystal chandeliers—some of them are from the personal collection of the Gondal maharaja Jyotendrasinhji Jadeja, who owns the property, and some from David Sassoon’s home, Sans Souci—every bit of detail has received enormous attention. “The jewel tones in the ruby red and wine-coloured stained glass windows and even the proscenium, which bears the royal crest of the Gondals, to the side balconies and royal boxes in the auditorium, great care has been taken to restore it with the same historic detailing,” said Lambah. “While the ground floor uses Italian marble, the upper floors use Minton tiles imported from England.”

Asad Lalljee, curator of the Royal Opera House and CEO of Avid Learning, is going all out to introduce India’s only opera house to the country and the world with his subtle style. Mumbai Film Festival was the first event hosted by the Royal Opera House. “We were so fortunate that the Gondal family permitted us to have the 18th Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival with Star’s opening ceremony at the restored Opera House,” said Anupama Chopra, the festival director. “This iconic landmark has always had a special connection with the city,



Grand taste:

(Clockwise from above) the grandeur of Royal Opera House; the opera house hosts two or three shows every week; Gondal maharaja Jyotendrasinhji Jadeja with wife, Kumud Kumari; industrialist Anil Ambani’s wife Tina attending a show



PHOTOS: AMEY MANSABDAR

being the destination for art and culture. Its incomparable interiors provided the ultimate backdrop of elegance and baroque style.”

The following day it hosted a short performance of operatic arias and songs by Mumbai-born British soprano Patricia Rozario and her husband, Mark Troop. “The evening was beautifully done. My whole thing was that I didn’t want to overpower people with opera; what if they’re not interested, and so half an hour max. It was very short, just wine and cheese,” said Lalljee.



That set the proverbial ball rolling, and next it was the Parsis of Mumbai—Coomi Wadia and Parvesh Java did a performance, a homage to the opening. Lalljee said the response so far had been great, from award shows to Republic Day celebrations of an NGO to music groups who recently performed at the Jaipur Literature Festival. Even the theatre fraternity is coming in with a big show debuting next month. “There are almost two-three things happening every week and it is not even fully ready,” said Lalljee, who has plans for a fountain, a garden and even a fine dine restaurant. “I’m also going to have rotating installations paying homage to the structure; all that will

be ready in the middle of May, June,” he said.

Lalljee said they were not looking to cover the restoration cost but could not run at a loss. “We’re just looking to cover the out of pocket cost,” he said. He is lobbying all the high commissions and cultural organisations to “come and make this their home”. “I was in New York earlier, for some other work, and I met the mayor. I’m meeting lots of people and they’re exploring,” he said.

That the Royal Opera House has already received bookings until December next year should give a glimpse of how exciting things already are. But Lalljee is not one to sit back content. He wants to invite sculptors to come to the garden and create pieces. “I need the garden to be ready to do that, though, and then, on the two verandahs, we are trying to do some kind of a rotating exhibition,” he said.

There are also plans to have curated walks through the place on a regular basis, where legends such as Bal Gandharva and Lata Mangeshkar gave some of their early performances. “We have already got somebody who is going to do it for us. We are going to do not only the Royal Opera House but also the area around it; a lot of music gharanas started down the road, because of the opera house,” said Lalljee. “The idea is to bring various elements of arts into this performing arts space.” ♦



DeTour • Shobhaa De

Fest impressions

The JLF jamboree marks the end of the Lit Fest season in India. The caravan then moves to other climes, other less sexy cities... and life for us hacks goes back to its daily, rather dull grind—deadlines, word limits, interviews and the desperate search for the next big idea. This year, I skipped most lit fests (same old, same old), but the two I did attend, were interesting on a level that has little to do with books. The Apeejay Kolkata Lit Fest features the best, most imaginative venues—magnificent monuments like the Victoria Memorial shimmer seductively as a winter mist embraces those gathered to listen to voices from near and afar. The theme for the AKLF remains consistently thought provoking, and the food served to perpetually starved (in more ways than one!) authors at the cosy lounge is so gourmet and artistic, one feels nervous to actually eat it and spoil the presentation.

The concluding session this year was about ‘inclusion’. Yup. Big word. Bigger implications. Fortunately, Maina Bhagat and Anjum Katyal, the two main pillars of the AKLF, do not believe in sneaking controversial writers into the venue, changing timings at the nth minute to avoid protesters or announcing last minute presence/absence of big literary stars with bigger prices on their heads.

Nayantara Sahgal gave a sterling keynote address to those gathered on the lawns of the St John’s Church to participate in the candlelight send-off, with a school choir singing sweetly, led by Anjum herself. Now, that’s quite a departure! When was the last time you heard a strong rendition of ‘Blowin’ in the wind’ belted out by one of the chief organisers?

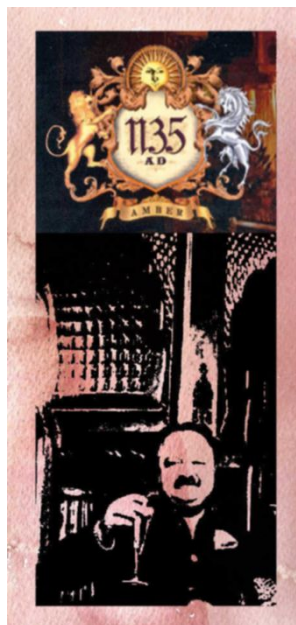
There were poets and playwrights sharing stories of exclusion and inclusion, prejudice and yes, pride, too. One of the speakers was a handsome, well-dressed gentleman with very expressive hands, a smiling visage and a well-modulated voice. Maina told me Haji Syed Salman Chishty, custodian of Ajmer Sharif, is a sought-after public speaker who travels the world spreading the universal message of peace

and hope.

The Jaipur experience is entirely different. If there is one individual who encapsulates Jaipur’s spirit, it’s Sanjeev Bali. I am not sure what exactly he does, but that hardly matters. He is the ultimate bon vivant—extravagant, generous, good humoured and wildly adventurous. Why does everybody like this man? It can’t be just because he throws incredible parties at his incredible restaurant, aptly called 1135 A.D. perched on the ramparts of the historic Amer Fort. It can’t be because he is the custodian of countless royal scandals and secrets. Or because the gloriously beautiful grande dames of India confide in him. But wait, men love him, too! When he shouts out “Brrrrr-rothrrrrr!” at a soiree, at least ten fellas spin around. Bali totally gets bromance. He feeds his favourites choice specialties of the state—bater, teetar and laal mass. Brings out rare malts and cognacs for visiting celebs. Is on first name terms with the likes of Naomi Campbell. His farmhouse plays host to Maharajahs and movie stars. And when he enters a room, his diamonds blind some of the billionaires present.

Every old city requires a Bali-esque character. The source of his wealth is known to insiders and rivals. Some call him a booze baron. Frankly, I don’t know and neither do I care. My husband and I meet him when we visit Jaipur. JLF is incomplete without making it to the top of Amer Fort on a cold night, listening to qawwalis in the courtyard, being warmed by sigris, partaking of a feast fit for emperors and being regaled by juicy stories narrated by the host, whose shirt front features emerald drops while his bandgala shows off diamond encrusted elephants on the collar. Let me not forget the jewelled tiger claws hanging on a thick gold chain around his neck, and the seriously heavy gold bracelet on his wrist. What did I forget? The luxury watch on the other wrist, assorted rings with gem stones on his fingers. I’d love to know if he carries a rubies-studded dagger. He may need it someday! Aaah—what a life—the Bali life!

www.shobhaade.blogspot.com



BHASKARAN

CINEMA

Interview/Dev Patel, actor

Actors never know truly who they are

BY SAMANTHA REYES

British director Danny Boyle had a good hunch when he cast 18-year-old Dev Patel, a Brit with Indian roots, for the leading role of *Slumdog Millionaire* nine years ago. The movie won the Oscar in 2009 and Patel paid back his good fortune—and Boyle’s intuition—with a brilliant film career.

Patel is now headlining *Lion*, next to Nicole Kidman, an acclaimed movie with many Golden Globe nominations under its belt and a favourite at the Academy Awards. Directed by Garth Davis, the film is based on the autobiographical novel *A Long Way Home*. Excerpts from an interview:

To what extent do you identify with Saroo in *Lion*?

He’s indeed a character I can see myself, as in a mirror. While growing up I spent a good amount of time trying to shake off my ethnic/cultural identity in order to blend in, in Britain; I didn’t want to be roughed up, therefore I didn’t intend to stand out. I would do whatever to be as anybody else in the UK. Saroo did the same in Australia.

But then something happened along the way: you went to India.

Exactly. I went to India with Danny Boyle to shoot *Slumdog Millionaire*. It was the first time for me, and the proverbial light bulb went off: all those clichés I had in mind about India were immediately subverted. Since then I went back to India many times, and I shot there five films—including

the just wrapped *Hotel Mumbai*—and I’m having a love affair with my India. As Saroo, I too, as a young man, tried to play down my own history to blend in. But I never had to look for my biological mother. My mom is an overbearing biological one!

Saroo finds his roots thanks also to Google Map, smartphones, apps, and so on. What’s your relation with technology?

I’m not technologically very advanced, I swear! I’ve never been on My Space and I don’t have a Facebook page. Yes, I spend a lot of time in front of a computer as an actor, on *Newsroom* for example. But in real life I’m not a geek at all.

***Lion* is also a great love story, between mother and son, isn’t it true?**

Of course, and it doesn’t matter what kind of loving mother she is. While Saroo wrestles with his past, his adoptive mother [Nicole Kidman] feels an unconditioned type of love for him and she says: “I always wanted you... and whatever you will decide to do, I will always be there for you.” She also says, “I can’t wait for your mother to see what a great man you became!” Wow, this is the most beautiful type of love you’d ever encounter.

What did you learn from Nicole Kidman?

I was in awe of her focus and total abandon to her character: on the set Nicole was Sue Brierley, Saroo’s adoptive mother; and to me she wasn’t much different from the

real Nicole: she’s also both a biological and adoptive mom. And I’ve seen with my eyes how she’s with her kids: she’s a real, loving, wonderful mom.

Do you feel more Indian or British?

A citizen of the world, to say the truth. My genetic makeup is cosmopolitan. I’m very open minded, and open to everything that comes my way. And yet there’s always something that forces me to constantly search for myself. It might be because I’m a natural born actor. Actors never know truly who they are, they live through their characters. I ask them to be just themselves, they’re lost!

How do you choose your projects?

I choose the stories that I know my mom would love to see! That’s what I thought when I first read the script for *Lion*. My mother works as a social aide at an assisted life facility for elderly people, and when I did the first Marigold Hotel, I already knew so well that world, because when I was young I used to spend a lot of time at that facility with my mom. I always loved older people. And I would look at my mom dealing with them and think: “Wow, mom, you’re a real star... The way you take care of these people—many with dementia—is awesome.” I was lucky I could take my mom to the *Lion* premiere in London: she was gleaming. ♦



GETTY IMAGES



arugula guy • **Manu Chandra**

The long and chop of it

While writing this piece, I did some research, trying to determine the per capita consumption patterns of meat eating in the country, only to find that the data was largely scattered, and often contradictory. The pattern across studies roughly pegged the per capita consumption at nearly five kilos, which seems like nothing when compared to Ireland's fifty kilos. But, is it?

When one looks at it purely from a demographic perspective, and also given the fact that a majority of the country eats animal protein in some form or another—nearly 60 per cent as per an article in *The Hindu* in 2014, titled 'The meat of the matter'—the volumes are staggering.

India continues to be the largest exporter of bovine meats, despite the recent implementation of consumption bans in many states. Post liberalisation, and with the subsequent density swelling in urban centres, meat consumption has only seen a rapid rise. While chicken remains the most popular meat across the country, it is also exported in very large numbers to the Middle East and Africa. Nearly all mutton produced in India is consumed within the country, and pork remains dominant in the northeast states, where livestock accounts for as much as 18 per cent of the agricultural output.

The proliferation of non-vegetarian restaurants, the chicken tikka, biryanis and even pizzas and nuggets, is there for all to see. Coupled with the notion, for a young generation bent on building their bodies, that white meat and eggs will help bulk faster, the demand has probably never been higher.

Much of the meats are dispensed and retailed from small stalls, like they have been for decades, with carcasses displayed visibly and the hack-hack on a big log, or giant cutting board. Many places offer the chicken freshly killed, and, depending on religious requirements, there are halal and jhatka options too. Much of it can seem rather gory, but that's how it's been done. Large institutional players have made their presence felt in the markets, notably in the poultry sector, like Godrej, Saguna and Zorabian. Add to that the inclusion of meat shelves with processed and fresh cuts on supermarket aisles.

The bigger cities have always had

their go-to meat shops like Bamburries and Lusitania in Bangalore, Pigpo in Delhi's zany Jor Bagh market and Green Chick Chop in Green Park.

There are now a string of start-ups offering pre-cut and portioned chicken, fish, goat, pork and even buffalo; notable among them are Licious, Brown Apron, Freshtohome and Big Basket. They've clearly seen an opportunity for a burgeoning urban populace who wants the convenience of having hygienically processed and pre-portioned cuts delivered to their doorstep, away from what was once the fly-infested shed in the local market.

Will this be the new way meat consumption is pushed in urban centres? Given that many have also started offering recipe kits and tips on how best to utilise the proteins, the aspirational value of these has gone up exponentially. With the skinless, boneless, tasteless basa fish also entering the health-conscious eaters' plates (basa is now produced locally

too) the trend for hassle-free meat eating is evident; one I reckon will only drive the consumption up. It may be a good idea to consider meatless Mondays, but that's for another article. **Manu Chandra is chef partner of Monkey Bar, The Fatty Bao and Toast & Tonic. He is also executive chef, Olive Beach.**



AFF

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art to heart • Sanjna Kapoor

The festive season of theatre

As the Bharangam theatre festival in Delhi commences, followed by the International Theatre Festival of Kerala (which I have sadly never attended) in Thrissur, I stop to ponder on the role of theatre festivals.

Why host a regular annual theatre festival? I believe this is a question that all festival directors need to constantly ask themselves, because just like theatre should forever be evolving, reinventing and transforming itself, so would the answer to this question constantly change. And a truly successful festival will respond to this shifting focus. If not it will become moribund and be a complete waste of money, time and resources. I say all this with the experience of having been festival director of more than 25 theatre festivals in a span of 21 years at the Prithvi Theatre in Mumbai, curating festivals ranging from international, national and local theatre, to theatre for children, puppetry, classical arts, provoking new work, or coalescing work around themes. And, always addressing a deeply personal desire to see the body of work come alive with a thirsty discerning audience. Always a challenge!

Unlike 30 years ago when theatre festivals were few and far between, today I am spoilt for choice of which festival to attend across the length and breadth of our country. I have just returned from celebrating the inauguration of the 11th Windermere Theatre Festival in Bareilly, where I finally got to meet Dr Brijeshwar Singh, the wonderful, unassuming orthopaedic surgeon whose love for

theatre prompted him to spend over a decade bringing theatre that he loved to Bareilly. The momentum of his *junoos* gradually propelled him to build a theatre above his new home, and thus Windermere came into being. Rangvinayak Rangmandal, his in-house theatre group, inaugurated the festival with a marvellous production based on Ismat Chughtai's life and work—*Kaghazi Hain Pairahan*, directed by the talented young Lov Tomar and brought to life by over forty energetic performers in the magical confines of the black box theatre.

I have been told that my grandfather Prithviraj Kapoor, after performing at the Ganga Theatre in Bikaner, said he wished the theatre had wheels so that he could pull it along with him and perform in it across the country! Such was the joy of performing in the exquisite Edwardian Ganga Theatre. I felt pretty much the same about Windermere! I wish I had a theatre like Windermere in my neighbourhood that I could walk to every other day, to delight in a live performance.

My next stop on this year's theatre festival *yatra* is going to be Bikaner,

in March, where I shall visit yet again Anurag Kala Kendra's Bikaner Festival. I look forward to visiting the finally completed Rabindra Rang Manch, which has taken the state government 25 years to build! I hope it does some service to the theatre fraternity in Bikaner and does not become another white elephant! I also look forward to meeting with local theatre groups along with Sudhanva Deshpande to share our SMART journey, where we shall talk of Strategic Management in the Arts of Theatre, the country's first theatre management training programme that aims at equipping theatre groups to realise their dreams in a more effective manner.

The first quarter of this year is quite festival heavy as I have also just returned from the Jaipur Literature Festival, which was its usual happy mela. And I love melas! I also have the good fortune of being invited to Kerala, where I shall celebrate with an old associate and dear friend K. Ramachandran his Mumbai-based Keli festival's 25th anniversary, with one part of its yearlong celebration in its 'home' turf. More on that later! And this gives me the marvellous excuse to spend two far-too-brief days at the Kochi Biennale.

So here's to festivals across the country, celebrating the magic of theatre and cultivating eager loyal audiences. May their tribe grow from strength to strength, along with the skills required to grow them!

Kapoor is a theatre personality and cofounder of Junoon.
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strange encounters • Jerry Pinto

Bothering otherings

I am always mildly surprised at how easily the personal comment comes to the tongue. I meet someone I have not seen for many months.

“Put on some weight, I see,” I say.

“Actually, I have lost some weight,” he replies. “You should have seen me a month ago.”

That was a bit of camouflage. What I wanted to say was: I am always mildly surprised at how easily the personal comment comes to the tongues of the people I meet. When someone who has not seen me for many months... and so on, *mutatis mutandis*.

This all began when I got a haircut with a number-two blade. This means that the barber will now not fiddle about your scalp, lop a bit off there, tuck a hank across a finger and snip-snip-snip away. Instead, he gets out the trusty clippers, attaches a number-two guard and he goes for it, scraping most of the foliage off but leaving about a quarter of an inch.

When I came out from under his ministrations, I found I was looking close to bald. This looked like a number-one blade—that leaves one-eighth of an inch—but one of the reasons I get a haircut is so that I don’t have to think about my hair or fiddle about with combs, so I paid and left.

“Did you do that to prevent people from seeing that you are balding?” a friend asked. She did not wait for an answer. “If you did, it’s counterproductive because now everyone can see your scalp.”

That stung a little but the great consolation of the writing business is that

you can get your revenge in words and this column began. It began with me writing about your bad manners; in other words: I, the columnist, am allowed in the space granted to me by the wonderful WEEK to tell you what is wrong with our culture. Beneath that runs the belief: my manners are better than yours.

But after a paragraph or two of that, I began to think of the times I have met friends and said precisely the same thing. I couldn’t keep going like that....

You see what I am doing now? I am not just better than you, I am better than most columnists too. I can lay it on the line. I can tell you what I am thinking because what I am thinking is without hypocrisy.

Now, you can play the game for yourself. As each layer of the onion unpeels, you can look further down

into the dark heart of a superiority complex. Is there such a thing? In my youth, we often spoke of people who had inferiority complexes, but never superiority complexes. But, let us assume there is such a thing for I believe we all have it in some way or the other. Some superiority complexes arise out of birth—I was born in such-and-such a family and so I am better than you because you were not.

Stop a moment. You think I’m talking about caste, don’t you? That’s one way of looking at it. But there are others. Have you made a joke about Gujaratis? Or Marwaris? Or Tamilians? Come on, now, be honest. (I’m trying to be.) We all have ways of othering people. Some of us do it by passing Presidential orders. Some of us do it by denying visas to the Constituted Others. Some of us do it by trolling on the internet.

We know that we dislike these people. We do it conscientiously. But let us continue down the food chain.

Some of us do it by saying that if you’re my daughter you can’t marry a man from that community. Some of us do it by saying that if you love a person of your own gender, you will break my heart. Some of us do it by saying you should never change the religion of your birth because that’s the religion to which God assigned you.

I have never done anything like that. Gosh, I’m perfect. I deserve my superiority complex while the rest of you lot had better work on yours. (Go on then, take your potshot. You know how to do it.)

Jerry Pinto’s novel *Murder in Mahim* is out now.



BHASKARAN

FOCUS

Minimally Invasive Cardiac Surgery

"A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION"

Minimally Invasive Cardiac Surgery (MICS) encompasses a variety of operations performed through incisions that are substantially smaller and less traumatic than the standard sternotomy (cutting of breast bone). The surgery is performed through a small incision in the right or left intercostal space without cutting the sternum.

In MICS, patient selection is critical, giving safety the priority. The short and long-term results are comparable to conventional techniques in experienced hands.

With Innovations in perfusion techniques, better hardware (surgical instruments), improved imaging pre-operative & intra-operative echo cardiography (ECHO) and standardization of techniques the procedure has become safe and the incisions/scars have become smaller.

Benefits of Minimally Invasive Cardiac Surgery:

- Small Incision
- Better Cosmetic results
- Less Pain
- Less Blood Loss
- Shorter Hospital Stay & Faster Recovery (3-5days)
- Reduced risk of infection
- Improved quality of life.

Fig 1



Image of left thoracotomy for Minimally invasive CABG Repair

At M S Ramaiah Narayana Heart Centre the following procedures are performed on a regular basis:

✂ Minimally Invasive Direct Coronary Artery Bypass (MIDCAB)

This procedure is done through a small left thoracotomy (fig 1). Single and multivessel grafting can be done. It is mostly done on the beating heart, using a special stabilization system to steady only the portion of the heart, where the surgeon is operating. MIDCAB may be also done using cardiopulmonary bypass (CPB)

Who will benefit the most?

- Elderly patients
- Patients with uncontrolled Diabetes
- Smokers
- Asthmatics

Note: Patients with diffused multivessel disease and patients with reduced LV functions are not suitable for this procedure.

✂ **Congenital Heart Defects** like Atrial Septal Defects (ASD) can be corrected through MICS by right thoracotomy with an incision of 2-3 inches.

✂ Minimally Invasive Heart Valve Surgeries-

- Mitral Valve Surgery, done through right thoracotomy (fig-2)
- Aortic Valve Surgery, done through right thoracotomy or mini sternotomy

Fig 2



Image of right thoracotomy for Minimally invasive Mitral Valve

- Tricuspid Valve Surgery, done through right thoracotomy

All cardiac surgeries, except Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting (CABG) are done by using CPB machine. CPB can be established by peripheral cannulation via the femoral or axillary artery and percutaneously via the femoral veins and internal jugular veins or both.

The peripheral access perfusion techniques has allowed for maximal exposure in the operating field and reduced the size of the incision. Trans-esophageal echo has allowed for safe placement of the peripheral cannula.

Conclusion:

There has already been higher requests for MICS from patients. Regardless of the different surgical approaches, the objective of MICS is to provide a safe and effective approach with all the benefits associated with minimal access surgery. A patient-centered approach has to be taken.

Now a significant amount of data has emerged on the safety and efficacy of MICS for a wide range of surgical options. There have been concerns regarding learning curve, increased operating room time and decreased surgical exposure but **advantages of decreased length of hospital stay, less trauma, reduced pain, aesthetically better and improved patient satisfaction have outweighed the concerns.**

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PEOPLE

THE PRINCESS DIARY

Soha Ali Khan is coming out with a book that will chronicle her life as a princess and a 'moderately famous' actor. Titled *The Perils of Being Moderately Famous*, the book from Penguin India will be released this year. "I can use this time creatively to pen down memories, some insights from what surely must be a life less ordinary," she said. "I'm a princess after all. Try not to imagine me saying that whilst stamping my feet in a silver sequined dress with a tiara on my head."



PTI

SHOW CRASHER

In a video that has gone viral, **Shah Rukh Khan's** three-year-old son **AbRam** crashes an interview Khan's giving. "Papa, my thumb has broken," he says to Khan, who kisses it and asks: "Is it okay now?" The easy banter between father and son continues with Khan entrancing his son with the famous thumb removal trick. AbRam often accompanies him to shoots and cricket matches and is a big fan of his daddy.



BEING BADASS

Jason Momoa, who played Khal Drogo in the HBO series *Game of Thrones*, drank beer and played a game of throwing axes at a dart board in the latest episode of *Jimmy Kimmel Live*. While Kimmel's axe barely scraped the dart board, Momoa struck it thrice. And then took a huge gulp of beer because he says he's a better shot after drinking it. He was on the show to promote his new Netflix show, *Frontier*. This beer-swilling, axe-throwing giant of a man might just be every woman's wet dream-come-true.

**CONTRIBUTORS: SHALINI SINGH AND MANDIRA NAYAR
COMPILED BY ANJULY MATHAI**



BACK IN ACTION ▶

Mallika Sherawat, who has been out of the limelight for a while, has signed her next Bollywood film—a social drama titled *Zeenat*. “This is a commercial Hindi film which helps a message to be conveyed to a larger section of society,” she said. “I am looking forward to this role, never having played something like this before.” The movie is set to release around December.



SANJAY AHLAWAT

NEW INNINGS ▲

Karthika V.K., one of the most talented and popular editors, is back in the book business after quitting HarperCollins India last November. Her exit had created quite a furore in the publishing world. She will be starting a new publishing division for Westland Publishers, now owned by Amazon. Known for her great relationship with authors like Aravind Adiga, Manu Joseph and Anita Nair, Karthika had built HarperCollins into the brand that it is today. Hopefully, the books will start rolling out soon.



AFP



last word • **Shashi Tharoor**

The unfinished Memorial

Speaking recently at a literary festival on the grounds of Kolkata's magnificent Victoria Memorial, built in white Makrana marble between 1906 and 1921, I was struck by the incongruity of my situation. I was speaking of my new book, *An Era of Darkness: the British Empire in India*, in the shadow of an edifice dedicated to the very empire I was decrying, and named in memory of Queen Victoria (1819–1901), the first British Queen (and, later Empress) of India.

The Memorial was built to commemorate and celebrate the British Empire. Viceroy Lord Curzon had declared the need for “a building, stately, spacious, monumental and grand, to which every newcomer in Calcutta will turn, to which all the resident population, European and Native, will flock, where all classes will learn the lessons of history, and see revived before their eyes the marvels of the past.”

In keeping with his vision, the Memorial is now a museum and tourist destination. Its 25 galleries feature decorous portraits of Victoria and Prince Albert, and paintings illustrating their lives, a collection of watercolours of Indian scenes by Victorian artists Thomas and William Daniell, and a 19th century oil painting of the state entry of Edward VII, then Prince of Wales, into Jaipur in 1876. Elsewhere, there are arms and suits of armour, some rare antiquarian books and assorted colonial memora-

bilia, not all of it memorable.

I do not particularly object to all of it, but I find it grossly inadequate. As a museum, the Memorial is mediocre. Except for the Daniells, its paintings are mainly copies; the originals hang in London. The few originals are largely undistinguished, and are there only because they exalt the Raj. As a depiction of the British Empire, the Memorial omits the harsh realities of colonial rule. It does not even fully convey the pomp and splendour of the Raj. The most impressive thing about the Memorial is the building itself.

And, of course, as with everything else the British built in India, from the railways to Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Indians paid for it. The “princes and people of India”, the official website of the Memorial explains, “responded generously to Curzon’s appeal for funds”. The total cost of construction—₹1.05 crore in 1906—was entirely derived from their “voluntary” subscriptions. Indians paid for their own oppression, and even for the conquest of far-off peoples. (Our ancestors even largely financed the British participation in WW I.)

So, isn’t it time Indians finally got their money’s worth for the Memorial? Take Curzon’s declared purpose and reverse its intent. The Memorial should be converted into a national museum to British colonialism—its exactions and cruelties, its loot and expropriation, its atrocities and racism.

One gallery should show how India, one of the world’s richest countries with 27 per cent of global GDP in 1700, was reduced to one of the world’s poorest when the British left. Another might be devoted to the Revolt of 1857 and the horrific reprisals that ensued; one more should depict the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. A third should show how the railways were built for the profit of the British and reveal the racism with which they were run. Oil paintings, instead of showing dainty British aristocrats or princes haughtily surveying their spoils, might portray Mangal Pandey being blown from the mouth of a British cannon, or Lala Lajpat Rai being beaten on the head by a red-faced British policeman.

There is much our young people need to learn about the colonial past, and the Victoria Memorial is the perfect place to teach it to them. This magnificent monument to the monstrosity of imperial rule is crying out for a worthwhile purpose. Let us, for the first time in a century, put it to use for the nation. If we start now, the new exhibits can be ready to be unveiled in time for the building’s centenary in 2021.

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JOSEKUTTY PANACKAL



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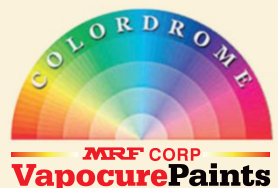
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