

An old Kashmir-Jammu dilemma

The BJP was well placed to manage it, but it chose short-term political gains



SANDEEP BHARDWAJ

The Bharatiya Janata Party's decision to break its alliance with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and plunge Jammu and Kashmir into political chaos comes as a climax to a dilemma that the party's government at the Centre had been facing since the State elections in 2014. On the one hand, it needed political stability and a friendly government in J&K to find a political solution to the growing insurgency and unrest in the Valley. On the other hand, the BJP needed to placate its Hindu constituency in Jammu by appearing to stand tough against Srinagar. In the end, the party chose short-term electoral gains over long-term necessities of finding peace in Kashmir.

Sadly, this dilemma is something that successive Indian governments have struggled with for many decades. Jammu politics has always cast a long shadow over national politics and complicated the Srinagar-Delhi relationship. The demographic reality of Jammu – as a Hindu majority region within a Muslim majority State, in a Hindu majority nation – makes it an

irresistible magnet for religious and identity politics, which inevitably hinders attempts to bring stability in the State as a whole.

An early brush

India was first confronted with this problem in the early days of the republic when a mixture of Jammu unrest and religious politics brought down one of the strongest attempts to bring a permanent resolution to the Kashmir problem. This was the Jammu Praja Parishad (JPP) agitation which went on for nearly a year in 1952-53.

In 1952, India seemed close to solving the Kashmir question. The J&K Premier, Sheikh Abdullah, had succeeded in establishing a stable government in Srinagar. He had also developed a good working relationship with Delhi, underpinned by his personal friendship with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In July, both sides signed the 1952 Delhi Agreement establishing the federal framework for India and J&K. Soon thereafter, the new Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali, committed to finding a peaceful solution to Kashmir "within one year" and began a series of talks with Nehru.

Unfortunately, this moment of bonhomie was mired by the widespread unrest that flared up in Jammu in late 1952. The JPP, a local Hindu party founded by RSS leader Balraj Madhok in 1947, took to the streets protesting against the



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State government. The initial agitation was over Abdullah's land reforms, which had adversely affected the landowners in Jammu. However, soon the agitation took on hues of hypernationalism. "*Ek Vidhan, Ek Nishan, Ek Pradhan* (One constitution, one flag and one Premier)" became the rallying cry.

Soon afterwards, the national Hindu right-wing parties rallied around the issue. They included the then-powerful Hindu Mahasabha, the BJP's predecessor Bharatiya Jan Sangh, and a little-known party called the All India Ram Rajya Parishad. Under the leadership of S.P. Mookerjee, these parties launched a nationwide campaign in support of the Jammu agitators in February 1953. In May, Mookerjee travelled to Kashmir where he was arrested. He died of a heart attack a month later under detention.

Meanwhile, Nehru found him-

self facing the Kashmir-Jammu dilemma. He continued to believe that the Abdullah government represented the best hope of finding a political solution to Kashmir. But he also had to find a way to put the Jammu agitation and its accompanying Hindu right-wing campaign to rest. For several months he continued to resist any compromise with the agitators, attacking the Hindu right-wing parties and giving full-throated support to Abdullah. However, after Mookerjee's death, he had to give in, issuing an appeal to the agitators in July. The protests were suspended shortly thereafter.

But the damage was done. Abdullah had been severely weakened politically and his relations with Nehru were frayed. A month later, he was removed from power and put under arrest. With government records still a secret, it is not yet known who exactly ordered the arrest. However, the Jammu agitation certainly paved the way for it. A deeper legacy of the agitation was that it turned Kashmiris against Delhi. Years of efforts by the Indian government to generate goodwill in Kashmir had been "washed away by this movement," Nehru lamented. "Nothing more harmful to our cause in the State could have been done even by our enemies."

The only real victors of the agitation were the Hindu right-wing parties. Many within their own

camp saw the potential dangers of such a divisive campaign but the political opportunity it offered was irresistible. At the time they were seen as somewhat outside the realm of mainstream national politics. The protest campaign allowed them to expand their base and gain legitimacy in the eyes of the Indian public. Nehru's direct appeal to them was also interpreted as a boost to their political stature.

A wasted opportunity

Today, while the Kashmir-Jammu dilemma remains, the political landscape has completely changed. The BJP is not only the ruling party in New Delhi, it is also the biggest political force in the country. It can no longer afford to play the spoiler as before because of the national responsibilities that weigh on its shoulders. The myopic decision to withdraw support from the Srinagar government betrays its old mode of thinking. It needs to take the long-term view. In fact, given its dominant position in Jammu, it is arguably better positioned to manage the dilemma than previous governments. Instead of pursuing superficial political gains, the BJP's government at the Centre should use its unique position to find a permanent political solution for the entire State.

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A history of undemocracy

The fall of the Mehbooba Mufti government is only the latest instance. New Delhi's policy towards Jammu and Kashmir has been to prefer rule by bureaucracy and fiat rather than by elected state governments



AMITABH MATTOO

ALMOST EVERY INTRODUCTORY course on contemporary Indian politics begins with a fundamental question: Why did democracy survive and succeed in India (except for the 19 dark months of the Emergency) when it failed in much of the post-colonial world — including in India's neighbourhood? And every sharp tutor provides a variety of explanations, without privileging any one: The ideals of the freedom movement; the accident of a visionary leadership deeply committed to democracy; the checks and balances provided by an elaborate Constitution; and the "argumentative" gene which has defined India and Indians. A similar question (turned on its head) has often been articulated and is voluble in the social media, and on the streets of Srinagar of late. Why doesn't New Delhi trust the people of the state with real democracy? And why has the erosion of democratic institutions been one consistent factor in New Delhi's Kashmir policy? Mehbooba Mufti is only the latest victim of a policy that goes back to inarguably contemporary Kashmir's strongest leader, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

In August 1953, the Sheikh was holidaying in Gulmarg when, early in the morning, the Superintendent of Police, Lakshman Das Thakur, informed the Prime Minister of J&K (as was the nomenclature then) that he had been dismissed and was being interned. "Who ordered this?" The Sheikh is believed to have roared, believing that his friend in Teen Murti House, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, would never betray him. Thakur presented an order, signed by the Sadar-i-Riyasat, Karan Singh, barely out of his teens, whose father, Maharaja Hari Singh had been exiled to Mumbai. The Sheikh took time to offer namaz before accepting that the "chit of a boy" he had appointed had just removed him from office "undemocratically". For 22 years, the Sheikh stayed out of power, arguably the most popular leader, until he accepted an accord with Indira Gandhi in 1975.

Of course, the contagion of not allowing democracy in J&K had infected Sheikh's National Conference as well, as he barely allowed any opposition to survive in the state. And made the most inflammatory speeches in RS Pura, flirted with American emissaries and let the tallest leader of the Jana Sangh, Syama Prasad Mukherjee die in Srinagar on his watch in mysterious circumstances.

His successor, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, with Delhi's patronage, manipulated elections to the point that Nehru had once to counsel him to allow at least some opposition to grow, even if for purely cosmetic reasons.

Post-Sheikh, his son and political successor, Farooq Abdullah, was the recipient of New Delhi's blessings as well as the lack of faith in Indian democracy. In 1984, Abdul Ghani Lone — father of the PC leader Sajjad Lone — had to wake up Abdullah from his slumber to inform him that a large section of his loyal MLAs had defected and were in Raj Bhawan with Governor Jagmohan. Farooq was dismissed and BK Nehru, the former governor, reveals that the defection was arranged after large sums of money were moved by conduits of the IB, including one well-known Congress leader/businessman. and paid to the defecting MLAs.

In 1987, Kashmir's rigged assembly elec-

tion, fought by the National Conference and Congress together, we now know without a shred of doubt, would lead to the decades of the militancy. My father, a respectable Kashmiri Pandit, found that his vote had already been cast in the Amira Kadal constituency where Maulvi Yusuf Shah from the Muslim United Front (now Syed Salahuddin of the Hizbul Mujahideen) was contesting against the National Conference's Ghulam Mohiuddin Shah.

There have been exceptions: The 1977 elections that once again announced the Sheikh's popularity; the 2002 elections where Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee made sure that fair elections lead to a coalition government, led by the Opposition Congress and the People's Democratic Party, initially under the chief ministership of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and the 2014 elections that brought the ill-fated PDP-BJP coalition together.

But these have been exceptions. In essence, if not in form, a patron-client relationship rather than strengthening real democracy is the mainstay of New Delhi's policies. Consider this, with the flourish of some atmospherics.

On this Tuesday, June 19, afternoon, the civil secretariat in Srinagar was unusually quiet. The Stalinist-style multi-storey building houses the offices of most of the senior bureaucracy and, of course, the hallowed third floor houses the chambers of the chief minister and the chief secretary. There are usually queues of ordinary citizens waiting to be frisked and then gain access to the corridors of power. The celebrations of Eid-ul-Fitr,

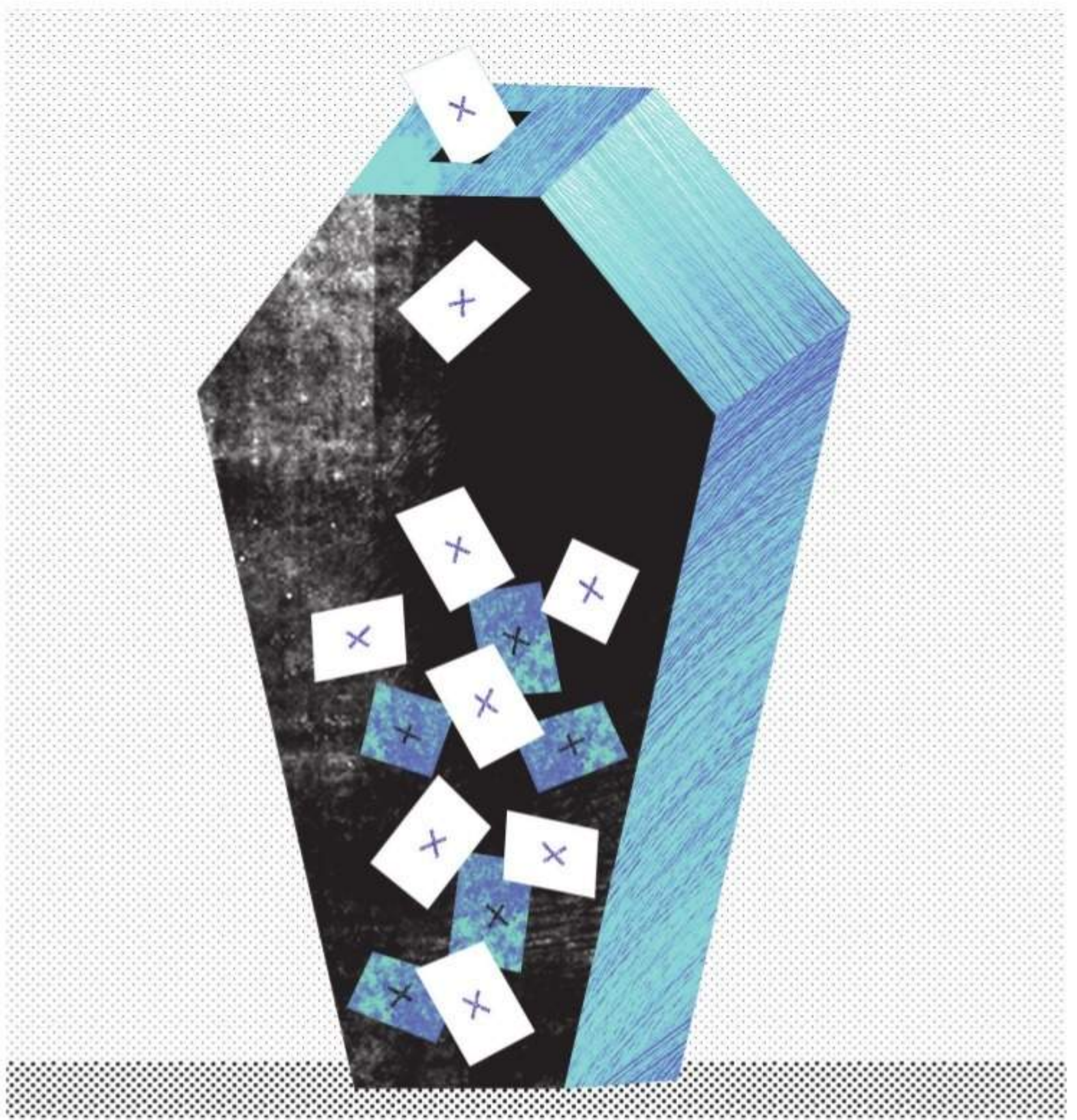
The chief secretary, B B Vyas, received a phone call from Governor N N Vohra. Vohra communicated that he had received a fax from the BJP legislators, withdrawing support to the government. The chief minister had only two options: To resign or to ask for time to explore options for securing support. A proud Kashmiri, the daughter of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed took 15 seconds to verbalise her thoughts: 'I am sending in my resignation'. No leader of the BJP, no Union minister or high functionary of the government had spoken to the CM.

over the weekend (after a month of fasting during Ramzan), usually carry on into the working week, but there was something ominous, an unquiet calm. The chief minister had a thin agenda for the day, only a substantive meeting with legislatures of reserved categories.

Soon after the meeting, the chief secretary, B B Vyas, received a phone call from Governor N N Vohra. Vohra communicated that he had received a fax from the BJP legislators, withdrawing support to the government. The chief minister had only two options: To resign or to ask for time to explore options for securing support. A proud Kashmiri, the daughter of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed took 15 seconds to verbalise her thoughts: "I am sending in my resignation". No leader of the BJP, no Union minister or high functionary of the government had spoken to the CM. A week earlier, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh had visited Srinagar and applauded the CM in an event that brought out thousands of young men and women of Kashmir.

Procedurally, perhaps correct, but bad in spirit and substance, New Delhi has faulted once again in Kashmir. The chaos, noise, and messiness of democracy are always an option to be preferred over bureaucratic rule. Was this done without the consent of Prime Minister Narendra Modi?

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CR Sasikumar

Right on Kashmir's rights?

Why India is upset over the UN body's report

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE

What prompted this human rights report?

The first ever report by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on Jammu and Kashmir, including Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, published last week, has been in production since 2016. A new wave of violence had then hit the Kashmir Valley, when protests sparked by the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen militant Burhan Wani were met with force by security personnel; about 51 protesters and civilians were killed in the months that followed, while more than 9,000 were injured by pellets and bullets. Consequently, the OHCHR asked India and Pakistan to allow its teams access to the State, a request that was refused.

Why is this report controversial to India?

Apart from being irked by

the report's criticism of India's handling of the protests, alleged extra-judicial killings and hard tactics, the Ministry of External Affairs is also upset by the terms used to describe militants. For example, Hizbul Mujahideen, which is regarded as a terrorist organisation by India, was described in the report as an "armed group". Wani, regarded as a terrorist by Indian security forces, was described as the "leader" of the organisation. India in its official statement said the report "undermines the UN-led consensus on zero tolerance to terrorism". Finally, it makes specific recommendations aimed at India, including removing the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act from areas and instituting inquiries into alleged human rights violations.

What was the methodology used?

In the absence of direct interviews, the OHCHR used

"remote monitoring" from local sources to write the report.

Is there a political or diplomatic implication of the report that can hurt India in the long run?

India has said that the report violates its "sovereignty and territorial integrity" as it has used terms such as "Azad Jammu and Kashmir" and "Gilgit Baltistan" to describe the part of the State under Pakistani control. India does not consider Pakistan's control over a part of Kashmir as legitimate and describes the region as Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

After decades of delay, Pakistan, May 27, 2018, integrated Gilgit-Baltistan region into its federal structure despite strong protest from India. The OHCHR's decision to use these terms in the report can be interpreted as a sign of recognition of these regions as being part of Pakistan.

Neither new nor undesirable

But making a fetish of lateral entry of domain experts into government service will have grave consequences



D. SHYAM BABU

Our ceaseless search for the Holy Grail to fix the challenges of governance always leads us nowhere because the thing doesn't exist. But what we find in the process is a counterfeited, of... well, nothing; it looks like a solution but it is in fact a problem. Good intentions, unless tempered by thoughtful deliberation and preparation, do not lead to good policy outcomes.

The move by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) towards lateral entry in government service falls in this category. It has invited applications from "talented and motivated Indian nationals willing to contribute towards nation building" to be appointed as joint secretaries in 10 Departments/ Ministries at the Centre. One cannot question the good intentions behind the decision to make lateral entry more institutionalised than the case till now. Nor should one read too much bad faith into this, until and unless that bad faith comes into the open.

Once we unwrap the new poli-

cy, however, what we find is a little incongruence that can one day grow into a monster. Since the problem that the new policy seeks to fix remains vague, we cannot hope for whatever improvements promised. It is also a distant cousin to the 'committed bureaucracy' bogey of the 1970s. Moreover, the lateral entry policy goes counter in spirit to the governance philosophy enunciated by the Constituent Assembly, insofar as it concerns the candidates from private sector, consultancy firms, international/multinational organisations (MNCs).

Traditionally, the services of outside experts were availed through consultative processes, a practice quite widespread with the erstwhile Planning Commission and to some extent with its new avatar, the NITI Aayog. It is not clear why the government determined that the practice was not effective.

Why and wherefore

The lateral entry decision is based on the assumption that since our civil servants, especially those of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), are generalists and hence ill-suited to deal with policy implications of new technologies and new modes of thinking, the country is in dire need of domain experts. Nobody questioned the assump-

tion so far as the government invoked it sparingly and also it is prima facie valid.

The policy's aim "also to augment manpower" can only mean that the lateral entry will be as wide as regular recruitment and used as regularly. In doing so the government is turning an exception into a rule but the whole enterprise also begs the question: what does all this mean?

Neither the DoPT nor Ministries concerned cared to define 'domain expertise'. For example, most of the 10 posts open for lateral entry are pretty generalist. A joint secretary in agriculture? And a candidate is merely directed to the website of agriculture ministry. Has the need for domain expertise in plant breeding been felt so as to look for another M.S. Swaminathan? Is there a need for a plant pathologist? A marketing expert? Or is the nation destined to have joint secretaries in all branches of a given Ministry? Therefore, we must recognise that domain expertise is salient only in a very narrow context.

A clear trade-off

What is common between the lateral entry policy and the push for simultaneous polls is a certain restlessness that the system has become too unwieldy to speed up development. The sentiment is



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honourable but misplaced. The Founding Fathers felt that India needed a responsible government more than an efficient one. Trade-off, there is.

While elaborating why the Constituent Assembly preferred the parliamentary over the presidential system, B.R. Ambedkar reflected the sense of the House that while the former is more responsible but less stable, the latter is more stable but less responsible. Is the country in such a state to opt for efficiency at the cost of accountability?

Of the three methods at our disposal to ensure the government is responsible, one is independence of judiciary; the second is to subject the executive to constant scrutiny of the legislature; and the third is to maintain bureaucratic neutrality.

Most democracies train their higher civil servants to be accountable rather than efficient and India is no exception. What haunts a civil servant is the spectre of having to answer to a *quo warranto*

writ against his alleged action/inaction. If this dynamic renders bureaucracy slow to act, it's a welcome trait. In any case, a civil servant is expected to follow the decisions taken by the political executive which is the real master.

The new system is open to three groups: 1) officers of State governments; 2) employees of public sector undertakings and assorted research bodies; and 3) individuals in the private sector, MNCs, etc. Among the three groups, any metric of accountability, bureaucratic neutrality and fidelity to due process gets progressively worse from group 1 to 3.

The nation cannot escape the havoc likely to be wreaked by a large number of private sector experts becoming joint secretaries on three-to-five year contracts. Whatever training or orientation that these new entrants will undergo cannot match 15-20 years of acculturation/on-job training that regular officers receive before they become joint secretaries.

Unless the government is mindful of the dangers, lateral entry can result in large swathes of higher bureaucracy being consumed by the 'nation-building' zeal at the cost of accountability.

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Trauma at the border

The U.S. policy of separating children from undocumented migrant parents is cruel

As part of its “zero-tolerance” approach to dealing with undocumented migrants, the Donald Trump administration in the U.S. has been separating parents and children within migrating families, leading to outrage over the burgeoning number of minors lodged in foster care. Reports suggest that between October 2017 and May 2018 at least 1,995 children were separated from their parents, with a significant majority of the instances between April 18 and May 31. In recent weeks, disturbing images and videos have emerged of screaming toddlers in the custody of Customs and Border Protection personnel, or in what appear to be chain-link cages in facilities holding older children, as well as one disturbing audio allegedly of wailing children at one such unit. Democrats and Republicans alike have expressed deep concern about the ethics of using children, facing trauma from separation from their parents, to discourage further undocumented border crossings. Mr. Trump, however, has refused to accept sole responsibility for the family separations. Instead, he took to Twitter to blame his Democratic opponents for not working with Republicans to pass new immigration legislation to mitigate the border crisis.

His response begs two questions. First, why, when both Houses of the U.S. Congress are under Republican control, is Mr. Trump unable to garner the numbers to pass legislation to end family separations? The answer is that poignantly tragic though the fate of these broken families may be, the issue as such has failed to garner even as much bipartisan momentum on Capitol Hill as Mr. Trump’s rescinding of the Obama-era immigration order on Deferred Actions for Childhood Arrivals. The second question is whether the policy of separating migrant families is new, or if there was indeed “bad legislation passed by the Democrats” that supports this action, as Mr. Trump claims. The answer is that both are true. Mr. Trump’s critics are correct in that there is no single U.S. law requiring families to be separated. Rather, what the White House referred to as “loopholes” in legislation are two legal provisions: a law against “improper entry by aliens” at the border, and a decree known as the Flores settlement. The first is a federal law that makes it impossible to summarily deport certain vulnerable categories of migrants, such as families, asylum-seekers and unaccompanied minors. To get around this the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama adopted the policy of “catch and release” – whereby these migrants would be released from custody pending their deportation case adjudication. Family separation was unnecessary at that time, but under the Trump administration’s zero-tolerance approach, all undocumented migrants are charged in criminal courts. Here the Flores settlement applies, because it limits to 20 days the length of time migrant children may be held in immigration detention. While their parents face charges, the children are transferred to a different location, often with devastating consequences for their families. This is unspeakable cruelty.

AMERICAN NIGHTMARE

Trump Administration's dehumanising treatment of immigrants carries long-term political and moral consequences

FOR THOSE LOOKING for a silver lining in the Donald Trump Administration's move to separate immigrant children from their parents, place them in camps and, in some cases, even cage them, there is some hope. Democrats have condemned the move which has already seen over 2,000 families torn asunder, a large section of the US President's own party has spoken up against the initiative and even First Lady Melania Trump has said she "hates to see" what has been happening to children and their parents. But these small consolations aside, the implementation of the US government's "zero tolerance" policy towards illegal immigrants has left a trail of suffering whose repercussions will go far beyond the immediate political crisis.

The US owes its predominant economic and cultural position, in large measure, to the fact that it is an open society. From its inception, it has been a nation of immigrants, each wave adding to the country's diversity, and its people's collective capability. That, like all modern nation-states, America needs to police its borders to some degree is understandable. But the complete lack of empathy with which Trump is going about it is shameful. The administration's justifications have been two-fold: First, it has claimed that it is merely implementing laws and policies put in place by Democrats. This is, at best, a creative interpretation — the law asked migrants to appear before court; it did not call for children and first-time offenders to be incarcerated. The policy also did not exhort the government to hold people, like the 52 Indians currently detained in Oregon, in allegedly "inhuman conditions". Second, Trump himself has used words that are deeply disturbing to describe those coming into the US in search for a better life — immigrants, he said, "pour into and infest our country".

The actions of a government, especially an elected one, carry deep moral consequences. America need only recall the burden of slavery on contemporary race relations, its treatment of Native Americans and even the internment of Japanese citizens during the Second World War. Its global image will certainly not be enhanced as it detains people from friendly countries. As video and audio recordings of children crying out for their parents — locked up and scared — surface, Trump's dehumanising language of "infestation" appears all the more stark. Amnesty International has termed such an infliction of suffering "torture", and the American Paediatric Association has called it child abuse. Both are correct.

The seeds of sustainability

How Zero Budget Natural Farming could be the model for the future



SUJATHA BYRAVAN

In early June, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu announced that the State would fully embrace Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF), a chemical-free method that would cover all farmers by 2024. Earlier in the year, he had revealed these plans at the meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Even though this revolution has been in the works for several years, this is still a momentous occasion and highlights the way to improve the welfare of farmers, reduce the cost of farm inputs, cut toxins in food, and improve soils. With successful pilot programmes that were initiated in 2015 and partners who brought experience in different aspects needed to carry out such a transformation, Andhra Pradesh has become the first State to implement a ZBNF policy.

According to Rythu Sadhikara Samstha, the agency that is implementing the ZBNF, the programme will be extended in phases. This year, 5 lakh farmers will be covered, and at least one panchayat in each of the mandals will be shifted to this new method, bringing the programme to a tipping point. By 2021-22, the programme is to be implemented in every panchayat, with full coverage by 2024.

Towards this end, substantial resource mobilisation for about ₹16,500 crore is in progress. Tenant farmers and day labourers are also being trained, to ensure that through the ZBNF, livelihoods for the rural poor will be enhanced. T. Vijay Kumar, a retired civil servant in charge of implementing the programme, views farmer-to-farmer connections as vital to its success. According to him, the role of the Agriculture Department is to just listen to farmers and motivate and assist them in different ways. Farmer's collectives such as Farmer Producer Organisations need to be established and these would be critical to sustaining the programme. The Government of India provides funding through the



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Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana. Additional resources have been made available through various philanthropic organisations.

Natural farming

Natural farming is “do nothing farming”, according to Masanobu Fukuoka, a Japanese farmer who, in the 1970s, was a proponent of no-till, no chemical use in farming along with the dispersal of clay seed balls to propagate plants. He found it important to apply nature's principles in farming and developed a deep-rooted philosophy around the process.

Subhash Palekar developed the ZBNF after his own efforts at chemical farming failed. He identified four aspects that are now integral to his process and which require locally available materials: seeds treated with cow dung and urine; soil rejuvenated with cow dung, cow urine and other local materials to increase microbes; cover crops, straw and other organic matter to retain soil moisture and build humus; and soil aeration for favourable soil conditions. These methods are combined with natural insect management methods when required.

In ZBNF, yields of various cash and food crops have been found to be significantly higher when compared with chemical farming. For example, yields from ZBNF plots in the (kharif) 2017 pilot phase were found on average to be 11% higher for cotton than in non-ZBNF plots. The yield for Guli ragi (ZBNF) was 40% higher than non-ZBNF.

Input costs are near zero as no fer-

tilizers and pesticides are used. Profits in most areas under ZBNF were from higher yield and lower inputs. Model ZBNF farms were able to withstand drought and flooding, which are big concerns with regard to climate change. The planting of multiple crops and border crops on the same field has provided varied income and nutrient sources. As a result of these changes, there is reduced use of water and electricity, improved health of farmers, flourishing of local ecosystems and biodiversity and no toxic chemical residues in the environment.

In early 2016, Sikkim was declared India's first fully organic State. But organic agriculture often involves addition of large amounts of manure, vermicompost and other materials that are required in bulk and need to be purchased. These turn out to be expensive for most small farm holders.

Model for other States

The changes taking place in Andhra Pradesh are a systematic scaling up of farming practices based on agro-ecological principles in opposition to the dominant chemical agriculture. Changes at this scale require many different elements to come together, but open-minded enlightened political leaders and administrators are fundamental.

Over the years, Andhra Pradesh has supported and learned from its many effective civil society organisations such as the Watershed Support Services and Activities Network, Centre for Sustainable Agriculture and the Deccan Development Socie-

ty. A step-by-step increase in the area covered is another notable aspect. The scaling up relies primarily on farmers and local groups – all in all, very much a bottom-up process.

With its combination of delta regions, arid and hilly tribal areas, districts in Andhra Pradesh are similar to those in other parts of the country and could therefore serve as a model for replication. The approach taken by APPI to monitor the improvements is vital to understanding the outcomes of large-scale changes that are under way; this is critical to expanding the ZBNF to other States. As ZBNF is applied in India's various agro-ecological zones, making farmers the innovators is essential.

Resilient food systems are the need of the day given the variability of the monsoons due to global warming and declining groundwater in large parts of India. The drought-prone Rayalaseema region (Andhra Pradesh) is reportedly seeing promising changes already in farms with the ZBNF. More encouraging is that the programme can have a positive effect on many of the sustainable development goals through improvements in soil, biodiversity, livelihoods, water, reduction in chemicals, climate resilience, health, women's empowerment and nutrition.

Andhra Pradesh is one of the top five States in terms of farmer suicides. When asked about agricultural distress across the country, Mr. Kumar had one message for decision makers: “Don't listen to your scientists, listen to the farmers.” Technology is simply the systematic application of knowledge for practical purposes and according to Mr. Kumar, the ZBNF is a technology of the future with a traditional idiom. Agricultural scientists in India have to rework their entire strategy so that farming is in consonance with nature. The dominant paradigm of chemical-based agriculture has failed and regenerative agriculture is the emerging new science.

The world is at critical junctures on many planetary boundaries, and establishing a system that shows promise in improving them while supporting people sustainably is surely one worth pursuing.

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Beating plastic pollution

The focus must be on waste management and recycling



PRAKASH NELLIYAT

We celebrated ‘World Environment Day’ (June 5) with a critical theme: beat plastic pollution. Since India was the global host of this year's event, and also one of the victims of plastic pollution, we should view this danger seriously. The theme urges governments, industries, communities and individuals to come together and explore sustainable alternatives. It also urges this target group to reduce the production and excessive use of single-use plastics, which are polluting our environment and threatening human health.

Plastics are organic polymers of high molecular mass and often contain other substances. They are usually synthetic, mainly derived from petrochemicals. Due to their low cost, ease of manufacture, versatility, non-corrosiveness and imperviousness to water, plastics are used for multiple purposes at different scales. Plastic was invented in New York in 1907 by Leo Baekeland. Further, many chemists, including Nobel laureate Hermann Staudinger (father of polymer chemistry) and Herman Mark (father of polymer physics), have contributed to the materials science of plastics. However, these scientists could not have anticipated such an exponential growth of plastic production.

Critical impact

Plastic has become an indispensable material in modern society. Worldwide, one million plastic bags and one million plastic bottles are used every minute. About 50% of our plastic use is single use (disposable) and it constitutes 10% of the total waste generated. More than 9.1 billion tons of plastic are said to have been “manufactured since the material was initially mass-produced in the 1950s”. In 2015, scientists said that “of the nearly 7 billion tons of plastic waste generated, only 9% was recycled, 12% incinerated, and 79% accumulated in landfills or the environment”.

In India, which accounts for almost 18% of the world population in 2.4% of the global land area, the accumulation of plastic waste is huge. An estimate in 2015 revealed that 60 cities across the country generated over 15,000 tonnes of plastic waste every day. Even if plastic is a convenient alternative, it is a difficult substance for nature to digest.

Each year, 13 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans. A study revealed that 20 rivers (mostly from Asia) carry two-thirds of plastic waste to the ocean; the Ganga's con-

tribution to this is one of the highest. Researchers exploring the Arctic have found very high levels of microplastics trapped in the ice. Last year, a plastic spoon was found in the remains of a whale shark off Rameswaram. Experts explained that whale sharks are filter feeders and like to swallow everything floating in the sea. The economic impact of plastic pollution on marine ecosystems through fisheries and tourism losses and beach cleaning-up costs is estimated to be around \$13 billion per year.

Plastic disposed of on land degrades slowly and its chemicals leach into the surroundings. Drinking water samples analysed from 14 countries, including India, revealed that 83% have micro-plastics concentrations. According to a United Nations Environment Programme report, the overall annual natural capital cost of plastic use in the consumer goods sector is \$75 billion.

What should we do?

In reality, we cannot eliminate plastic use from our day-to-day activities. However, we should not allow plastic to reach the soil or water. The government should restrict plastic production and encourage recycling through appropriate policies. The ‘Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016’ need to be strictly followed.

As most plastic items pass through our hands, public care, with behavioural change, is necessary. Household-wise waste segregation is the key. We should act as responsible citizens with a determination towards maintaining cleaner surroundings. Every shopkeeper should go in for and encourage the use of biodegradable packing materials while shoppers should use cloth bags. Mass public awareness on the dangers of plastic hazards is a prerequisite.

Eco-friendly substitutes (cloth/paper/jute bags, leaves/areca leaf plates, paper straws) should be developed. For this, scientific and financial support (soft loans and subsidies) is required. Charges for plastic bag use and deposit-refund for plastic bottles may be effective options. The recent decision by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on extending the mandate on packing food grains and sugar products in jute bags is welcome. Even if the intention is to promote the jute industry, it is a step that reduces plastic pollution. The Swachh Bharat Mission should emerge as a platform for plastic waste management.

We cannot transform our world into a ‘plastic planet’. What is needed is collective public effort to stop plastic pollution and safeguard our ecosystem/biodiversity.

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A Bill that is causing worry

The what and why of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill

VENKATARAMANAN K.

It has been made clear that the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, will not be tabled in Parliament in the monsoon session, and that the Joint Parliamentary Committee examining it will be holding wider consultations.

The Bill was introduced in July 2016, and referred to a parliamentary committee.

The Bill's objective is to remove the tag of 'illegal migrants' from members of minority communities – Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Christians and Parsis – from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, who have entered the country without legal documentation or whose documents have expired. The idea is to make them eligible to apply for Indian citizenship.

If the Bill is passed, these individuals will be eligible for citizenship by

naturalisation. Under the present law, citizenship by naturalisation requires applicants to have stayed in the country for 11 years of the previous 14 years, and throughout the last 12 months. The proposed amendment reduces the residency requirement to six years, besides the last 12 months. The amendment will not cover Muslims, who form the majority in these three countries.

Opposition to the Bill is strong in Assam, where there is fear that non-Muslim migrants from Bangladesh will become Indian citizens. There is also an apprehension that this would be in conflict with the ongoing exercise to update the National Register of Citizens in Assam, for which the cut-off date is March 24, 1971.

The Bill is also seen as discriminatory in some quarters as it does not cover Muslim sects fleeing persecution from domi-

nant sections in these countries.

The Bill's statement of objects and reasons argues that the aim is to help persons of Indian origin, including those from these minority communities in the three countries, who are unable to produce proof of their Indian origin while applying for citizenship by registration. As naturalisation is their only means of acquiring citizenship, the government wants to reduce the residency requirement from 12 to seven years. The long waiting period in the present law would deny them "opportunities and advantages" that accrue to citizens, even though they are likely to stay in India permanently.

Another feature of the proposed amendment is that it enables cancellation of the registration of any Overseas Citizen of India cardholder for violation of Indian law.



ILLUSTRATION: ROHNIT PHORE

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Centre must cut fuel tax rate

States will be constrained if fuels are brought under GST, since they will then have limited room to offset revenue shortfall. Also, the states' take from fuel taxes is subject to crude-price vagaries, the Centre's is not

THE RISING FUEL prices fan inflation, jack up the subsidy bill and make it difficult for the government to meet mandated fiscal targets. They stress households' budget directly through increased prices of diesel, petrol and cooking gas, and indirectly through the rise in freight charges that feed into higher prices of most consumable products and services. Higher fuel prices also impact the operating margins of busi-

nesses and in turn, government tax revenue. That caps government's ability to spend on its key social and infrastructural projects.

The upcoming state and national elections have added to the complications. The opposition parties have started blaming the ruling party for inefficient management. The fuel consumers, on the other hand, are outraged and clamouring for lower prices if needed through a reduction in taxes.

Against the backdrop of India's heavy dependence on import, the fuel prices are rising due to i) increase in international prices of crude oil, ii) weakening of the rupee against the dollar, and iii) high domestic taxes.

India can't really do anything about the rising international prices of crude oil. To make matters worse, 80% of its requirements are met through imports. The policymakers have limited control over how the rupee behaves *vis-à-vis* the dollar in a largely market-determined exchange rate regime when the trade deficit is rising, foreign investment inflows are slowing and the hawkish US Fed is bent on hiking interest rates. Thus, the only thing India can do to rein in surging fuel prices is to reduce taxes, and one of the suggested ways to do that is to bring petroleum products under GST. That will also enable businesses reduce their effective tax liabilities through input tax credit and also contain producer price inflation.

However, given the precarious condition of their financials, both the Centre and states are advising each other to play ball on this. Though, not much action has happened so far, except Kerala that has reduced sales tax by a meagre ₹1 per litre.

Many newspaper editorials have been arguing that Centre imposes a fixed excise duty of ₹19.48/litre on petrol and ₹15.33/litre on diesel, while states impose *ad valorem* duties on the pre-tax fuel price plus central excise. Since the Centre's duties are specific while those of the states' *ad valorem*, it is the states which will have to walk the talk on reducing fuel taxes. Such arguments have several flaws:

First, states lose more of their sales tax revenue if international crude oil prices correct. Centre's excise tax collection, however, is largely immune from global price volatility.

Second, the sales tax or VAT on petrol wildly varies across states. For instance, it is around 40% in Maharashtra but a meagre 6% in Andaman and Nicobar islands. The sales tax on diesel varies between 6% and 30%. Thus, the GST inclusion will mean same tax rates and prices of fuels throughout the country. That, in turn, would mean raising taxes in some states while pruning them down in others. If that really happens, the states with lower sales tax rates at present will witness a sharper increase in fuel prices, and accepting that will be 'political suicide' for the parties in power, especially in the run-up to major state elections this year and the general election next year.

Third, if diesel and petrol are included under GST, the Revenue Neutral Rate (RNR) could be as high as 100% including the dealers' commission of ₹3.63/litre. So, either the GST will have to

be raised to that level which will defeat the whole purpose of the exercise. Otherwise, both the Centre and the states will lose substantial tax revenue at a time when their finances are already stressed by the burden of loan waivers and pay hikes.

Fourth, post-GST, the states have almost surrendered their taxation power except those with respect to alcohol and fuel that is now their fall-back option to meet any shortfalls in revenue. They will naturally be opposed to the proposal when most of the states are struggling with containing revenue deficit. Some background is needed here.

The Indian Constitution provides the bulk of taxation power to the Centre, but the responsibility to provide most of the basic public goods such as drinking water and sanitation, municipal roads and schools among others have been left to the states. Yet, two-thirds of the pre-devolution tax revenue has been going to the Centre and states get only one-third. That explains why most Indian states run perpetual revenue deficits. The 14th Finance Commission tried to address this anomaly by increasing the states' share in the central tax pool to 42%.

However, the 15th Finance Commission has been asked by the Centre to consider reducing states' share in Central taxes and do away with the provision of revenue deficit grants—relied upon by the states to meet any expenditure-revenue gap. That is not all, though.

The Centre is now increasingly relying on cess and surcharges that it doesn't share with the states. In 2014-15, 40% (₹400 billion out of ₹992 billion) of the Centre's fuel revenue came from cess and surcharges. That ratio has now jumped to 65%. Thus, in the current financial year, ₹1,490 billion out of ₹2,300 billion of the Centre's fuel tax revenue is budgeted to come from cess including the restructured road and infrastructure cess that it won't be sharing with states. That makes it harder for the states to reduce fuel sales taxes. Obviously, states will resist any further attempt to limit their taxation power.

One would argue that won't the collection from the GST be shared with states—then, how are the states going to lose if fuel (or alcohol for that matter) is brought under GST. Bringing GST doesn't necessarily mean states will lose tax revenue at least in the long run and depending upon the tax rates, but it certainly means less flexibility for states to increase sales tax on fuels if they really need.

To cut the long story short, it is the Centre which will have to take the hit if we really want to bring down fuel prices even though it's the states which benefit more from surging crude oil prices.

The Tilt — or why Thursday had longer daylight hours than any other day

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

JUNE 21 was summer solstice, the longest day of the year — as compared to the night — in the northern hemisphere. Winter solstice occurs on December 21 or 22, when the night hours are the longest. But why are the hours of daylight not the same every day?

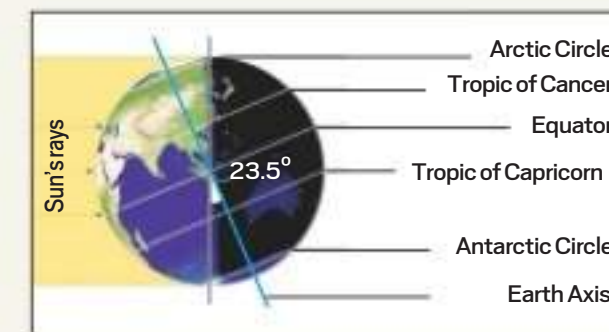
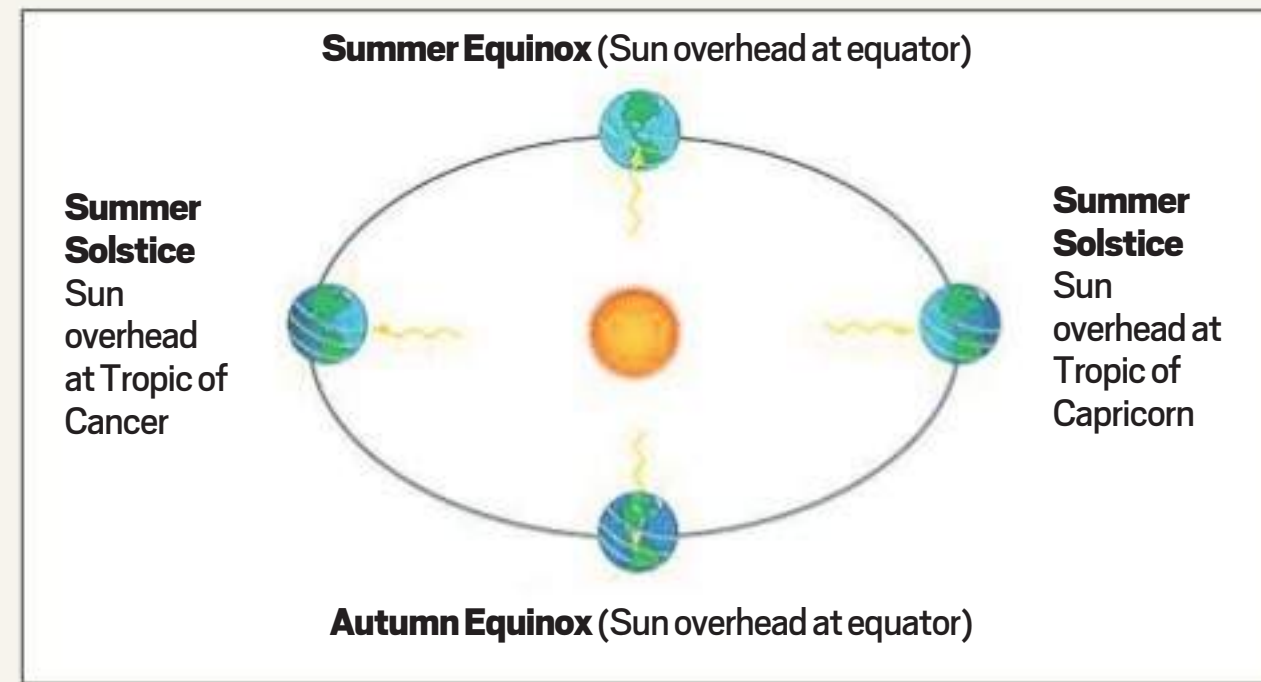
The explanation lies in Earth's tilt. The planet's axis of rotation is tilted at an angle of 23.5° . This tilt — combined with factors such as Earth's spin and orbit — leads to variations in the duration of sunlight on any location on different days of the year. The tilt is also responsible for the different seasons.

Day & night

Day occurs on the side facing the Sun, and changes to night as Earth continues to spin on its axis. On the Equator, day and night are equal. The closer one moves towards the poles, the more extreme the variation. During summer in either hemisphere, that pole is tilted towards the sun and the polar region receives 24 hours of daylight for months. During winter, the region is in total darkness for months.

Key latitudes

A latitude is a measure of a location's distance from the Equator. Earth's tilt helps define some familiar imaginary lines, which



(Above) Summer solstice; (left) four key dates of the year. *Wikipedia, NOAA*

are also key to determining when a solstice occurs. At latitudes of 23.5° (matching the tilt) are the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, north and south of the Equator. At 66.5° (or

90° minus 23.5°) are the Arctic and Antarctic Circles, north and south. It is at latitudes higher than 66.5° (in either direction) that days of constant darkness or light occur.

Solstice

On each Tropic, the sun is directly overhead at noon once a year. When this happens on the Tropic of Cancer, it is summer solstice in the northern hemisphere. When on the Tropic of Capricorn, it is winter solstice.

On the Equator, the sun is directly overhead on two days. These are the spring equinox in March and the autumn equinox in August. Across Earth, day and night are of equal length on these two dates. On the Equator, day and night are equal every day.

Tighter is better

Loose fiscal and monetary policies pushed India to brink of crisis in 2013. Wiser policy could avert it in 2018



JAHANGIR AZIZ

SINCE APRIL, EMERGING markets (EMs) have been rudely shocked by the sudden reversal of capital flows without any apparent change in economic fundamentals. Many would also argue that the financial buffers in EM are much stronger today than they were before the 2013 taper tantrum. However, across all the economies that have come under pressure, namely the ones with large current account deficits and, in turn, high foreign borrowing, there has been a steady decline in policy space because of loose fiscal and, in some cases, monetary policy. Without adequate policy space, these buffers have turned ineffective.

At the risk of oversimplifying, capital inflows into EM are driven by two factors: The growth differential with developed markets (DM) and the strength of the US dollar. Higher EM-DM growth differential increases inflow, a stronger US dollar lowers it. The logic is straightforward: Investing in EM is riskier, higher growth will compensate the risk; ergo, the higher the compensation, the larger is the inflow. Similarly, a stronger dollar raises the cost of funding and therefore investors scale back investment. Since the early 2000s, much of the EM capital inflow dynamics — the steady rise in inflow until 2008, its collapse and recovery during the global financial crisis and its immediate aftermath, the relentless decline over 2010-15, the recovery from early 2016, and steep decline in the last two months — is explained by these two factors.

Starting early 2016, EM began a strong recovery powered by a synchronised global rebound. EM-DM growth differential began to widen, inflows returned, and EM outperformed DM across asset classes. The beneficiaries of the inflows were countries with large current account and fiscal deficits that offered high interest rates to compensate for these imbalances and policy uncertainties such as Argentina, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, India.

Over this period, despite US interest rates rising every other quarter, the dollar weakened. It is not that US growth was slowing; its differential with the rest of the world (Euro Area and Japan, and EM) was narrowing. Much of the same is expected in 2018: The US would deliver above par growth, but the differential with the rest of the world would narrow. In addition, growth in the US would be driven by a rising fiscal deficit (due to unfunded tax cuts) funded by foreign borrowing, that is, a widening current account deficit. These factors — a narrowing growth differen-

In several, if not all, vulnerable economies, the current account deficit is rising because of growing fiscal and quasi-fiscal deficits. Fiscal profligacy is, once again, restraining the space for the economies to grow without increasing foreign borrowing. Put differently, if an EM economy is to maintain or widen the growth differential with DM (in order to attract capital flows), it needs to grow faster, requiring more funding. If the government does not reduce its deficit to provide the additional funds, the private sector is forced to borrow more externally, that is, the current account deficit has to widen.

tial and widening twin deficits — would raise interest rates in the US but weaken the dollar. Convinced that global economics would follow this path, inflows into EM surged in the first quarter of 2018.

In April, the world changed. Incoming data from the Euro Area and Japan pointed to growth disappointment, but above par growth in the US. The altered dynamics forced the market to reprice US interest rates and the dollar. The consequent tightening of global financial conditions caught investors off guard. Capital outflows from EM ensued and their currencies depreciated. Most of the damage was concentrated on the high-yielders.

The past few weeks have seen some stabilisation as the repricing of US interest rates and the dollar appear to be nearing an end, much of this having to do with improved economic data emerging from the Euro Area and the ECB's recent promise to end quantitative easing by December. However, none of the vulnerable countries are out of the woods unless the dollar turns decisively benign and policy uncertainties are resolved. And if not, then more aggressive rate hikes and further depreciation will likely follow that will cloud growth prospects, narrow the growth differential with DM, and force further capital outflows. This is the downward spiral that EM economies with macroeconomic imbalances undergo regularly. Having seen this movie play out many times, we all know how it ends.

Many will argue that these countries today have more buffers than in the past, pointing to the higher foreign exchange reserves, though they conveniently forget that foreign exchange liabilities have also risen and that there are limits to the use of reserves. More importantly, buffers have limited effectiveness if there is no policy space.

In several, if not all, vulnerable economies, the current account deficit is rising because of growing fiscal and quasi-fiscal deficits. Fiscal profligacy is, once again, restraining the space for the economies to grow without increasing foreign borrowing. Put differently, if an EM economy is to maintain or widen the growth differential with DM, it needs to grow faster, requiring more funding. If the government does not reduce its deficit to provide the additional funds, the private sector is forced to borrow more externally, that is, the current account deficit has to widen. When global financial conditions tighten, foreign investors become increasingly reluctant to provide the

additional funds, afraid that the borrowing country will not be able to repay without eventual debt restructurings and large declines in stock prices or in the value of the FDI project. The way out is to tighten fiscal policy, even when it might not have been part of the problem, so that the private sector has the domestic space to grow.

India is no different. Excluding asset sales, India's overall fiscal deficit (Centre plus state) has remained virtually constant, around 7 per cent of GDP since 2013-14, despite oil price averaging over these years about half the levels reached in 2013-14. This year, again, both the Centre and state deficits are likely to be under pressure with GST collections running below the budgeted run rate. What saved India these last four years was the continued decline in private investment, which provided the excess domestic savings needed to keep the current account deficit (foreign borrowing) contained at around 1 per cent. The improvement in India's macroeconomic imbalances over this period was largely a result of weak private activity and borrowing — the very things we collectively lament — and much less due to public sector efforts. With the higher budgeted fiscal deficit, even the hint of a recovery in private investment is raising fears of the current account deficit rising sharply. When global financial conditions were benign, it might have been possible to fund the higher borrowing relatively easily. Not any longer.

Loose fiscal and monetary policies pushed India to the brink of crisis in 2013. The taper tantrum was the trigger. If India doesn't tighten fiscal and monetary policies early and sufficiently, then it too could be heading down the path of its peers. Thankfully, the RBI has made a start. The central bank has long been entrusted with multiple responsibilities: Delivering on the inflation target; managing government's debt; and preserving financial stability. In the last policy review, the RBI in raising interest rates rightly chose to prioritise financial stability over the other objectives. Hopefully, it will continue to do so and not be overly influenced by short-term growth inflation dynamics or debt management issues. The year 2018 may not appear as bad as 2013, but if the dollar continues to strengthen, it could well turn out to be.

The writer is Chief Emerging Markets Economist, JP Morgan. Views are personal

How Nirav Modi continued to fly

After India had revoked his passport, the fugitive jeweller went on using it for months to travel between countries. How was this possible, and why was an Interpol notice not enough to detect and stop him?

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, JUNE 20

What kind of notice has India sought against Nirav Modi, and what has Interpol issued?

On June 11, the CBI said it had asked Interpol to issue a Red Corner Notice (RCN) against Nirav Modi, the fugitive jeweller wanted for bank fraud. On June 18, a CBI spokesperson said Interpol had issued a Diffusion Notice against Nirav Modi on February 15.

What is the difference?

A Red Corner Notice has statutory powers. It is like an arrest warrant. When Interpol issues one, all countries are duty-bound to apprehend the fugitive if s/he is in their country, or if s/he tries to leave. Getting an RCN issued involves a lengthy process, with every request vetted by the legal division of Interpol. Both the Enforcement Directorate and the CBI recently sent requests against Nirav Modi after filing chargesheets against him; Interpol has not yet issued the RCN.

A Diffusion Notice is merely a request to various countries through Interpol to keep an eye out for an alleged fugitive, and inform the requesting country of his movements. It is not legally binding, is not vetted by the Interpol legal division, and can be sent directly to various Interpol offices.

When did India revoke Nirav Modi's passport?

The Ministry of External Affairs did so on February 23, a week after having suspended the passport. On June 18, the CBI said the information about the revocation had been updated in Interpol's central database "and was available to all countries".

How then could he travel between countries?

In a June 5 letter, first reported by *The Indian Express*, Interpol informed Indian investigators that Nirav Modi had travelled on at least four dates across three countries using his revoked passport — on March 15, March 28, March 30 and March 31. He was able to do so because, sources say, there is no international common database on passports.

Only in case of an RCN, sources in Interpol and the Immigration Department say, is the information in the Interpol Central Database



C R Sasikumar

directly linked to the database of immigration departments of major countries. Therefore, when a fugitive passenger's passport is swiped at the immigration counter, it automatically reflects in the system that there is an RCN pending against him.

In countries where the information is not directly linked to the immigration database, Interpol ensures that its National Central Bureaus (NCBs) in those countries make the immigration departments feed the information into their databases.

What are these NCBs?

These are nodal agencies through which Interpol operates in various countries. They are not established by Interpol, but are existing national agencies, designated to handle Interpol requests. In India, the Interpol's NCB is the CBI, which has a division dealing with Interpol requests and is staffed with officials of the CBI itself.

If the information is linked to the database only when Interpol issues an RCN, does it mean that a fugitive facing a Diffusion Notice can clear immigration?

For such notices, the Interpol data are not directly linked to the immigration database. So, unless the NCB of each country ensures an update of such data in the immigration database, it will not reflect automatically

when a passport is swiped at the immigration counter. The same is the case with information on revocation of a passport. That is why the CBI, after feeding such data in the Interpol Central Database, was also writing constantly to six different countries to ensure that they kept an eye out for Nirav Modi's movements.

What are these six countries, and how have they responded?

The CBI has claimed that it wrote to the US, the UK, Belgium, France, Singapore and the UAE between April 25 and May 28 — which was after Nirav Modi had already made a few trips on his revoked passports. Responses depend on diplomatic relations, and few countries generally bother to act on Diffusion Notices. Only the UK has responded to India's Diffusion Notice — with delayed information about Nirav Modi's travels two months earlier. Since nothing except an RCN is legally binding, agencies send reminders on pending notices. There is no statutory stipulation or laid-down procedure for this.

If a fugitive does not adhere to a set movement pattern, there is little an investigation agency can do. Nirav Modi, last seen in Davos in end-January, has crossed border posts, where immigration authorities have failed to stop him. Governments ultimately depend on cooperation between intelligence agen-

cies for tracking the movement of fugitives.

Nirav Modi allegedly had six different passports. How is this possible, and which one of these has India revoked?

Only the latest passport will be valid. When a frequent flier's passport booklet runs out of pages, or when a passport-holder has changes made in name, address etc, he or she has to get a new passport. The moment a new one is issued, the previous one is cancelled.

How does Interpol work, and what is its record in delivering to Indian agencies the fugitives they want?

Short for International Criminal Police Organisation, Interpol was established in 1923 and has 192 member countries, with a General Secretariat in Lyon (France), a Global Complex for Innovation in Singapore, seven regional bureaus, and Special Representative offices in the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations, to ensure co-operation among police agencies working in different legal environments to combat crimes of an international nature. Because Interpol has to deal with a number of barriers — such as differing legal systems, definitions of crimes, rules for evidence, incompatible extradition laws, restrictions on sharing information — its success depends largely on cooperation between one country and another, and diplomatic relations have a significant role in this.

There are over 650 RCNs pending against criminals wanted by India. These include Indian fugitives Dawood Ibrahim and members of his gang who have been holed up in Pakistan since 1993, and Pakistan nationals Hafiz Saeed and Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, who are wanted for the 26/11 attacks. India's Chhota Rajan, despite an RCN having been issued against him, managed to keep moving from one country to another on fake passports, until he was finally arrested.

What options does the CBI have now?

There is nothing the CBI can do on its own when a fugitive is out of its legal jurisdiction. It can hope that Interpol will issue an RCN and that Nirav Modi will be located and detained in whichever country he is found. India will then have to send an extradition request and fight a court battle in that country to get him back. It can also use its diplomatic leverage for extradition, provided it builds a convincing case against him.