

'84 RIOTS  35 YEARS LATER

IMPUNITY: There is an inordinate delay in securing justice for the riot-hit.

Delhi pogrom heralded dog-whistle politics

MANOJ MITTA
SENIOR JOURNALIST AND
CO-AUTHOR OF WHEN A TREE SHOOK DELHI

In the November 19, 1984, speech, Rajiv did not say a word about the bereaved families, much less about those conscientious non-Sikhs who had tried to save the Sikhs or believed that the violence had been politically engineered. Such deliberate errors of omission and commission set the tone for the cover-up of the massacre.

In the 35 years since the Delhi pogrom, this is the first anniversary in which the victim community has the solace of the first-ever conviction of a leader of the party accountable for it. The inordinate delay in securing the life sentence for former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar in December 2018 is yet another reflection on the state of the rule of law in India. If the Delhi pogrom has acquired a fresh resonance lately, it is for more than just its unparalleled scale of the violence in which 2,733 Sikhs were officially acknowledged to have been killed in the first three days of November 1984.

Beyond the issue of impunity, the current significance of the Delhi pogrom lies in the ultranationalism and dog-whistle politics heralded by it. The most notorious example of such corrosion of India's democracy and pluralism was Rajiv Gandhi's attempt to justify the violence caused by the mobs seeking to avenge his mother's murder. He likened the violence targeting a minority community to the reverberations caused by the impact of a fallen tree. Rajiv did so while addressing his first public meeting as Prime Minister within a fortnight of the car-

nage and in the very city in which it had taken place. The official translation of his Hindi speech, at the meeting commemorating Indira Gandhi's birth anniversary, put it as follows: "But, when a mighty tree falls, it is only natural that the earth around it does shake a little."

While paying tributes to his mother, Rajiv desisted from condemning the horrendous reprisal to her murder, let alone promising to take any action against the guilty. The closest he came to expressing any reservations about the mass violence was for its strategic repercussions to the nation, rather than any human rights concerns. Empathising with the *krodh* (intense anger) of the mobs, Rajiv cautioned: "Any action taken in anger can cause harm to the country. Sometimes, by acting in anger, we only help those who want to break up the country."

In his entire speech delivered on November 19, 1984, Rajiv did not say a word about the bereaved families, much less about those conscientious non-Sikhs who had tried to save the Sikhs or believed that the violence had been politically engineered. Such deliberate errors of omission and commission by Rajiv set the tone for the cover-up of the massacre as well as the Congress party's campaign for the Lok Sabha election held a month later.

Referring to the backdrop of insurgency in Punjab, one of the Congress' advertisements screamed, "Will the country's border finally be moved to your doorstep?" Without a trace of irony, it attacked Opposition parties saying: "They sow hatred and grow barbed-wire fences, watered with human blood. But it's you who step out and bump into the fences and bleed while they cash your vote to buy their ticket to power." As if that was not provocative enough, the advertisement proceeded to ask: "Why should you smile uneasily at your next-door neighbour just because he belongs to another community or speaks another language? Why should you feel uncomfortable riding in a taxi driven by a taxi driver who belongs to another state?" In keeping with Rajiv's projection of himself as the sole guarantor of territorial integrity, the tagline of the advertisement said: "India could be your vote away from unity or separatism."

The conflation of ultranationalism and dog-whistle politics proved so effective that, with the tally crossing the 400 mark, Rajiv secured more seats than even his grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru ever did. In the government he had formed after that landslide victory, Rajiv pro-

moted HKL Bhagat to the Cabinet minister rank although (or perhaps because) his East Delhi constituency had been the worst affected. Another violence-tainted minister, Jagdish Tytler, became a minister for the first time.

When the Parliament session began on January 17, 1985, the two Houses passed a common resolution condoning Indira's death. Though it said that she "loved India and the Indian people with a passion so sublime that it will live among us for long ages," the resolution expressed no regret about a section of the same Indian people being subjected to all sorts of violence in her name.

The silence on the pogrom became all the more glaring four days later when Parliament took due cognisance of another major disaster that had afflicted India in 1984, the Bhopal gas tragedy, and the government responded by promising to take necessary civil and criminal action against its perpetrators.

In this watershed election in which the Congress party had whipped up a majoritarian frenzy like never before, the BJP led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee managed to win only two seats. In 1997, when he wrote a retrospective on the 50 years of Independence, Vajpayee dwelt on the 1984 election in which he had himself been defeated. He said that the events in Punjab and Delhi had "unleashed a momentary madness that was harnessed by the Congress to create a sympathy wave." Significantly, he added: "I still vividly recall the Congress' election campaign of that year in which every Sikh was portrayed as a dangerous anti-national to be watched out for... My party, I also proudly recall, refused to exploit shamelessly the insanity that had gripped India in the immediate aftermath of Indira Gandhi's assassination. We stood by our cherished principle of unity — *ekta*. Yes, we lost to the Congress. But there are no regrets because our defeat was honourable while the Congress' thumping victory was tainted by the blood of innocent men, women and children."

In view of the BJP's dramatic growth since then, the conventional wisdom is that the 1984 election was its low point. But, in retrospect, it was so only in terms of seats. On the other hand, that fateful election demonstrated the immense potential of appealing to negative sentiments such as hate, fear, anger and prejudice, amid sanctimonious rhetoric about security and development. For its long-term political ramifications, the Delhi pogrom is an unacknowledged benchmark.

The long shadow of cauterised memories

ROOPINDER SINGH
SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR

It has been 35 years since the mass killings. Time enough to move on, to heal the wounds, to forgive and forget.

But that is not the case. Those who survived did move on, but their lives were impacted deeply. How do you move on when you have seen your family members killed? And that too, in many cases, by those who you knew? When the state engages in systematic obfuscation and minimisation of horrors that visited your family?

THE year was 1984. The day was one of shock, and the night one of horrors. On October 31, the nation's Prime Minister was assassinated by her bodyguards in the morning. Before nightfall, hundreds of Sikhs who lived proudly in the nation's Capital found themselves targeted and attacked by mobs. The next two days and nights were terrible. As often happens, it was the poorest of the poor that faced the worst, people living in tenements outside the city, eking out a subsistence living.

The contagion of hatred spread, other towns and even trains were no longer safe, uniforms of those who proudly served the nation no longer an armour against the marauding mobs. Official figures talk of a few thousand dead in Delhi. The community distrusts the figures. Those who died elsewhere are footnotes, if even that. The nation's fabric of trust was torn by those who wore spotless white even as they directed mobs to paint the streets red.

It has been 35 years since the mass killings. Time enough to move on, to heal the wounds, to forgive and forget. But that is not the case. Those who survived did move on, but their lives were impacted deeply. How do you move on when you have seen your family members killed? And that too, in many cases, by those whom you knew? How do you move on when the state engages in systematic obfuscation and minimisation of horrors that visited your family? How do you register a case when you remember policemen by their absence, and hear about them egging on the killers in some cases? How do you rebuild your lives after you have lost whatever meagre material possessions you had?

At the very least, you want your suffering and loss to be acknowledged. Then you want justice, identification of the perpetrators and the rule of law applied to them so that they are incapable of repeating the horrors that they perpetrated.

The killings stopped as the Capital prepared to swear in a new Prime Minister. The killers donned fresh white clothes and set out to reap the rewards for their misdeeds. Justice for those who had been killed was far from the minds of those who were now in power. What happened was a 'reaction.' After all, the 'earth shakes when a big tree falls', was the facile rationalisation. Indeed, the human mind has an infinite capacity to provide justifications, even for what cannot be justified.

Even those whose lives had been torn asunder by the violence found a way to cauterise parts of their minds where the memories of those who were cremated much before their time were stored. They did not want to visit those memo-

ries and all the pain, helplessness and hopelessness that were entwined in them, ever again. They picked up pieces of their lives and got on with the agony of living, existing.

The immediate aftermath of violence was chaotic. Many could not venture out of the refugee camps that had been set up for them. Their homes were cinder. While some neighbours had helped, others had turned enemies. The immediate environment was exceedingly hostile as the perpetrators of violence were strutting around, safe in the perceived protection of the ruling class.

Many sought justice. Some even mustered the courage to go to police stations to register FIRs about the missing and the dead, and about those who had killed them. They were actively discouraged, but some still persevered. Civil rights activists rose to the occasion. They did much to help the survivors, to document the horrors and to try to get justice for those who had been killed. How many? The official figure is 2,800 in Delhi, and 3,350 for the country. Independent sources place it at many times that figure. The one thing for certain is that the official figure is grossly understated.

As demands for justice arose, a commission of inquiry was set up to examine the failure of the Delhi police to protect the Sikhs from the mobs. Ved Marwah, then Additional Commissioner of Police, Delhi, was tasked. The commission was abruptly terminated by the Home Ministry in mid-1985.

So many broken beacons of hope followed — the Ranganath Commission, Kapur-Mittal Committee, Jain-Banerjee Committee, Potti-Rosha Committee, Jain-Aggarwal Committee, Ahuja Committee, Dhillon Committee, Narula Committee, the Nanavati Commission... there was always a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip. None was able to deliver justice.



WANTED: Identification of the perpetrators and the rule of law applied to them.

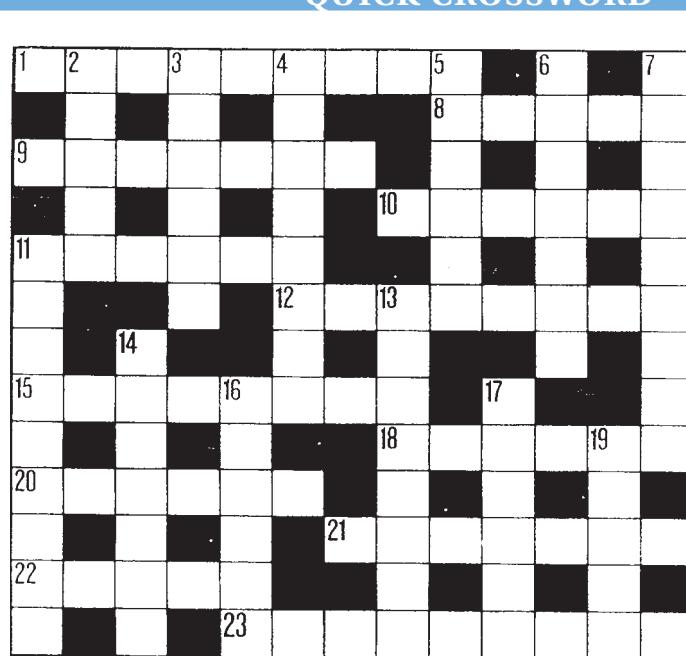
The wheels of justice grind on too slowly. Yet, they do. The Supreme Court-appointed SIT has shown some results. Convictions, though sporadic, trigger a tremendous response in the community. They acknowledge the wrong, and vindicate, however weakly, the faith in justice.

Most of those killed, whose homes were destroyed, and families torn apart, were poor. They faced the toughest of times ahead, and even if some got help from civic-minded citizens, religious organisations, and government support, they had nothing to build on, all that they had was destroyed.

The spirit of the people whose lives had been torn asunder by the Partition in 1947 is tremendous. Most of the survivors of the 1984 violence have built their lives yet again. They continue to be successful and productive members of society, but a sense of unresolved historic injustice pervades.

Politicians, officials, insincere efforts, even the passage of time, all can be blamed, but the result is the same. Remember, the adults were killed, children survived. These children of 1984 now have grown-up children of their own, who have a reason to distrust the system and the society they are part of. Seeing murderers walk away, even get honours, official positions and political offices, rips the cauterised memories of November 1984.

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Europe's smallest republic (3,6)
- 2 Breed of short-haired dog (5)
- 3 A cotton cloth (7)
- 4 Sullen (6)
- 5 Usual practice (6)
- 6 Inventive (8)
- 7 Abstaining from alcohol (8)
- 8 Innumerable (6)
- 9 Glory (6)
- 10 Fantastic (7)
- 11 Provide food (5)
- 12 In Australia or New Zealand (4,5)

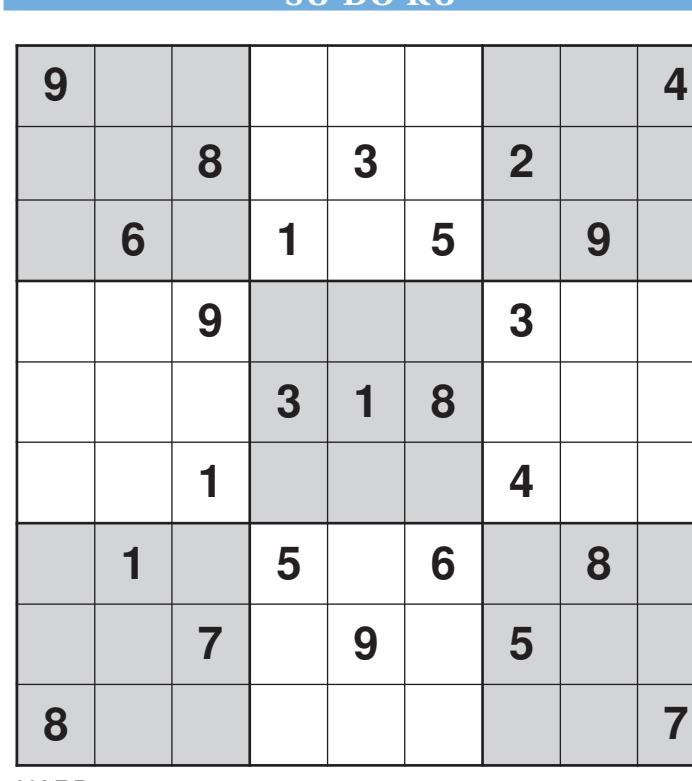
DOWN

- 1 Farewell (5)
- 2 Powerful (6)
- 3 Last (8)
- 4 Rectangular (6)
- 5 Set forth in detail (7)
- 6 Huge North Atlantic island (9)
- 7 Central American country (5,4)
- 8 Mistaken belief (8)
- 9 Central principle (7)
- 10 Advancing (6)
- 11 Achieve (6)
- 12 Of considerable size (5)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

Across: 1 Ageless, 4 In all, 7 Iota, 8 Critical, 10 Manoeuvres, 12 Jalopy, 13 Flurry, 15 On the cheap, 18 Trinidad, 19 Pass, 20 Ranch, 21 Slender.
Down: 1 Axiom, 2 Entangle, 3 Strive, 4 In the black, 5 Arch, 6 Lullaby, 9 Keep in with, 11 Free hand, 12 Jupiter, 14 Shears, 16 Poser, 17 Mien.

SU DO KU



CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 1, 2019, FRIDAY

■ Vikrami Samvat	2076
■ Shaka Samvat	1941
■ Kartik Shaka	10
■ Kartik Parvishite	16
■ Hijri	1441
■ Shukla Paksh Tithi 5, up to 12.51 am	
■ Aati Yoga up to 7.57 am	
■ Moola Nakshatra up to 9.52 pm	
■ Moon in Sagittarius sign	
■ Gandmool up to 9.52 pm	

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

2	7	8	1	3	4	6	5	9
3	5	9	2	7	6	1	8	4
1	4	6	8	9	5	3	7	2
4	1	2	7	5	8	9	6	3
6	8	3	9	4	2	5	1	7
7	9	5	3	6	1	2	4	8
9	3	1	5	8	7	4	2	6
8	2	4	6	1	3	7	9	5
5	6	7	4	2	9	8	3	1

FORECAST

SUNSET: FRIDAY	17:35 HRS
SUNRISE: SATURDAY	06:38 HRS
 Partly Cloudy	 Rainy
 Foggy	
CITY	MAX MIN
Chandigarh	30 16
New Delhi	32 18
PUNJAB	
Amritsar	31 16
Bathinda	33 16
Jalandhar	31 14
Ludhiana	31 15
HARYANA	
Bhiwani	32 18
Hisar	33 16
Sirsa	32 18
HIMACHAL PRADESH	
Dharamsala	24 15
Manali	19 05
Shimla	20 11
JAMMU & KASHMIR	
Jammu	28 19
Leh	— —
Srinagar	— —
UTTARAKHAND	
Dehradun	28 15
Mussoorie	20 09

TEMPERATURE IN °C



A scholar suffers collateral damage



ROOPINDER SINGH
SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR

ACADEMICS who venture into the religious territory have long had to face uncertainties that are bound to arise when the empirical clashes with belief. The clergy, transcending various religious denominations, has a certain view, often constrained by tradition, and it reacts mightily against all challengers. We accept this. Thus, those who work in this area are rightly advised about it. Few know it better than historians who negotiate their research with a perception of the past.

Complicating the equation is the role of the politicians, more so in this age of demagogues and revivalist movements. Has religion ever been divorced from politics? It would be hard to argue that it has. Most modern secular states try to maintain a safe distance between the church and the State, but the political influence of the religious institutions is widely recognised — as was evident in the resurgence of the Russian Orthodox Christian Church after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In the Sikh context, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) has long served as the premier Sikh religious body. The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), which predates the SGPC, and had, in fact, led

the movement that resulted in the creation of the SGPC, has a symbiotic relationship with the body that officially deals with the management of historical gurdwaras, but has evolved into much, much more.

There was a tradition of the SGPC and the SAD maintaining their distinct identities even as they worked together. This, however, has eroded in the past few decades, with the boundaries thinning, and eventually vanishing. This is unfortunate since the body that acts as the religious arbitrator for the Sikhs should provide leadership to the political class, and not the other way around.

The recent row over history textbooks in Punjab has a political agenda. And a respected scholar, Dr Kirpal Singh, who is known for a lifetime of work on Sikh history, is the collateral damage in this case. The scholar, who was rightly feted and honoured by the SGPC, has been editing *Sri Gur Partap Suraj Granth*, magnum opus of Bhai Santokh Singh, at the request of the SGPC since 2001. Till now, 21 volumes have been published and two are in print. But the work is far from over as the period of Guru Gobind Singh is yet to be covered.

The historian was honoured with the title of National Professor of Sikhism by the Akal Takht in 2014. But instead of getting appreciation for undertaking such an arduous task at an advanced age, he stands sacked as the director of the project. Not only this, the stellar work done by him has also been put under the scanner as it would be "examined".

Academic researchers dig for fresh texts, present new interpretations, and thus, contribute to enlarging our knowledge base. In such cases, vari-



A PITY: The SGPC showed undue haste in acting at the behest of the SAD.

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ations in history texts are to be expected. Sometimes such differences are sharp enough to attract the charge of 'distortion'. This often comes when an opinion of an expert clashes with that of believers, who adhere to a particular point of view and are not ready to consider any other possibility.

Textbooks, in India, however, are seldom subjected to the kind of rigorous scrutiny that they ought to face. Indeed, mistakes and distortions in textbooks are pointed out from time to time, testifying a cavalier attitude of those who publish and prescribe these books meant to shape young minds. Besides shoddy scholarship, there are production issues with books, typographical errors, etc.

The first committee to examine the problems in textbooks was set up during the tenure of the Akali government, and a decision to make changes in the syllabi was made in

January 2014. However, the work that was eventually done for the 2018-19 session on the basis of this syllabus had several problems of conceptual as well as factual nature, especially in the Punjabi and Hindi versions. This led to the withdrawal of books and a request to the oversight committee to write afresh and give it chapter-wise. In such a scenario, a mature response would have been to continue working in the joint committee comprising historians, SGPC representatives and government officials, and sort out issues for the future of the students.

The SAD's proclivity of falling back on the Panthic agenda when it is not in power is well known. It is leading the protest against the 'distortions' in history textbooks, and politicising the issue. It is not clear why it did not show its commitment to improving the quality of textbooks during the early phase of its

10-year tenure in the state when it could have accomplished much.

It is true that certain discrepancies regarding Sikh gurus have been found in the textbooks. The joint committee, set up by representatives of the SGPC and top Punjab historians, should have been given the time and support it needed and allowed to finish its work. That would, however, not have suited the political agenda of the SAD. The unholly haste shown by the Congress government in asking the committee to wrap up its findings has also been detrimental to quality control.

The SAD has sought to whip up popular sentiment by igniting this controversy, and thus, seeking to divert attention from other troubles that it is facing. Without digressing into details, it is suffice to say that this is a time-tested manoeuvre that has cost the state dear in the past. Now, too, it is difficult to see what gain will be made from such a move.

The loss, however, is clear. The SGPC showed undue haste in acting at the behest of the SAD. What should have been discussed, debated and resolved by the committee of scholars is now in the public domain. The SGPC should have allowed the committee to finish its work before attacking it. A respected historian and scholar has been censured, thereby sending a chilling message. Others on the committee will now hesitate to be involved with an endeavour that could turn political. The losers will be the students in whose name the whole exercise was started in the first place.

Political expediency has won, again. A pity.

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Shrinking base confronts new Maoist chief



MALLEPALLI LAXMAIAH
DALIT ACTIVIST AND COLUMNIST

Keshava Rao now faces the herculean task of defending his ever-shrinking territory due to reduced forests, increased police presence and most of all, gradual loss of support of the very people he had vowed to represent and defend. It is pertinent to note that the ones who govern and exploit are closer to the people than the Naxalites, who are now being seen by the world as only extremists.

THE Indian Maoist movement has had a recent change in leadership. Muppala Laxman Rao, better known as Ganapathy, hailing from Jagital in old Karimnagar district of Telangana, has stepped down from leadership in favour of Namballa Keshava Rao, from Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh.

Both Srikakulam and Karimnagar were the main theatres of the Naxalite movement at its peak in the 1970s. While there are rumours that the change was due to ideological differences, it cannot be farther from the truth.

Ganapathy had stepped down owing to his advanced age and associated inability to continue as a leader of the armed movement. As such, there would be very little change in the ideological path and trajectory of the movement itself. Ganapathy had joined the movement in the erstwhile Karimnagar, which had seen outrageous caste discrimination and oppression while Keshava Rao had seen the plight of tribal life in Srikakulam district of north Andhra.

These problems were not addressed by the democratic system as it exists.

It can be argued in the present sense and context that an armed struggle against the state is not only futile but also detrimental to the cause that the movement itself stands for. To shed light on the Naxalite movement, it is important for us to examine the reason that caused its birth.

However, this was not the case, as evidenced by the rise of Left extremist insurrections like the Naxalite movement. The Naxalite movement



LOST VIGOUR: It is time for this new leadership to acknowledge that the democratic path of securing the rights is far more viable and beneficial than violence.

1947, the Constituent Assembly toiled under the able guidance of Dr Baba Saheb BR Ambedkar to lay a firm foundation for a democratic and egalitarian society. The Indian Constitution has been praised as being the most extensive one in the world, taking into consideration the diversity, economic and social disparity that existed for millennia in the subcontinent. If the Constitution were to be implemented in word and spirit, there would have been very little reason for agitation against the government.

However, this was not the case, as evidenced by the rise of Left extremist insurrections like the Naxalite movement. The Naxalite movement

started in 1967 in West Bengal as a response to the exploitation of tribals by landlords in Naxalbari. The lack of governance in deep forests and tribal areas led to the growth of the movement. It can be seen even today, that deep-set tribal areas in the hearts of Chhattisgarh and Srikakulam have a heavy presence of Naxalites or Maoists. The Communist parties in India, primarily the CPI and CPI(M), had focussed on the working class. The lowest strata of society consisting of Dalits and tribals, were ignored. The growing disparity brought forth another movement which was dubbed the CPI(ML), in other words, the Maoist movement. The Maoist

movement, more popularly known as the Naxalite movement, had gained such traction claiming to represent the voice and action of the tribals and Dalits who were suffering due to neglect of the government.

It had always been clear that the armed movement gained strength in areas that were devoid of able governance. The lack of schooling, employment opportunities, medical aid and police network are still the reasons for the existence of the armed movement even now. Moreover, when the government seeks to privatise the forests for mining or any other associated economic activity, strong resistance is put up by the Naxalites whose stated intention is to protect the constitutional rights of the tribals. The resultant backfire from the armed forces of the state only puts the helpless tribals at risk. They are stuck between the police and the paramilitary forces on one hand, and Naxalites on the other.

It is time for this new and younger leadership to acknowledge that the democratic path of securing the rights of the tribals is far more viable and beneficial to the tribals than violence, force and use of arms. The state forces and Naxalites have for long been at loggerheads, preventing the initiation of a peaceful dialogue and resolution of pressing issues. The lack of basic amenities, besides being cut off from the outside world, has not helped the efforts of the state to annihilate the Naxalite movement.

Keshava Rao now faces the her-

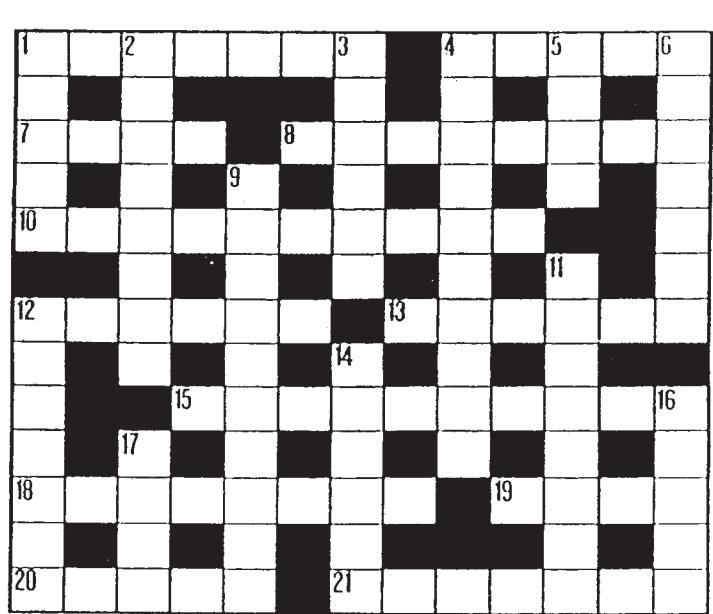
eculean task of defending his ever-shrinking territory due to reduced forests, increased police presence and most of all, gradual loss of support of the very people he had vowed to represent and defend.

It is pertinent to note that the ones who govern and exploit are closer to the people than the Naxalites, who are now being seen by the world as only extremists.

It can be seen that the areas from which both the leaders hail no longer have an active presence of this party. The movement, which had started in the plains for the benefit of the farm labourers and downtrodden, with the ideal and goal to overthrow the government with the aid of armed peasants, had to move away from those very people. The presence of arms justified police action. The movement, in order to mobilise an army, had spread across jungles in India, from Nepal to Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

The party's influence is now limited to the forests of and around Chhattisgarh. Keshava Rao faces the incredible challenge of creating mass movements in other parts of India and expanding into the territories that are not any more under Maoist influence. It still stands to question whether under the leadership of Keshava Rao, Maoist party will see an ideological change or will continue on the present course.

QUICK CROSSWORD



SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Hero-worship, 9 Hygiene, 10 Mason, 11 Dare, 12 Alsatian, 14 Inmate, 16 Threat, 18 Land mine, 19 Cash, 22 Naive, 23 Overall, 24 Under arrest.
DOWN: 2 Eager, 3 Open, 4 Overly, 5 Sympathy, 6 Inspire, 7 Rhode Island, 8 In a nutshell, 13 Stampede, 15 Mansion, 17 Angola, 20 Amass, 21 Bear.

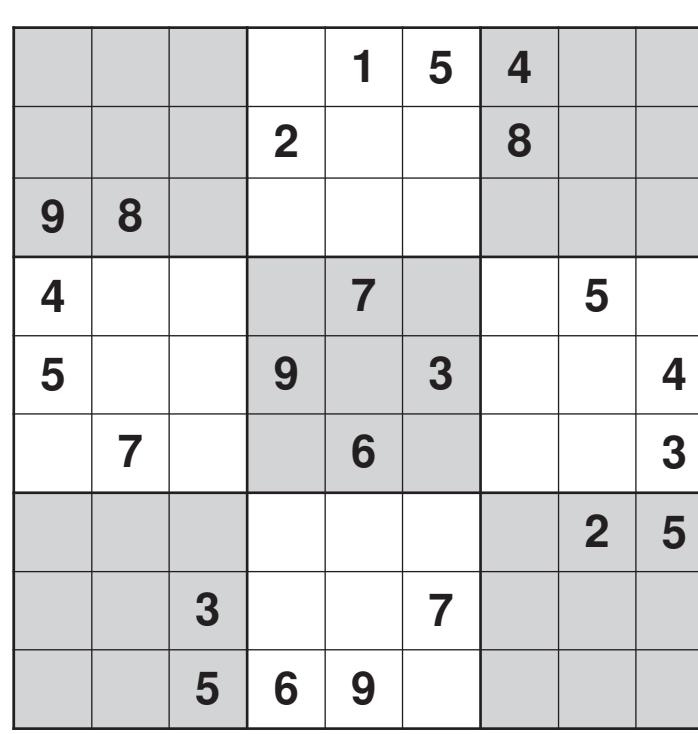
ACROSS

- 1 Die (7)
- 4 Unsettling blow (5)
- 7 Stratagem (4)
- 8 Large and luxurious (8)
- 10 Whatever the price (2,3,5)
- 12 Shackle for feet (6)
- 13 Lively (6)
- 15 That sounds reasonable! (4,6)
- 18 Court of justice (8)
- 19 Two of a kind (4)
- 20 To sponge (5)
- 21 Pagan (7)

DOWN

- 1 Middle East republic (5)
- 2 Person injured (8)
- 3 Publish widely (6)
- 4 Superficial knowledge (10)
- 5 Fail to do (4)
- 6 Spoilsport (7)
- 9 A Strauss waltz (4,6)
- 11 Leave by will (8)
- 12 Distracted (7)
- 14 Deliver a sermon (6)
- 16 Long-legged wading bird (5)
- 17 Untamed (4)

SU DO KU



MEDIUM

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 12, 2018 MONDAY

■ Vikrami Samvat	2075
■ Shaka Samvat	1940
■ Kartik Shaka	21
■ Kartik Parvishtha	27
■ Hijri	1440
■ Shukla Paksh Tithi 5, up to 1.51 am	
■ Dhriti Yoga up to 2.58 pm	
■ Purvashadha Nakshatra up to 2.38 am	
■ Moon in Sagittarius sign.	

SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

8	2	4	7	3	9	5	1	6
3	5	7	6	2	1	8	9	4
1	6	9	5	4	8	7	2	3
9	4	6	1	5	2	3	8	7
7	3	1	4	8	6	2	5	9
2	8	5	3	9	7	4	6	1
4	9	8	2	1	3	6	7	5
6	1	3	8	7	5	9	4	2
5	7	2	9	6	4	1	3	8

FORECAST

SUNSET:	MONDAY	17:27 HRS
SUNRISE:	TUESDAY	06:47 HRS
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Rainy
Cloudy	Foggy	
CITY	MAX	MIN
Chandigarh	28	13
New Delhi	30	13
PUNJAB		
Amritsar	27	13
Bathinda	26	12
Jalandhar	27	12
Ludhiana	28	13
HARYANA		
Bhiwani	28	15
Hisar	30	12
Sirsa	28	14
HIMACHAL PRADESH		
Dharamsala	19	9
Manali	13	0
Shimla	15	07
JAMMU & KASHMIR		</th

The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

Citizen Mukherjee in Nagpur
If speeches could change hearts...

FORMER President Pranab Mukherjee has been a difficult political personality to gauge. If the marked absence of an insider's revelation in his many books is an indication, his real motive behind the visit to the RSS headquarters in Nagpur on Thursday may never be revealed. That Pranab *Da* was a cut above the callow crowd that thronged Congress offices was established when Indira Gandhi handpicked him for her Council of Ministers. Pranab *Da*, though, remained a backroom operator; his first successful encounter with electoral politics was when he was a ripe 69.

But as a man in the bullring of New Delhi's politics for well over four decades, he would have factored in the net effect of his Nagpur sojourn on the Congress's battle plans for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections against an enemy Pranab *Da* has sought to legitimise. It certainly cannot be attributed to ignorance of the exigencies of mass politics. It is also juvenile to assume that one single address from the RSS rostrum would elicit a change of heart among its spear carriers when his countless denunciations in Parliament, and from the pulpit at Rashtrapati Bhavan, failed to do so. On the contrary, Citizen Mukherjee may have catapulted a nondescript RSS event into a prime time viewing spectacle.

And if his speech at the RSS headquarters is parsed, there is always ground for doubt that Pranab *Da* had, apart from a few boilerplate observations, tailored his address for the occasion. Pranab Mukherjee is certainly a free man. But it would be naïve to assume that his innings as President has magically transformed him into an apolitical individual. Congress in the past has intermittently flirted with the RSS. At least one comprehensive Congress Lok Sabha sweep was adduced to a tacit understanding between its backroom boys and the RSS. Was Pranab *Da* paying back for past association or was this his payback to a party that withheld from him the chalice of supreme executive authority in the form of the PM's post? But what is of little doubt is Citizen Mukherjee's unexplained ingenuity has left his old party at an embarrassingly loose end.

Rules vs appeal

Spotting rich beneficiaries of free power not easy

TO stop the subsidy going out to the rich in the name of agricultural tubewells, there have been numerous recommendations, the most recent being from the Punjab State Farmers' Commission. While this may happen with the force of law as and when it may, there has all along been a movement calling for voluntary surrender of the benefit by those who do not need such government largesse. The fact of the matter, however, remains that not even a handful have responded to the appeal, other than a few politicians.

So why do others not follow suit? Many take the excuse that they do not have any tubewell in their name, while others will say there is no land in their name, when it is known that their family income is from agriculture. Ironically, they are not telling a lie. Such are our land ownership and revenue laws that these people may indeed have nothing in their name and yet control vast tracts of land, and the proceeds from those. That is a roadblock where both rules and appeal will fail. Neither can you force such "rich farmers" to pay up, nor can you guilt them into paying as there is no way to prove their holdings. Besides, even legally no one is supposed to hold more than 18 acres of irrigated land, which sets the upper limit of how rich a farmer can be.

The grey areas are exploited by a class of people claiming to be farmers just because they own land, whether purchased or inherited. They also have other means of plentiful income. A large number of politicians fall in this category. Yet, they continue to claim power and other subsidies. This is the lot of people that needs to be named and shamed. And that can be done only by people who fall in this category themselves, by coming together to form a grouping to influence others by example. The effort could be augmented by PSPCL and the government launching a full-scale campaign to promote the idea of giving up the subsidy and making it procedurally convenient for the people to begin paying for the power they consume.

Thought for the Day

Great nation is a nation that respects the services of the hero. — Soekarno

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A lesson in tolerance

Both the RSS and former President Pranab Mukherjee have done a great service to democracy by showing us that even diabolically opposite views must not be rejected outright ('At RSS HQ, Pranab preaches tolerance', June 8). Healthy deliberations are the essence of a democracy. Stubbornly imposing our views without listening to others is lack of maturity of thought. By inviting Mukherjee to address its cadres, the RSS has succeeded in showing that it is not intolerant, as is believed, to opposite views. The former President, too, has exhibited maturity, but some Congressmen's scepticism over the visit exhibited their lack of self-belief.

HL SHARMA, AMRITSAR

In small numbers

Reference to 'Our hyphenated identities' (June 8); our Constitution provides protection to all types of minorities. When the provisions of the Constitution are violated, who is to be blamed? The government, the law and order machinery or the local administration? When public repre-

sentatives deliver speeches to target minorities in any corner of the country, the party should expel them; the head of the state should divest them of their portfolio; and the head of the nation should recommend their dismissal as guardians of the nation. All parties have the single agenda of winning elections to stay in power.

DILBAR ALI MEERAK, TOHANA

Status quo 'useful'

'Our hyphenated identities' (June 8) rightly seeks that the identities of different communities should be determined by their socio-political status rather than broader religious branding. I would go a step further. The economic worth of a community can also be considered as an important factor. However, the mode of identifying communities on religious grounds has suited every political party for the past 70 years. Why would they think of bringing in any rational change?

BALVINDER, CHANDIGARH

Law blind too

This refers to the news report '20,000 RTI applications and 13

years later, man gets justice' (June 8). In this case, it seems law is not only toothless, but also blind. Hats off to Iqbal Singh who gathered courage sitting in jail and sent 20,000 applications under the RTI Act to collect necessary documents to prove himself and his kin innocent. If this is the plight of a person who followed his case sitting behind bars, one can deduce what happens to innocents or illiterate persons who have no knowledge or courage to pursue their case.

RAJ KUMAR KAPOOR, ROPAR

Not theirs to take

Refer to 'Mr Manpreet Badal give up your subsidy' (June 8); kudos to the writer for surrendering her subsidy. Unfortunately, even after an application to the power corporation chairman eight months ago, the bill has not been issued. Manpreet Badal should have given up subsidy when the Punjab CM appealed to the rich to pay for electricity. Subsidies are meant for marginal and poor farmers, not for those living in big houses and own expensive cars.

AJAY BAGGA, HOSHIARPUR

Bad to worse

This refers to the editorial 'Distressed rural India' (June 8); at the frag end of its tenure, the BJP government has started thinking about the farmer's plight. The police shootout in MP during farmers' protest is still alive in the minds of people. Obviously, such a reconciliation exercise is initiated with an eye on the 2019 general election. Our economy largely depended upon agriculture. Unfortunately, the economic contribution of agriculture to the GDP is declining. There is a continuous rise in food prices, but the economic status of farmers has gone from bad to worse.

RAJESH SHARMA, JALANDHAR CANTT

Governor shows way

Apropos 'Chhattisgarh Governor refuses hike; fine with lesser pay' (June 7), the Governor has taken an exemplary step by refusing the hike. By doing this, he has proved himself to be a contented person when everybody in this world is hankering after monetary benefits. There may be many differences between the ruling and the opposi-

tion parties at the Central or state level, but there is always consensus on any proposal on salary hike of parliamentarians or legislators. They should learn from Balramji Das Tandon, so these funds can be utilised for development activities.

RAJINDER KUMAR ARORA, KURUKSHETRA

Subsidy misuse

The article 'Mr Manpreet Badal give up your subsidy' (June 8) is actually the voice of all farmers of Punjab. Rich farmers are taking advantage at the cost of marginal and poor farmers. Chief Minister Amarinder Singh had appealed to the people of Punjab to give up subsidy, but there was no positive response. Only the Chief Minister himself and Sukhpal Khaira (AAP) had announced to give up their subsidy, but even that has not come through.

HARWINDER S LONGOWAL, KURUKSHETRA

Paddy irrigation

A large number of farmers are willing to pay for tubewell power provided it is done in a logical way and guarantees uninterrupted power

was allocated a house in lieu of the property the family had lost in Pakistan and here he lived till the last, believing that his work was done and refusing all positions, political or otherwise.

He would look back at his journey in public life. In 1912, the All-India Sikh Conference was held in Sialkot, and he was elected Chairman of the Reception Committee. In December 1919, he addressed the annual session of the Indian National Congress in Amritsar. He was elected, in February 1922, President of the Punjab Provincial Congress following the imprisonment of Lala Lajpat Rai. Mahatma Gandhi called it "an excellent choice". Then he led agitations, as we have already discussed.

He was also watching independent India become different from the idealistic notion he had constructed. On July 10, 1949, he wrote: "It is a matter of genuine pride that India has become free and I pray to the Providence to bless my motherland with lasting prosperity and biding peace.

"But I regret to say that the lot of the common man has not much improved as it should have under the national government. Our PM (Nehru) is truly a great man worthy of the position that he holds, but I regret to observe that most of the things that he intends to do for the country's good and many a declaration of policy he makes are not fully implemented by those who are doing the day-to-day administration.

"Black marketing, corruption, jobbery (fraudulent official transactions) and several other vices are rampant both in the administration as well as outside. I am afraid that if drastic steps are not taken immediately and if nothing substantial is done effectively to stem this vicious tide, our hard-won freedom will be of little use."

Five decades after Independence, the man Khushwant Singh called "the most important Sikh character of the Indo-British history" is forgotten. His ideals, clarity of vision, his iron will and steadfast leadership at a very trying time make it imperative that we recognise the man and his ideals. In a vote-centric politics of today, such values hold little traction; in shaping a national conscience, they are invaluable.

PS: A few quotes have been reproduced from an earlier article by the author published in The Tribune.

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ONE-TO-ONE: Baba Kharak Singh being honoured by Nehru, who admired his 'iron will'.

When ideals governed politics

Uncompromising and idealistic, Baba Kharak Singh is ignored when we need to remember him

ROOPINDER SINGH

WHY would Baba Kharak Singh be honoured? He was the man who represented the "politics of giving" and now is the time when "politics of taking" dominates. He had no redeeming feature in the form of a family that followed him into politics. The qualities that made Gandhi praise him, Nehru admire him and the British colonial administration treat him with wary respect in pre-Independent India were just the combination that made others uncomfortable in independent India, especially after the first decade or so, when there was a generational change.

Even as we are familiar with the process of appropriation of icons of the freedom struggle by various vested interests for political gains, Baba Kharak Singh was allowed to become a footnote in the struggle of Independence. Indeed, the feeble attempt by the SGPC to honour its second president on his 150th birth anniversary took place a day later; that too once this lapse had been highlighted in the columns of this paper. The Congress, as ever fixated on the family, was not expected to do anything, and it did not.

It obviously did not matter much that Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had said: "In the days of our struggle for freedom, he was a pillar of strength and no threat of coercion could bend his iron will. By his example, he inspired innumerable persons."

Yet, this very iron will made him a liability after Independence. The journey of this tall political leader often called "The Uncrowned King of the Sikhs", is interesting and illuminating. He represents a fine example of a committed Sikh and an idealistic political leader. One of the first graduates (1899) of Punjab University, Lahore, he had a comfortable lifestyle, as before a member of a family in which the father and elder brother held the titles of Rai Bahadur. His involvement in the freedom struggle led to many trials and tribulations, but he never faltered in his convictions.

The "iron will" Nehru paid a tribute to was visible in during his five and a half years of incarceration as a political prisoner in the notorious Dera Baba Ghazi Khan Jail. It was here that he led the *morcha* against the jailers who had ordered political prisoners to

remove their Gandhi *topi* and in the case of the Sikhs, black turbans. These were worn as a symbol of protest against the Nankana Sahib tragedy, during which the British authorities had supported Mahant Narayan Dass against the Akali *jathas*. Firing by the mahant and his men on February 20, 1921, had resulted in the death of over a hundred Sikh protesters.

Baba Kharak Singh and other prisoners violated the ban during an inspection, in January 1923, by the Inspector General of Prisoners. The

Baba Kharak Singh has become a footnote in the Independence struggle. The SGPC honoured its former president a day after his 150th birth anniversary. The Congress, as ever fixated on the family, was not expected to do anything, and it did not.

jailers retaliated by forcibly removing the turban from Baba Kharak Singh's head. This precipitated matters and all prisoners decided that they would not wear any clothes, except their undergarments.

Inducements, including permission only for Sikhs to wear turbans, threats, moving him to the "condemned cell" or the death row, all failed to move Baba Kharak Singh. He was released in 1927 when the Punjab Legislative Council unanimously passed a resolution to that effect.

Baba Kharak Singh's determination had left an impact even earlier. He was elected the first President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Com-

ttee (SGPC) in 1921. In November that year, the Punjab Government ordered the Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, to keep the custody of the keys of the *toshakhana* (treasury) of the Golden Temple. The SGPC protested and an agitation, *Chhabian da Morcha*, was launched.

As Rana Jang Bahadur Singh, a former Editor of *The Tribune* wrote: "Ultimately the proud ruling power had to bend before the iron will of the puissant Baba. The key was delivered to him at a public function by a represen-

tative of British imperialism. And, metaphorically speaking, with that key he eventually opened the gates of the temple of freedom. He became a general of the army of liberators in the Punjab and his life became a saga of sustained, valiant struggle."

On January 17, 1922, the keys of the Golden Temple were handed back to Baba Kharak Singh. He and thousands of other political prisoners had been released earlier. Mahatma Gandhi, then "dictator" of the Indian National Congress, sent this message: "First decisive battle for India's freedom won. Congratulations."

After Independence, Baba Kharak Singh moved to Delhi. His grandson

20 minutes, it again stopped. The hassled passengers walked up to the driver once again and asked what had happened. It is the same cow again! he explained.'

In about two hours we were in Haryana, a hamlet north of Hoshiarpur and made a brief halt at a house above a row of shops. This is claimed to be the birthplace of Sher Shah Suri, the soldier who rose to be the great ruler of India in 1538; started rupiya, built the Grand Trunk Road we have been struggling to maintain,' he chuckled over a cup of tea.

As we sat in the car, St Augustine's lines came to my mind, 'The world is a book and those who do not travel read but only one page.'



The Gurdaspur travelogue

SARVJIT SINGH

THE driver leaning over the steering wheel like a seahorse with pupils dilated, the car sped into Gurdaspur at dusk carrying me and a Senior Town Planner (STP), a compact, agile man of 56, mischief in his eyes. He happened to hail from this area.

Magnetised by the joy of passing his hometown, he must narrate, fondly, how his parrot that remains uncaged flies freely in the house does not let his Alsatian dog rest on the master's bed while he is away. I get a glimpse of the concept of body and soul; how one can be living in the modern city of Chandigarh and an old street of Pathankot at the same time.

It is almost night by the time we

drive past the legendary New Egerton Woolen Mills with 'lamb' trademark at Dharialal. A Britisher had set it up in 1880 seeing wool aplenty in the nearby meadows of Kashmir, he informed, assuming the role of a local guide. After some time, the car entered the serene Raavi Sadan by the largish backwaters of Shahpur Kandi Dam. As we straightened over a stroll under the moon along the still waters, the liaison officer pointed to a distant well-lit house on a hillside with trees, across the waterbody: 'A white man lives there. His father used to be the manager of the mills. He was born here. The family moved to England in 1947. At 45, he came back for good and built that house. His wife and guests visit him some part of the

year; the rest of the time, he is happy fishing and reading.'

'Over there is the erstwhile caravan route to the north-west. Date trees lining the trek are a testimonial of the camel-riding Pathans.' As the cook came out, we drifted towards the dining hall under the starry canopy.

After much-needed sleep, on our way back the next morning, we went over the meter-gauge track in Pathankot and I asked how long the train took to Kangra. As if waiting for this, the STP remarked: 'Ample. They say one day the train stopped en route. As passengers got down and walked the hilly tract to the engine, the driver informed them that a cow had strayed onto the track. The train started moving again. After

supply for eight hours a day. At present, farmers are only getting it for four hours, that too with several interruptions and cuts. This limited power supply is in the area which has been classified as paddy growing and where canals are still dry owing to inefficiency of the irrigation department. Many farmers have lost time for the plantation of paddy nursery, and resultantly, all subsequent operations will get delayed.'

SURINDER AHUJA, FAZILKA

Remembering Kharak Singh

Reference to the news item 'Baba Kharak Singh forgotten, even on 150th anniv' (June 6); nothing better can be expected from the current crop of political and religious leaders, whose only objective is to acquire power and authority for their selfish interests. Baba Kharak Singh belonged to a class of politico-religious leaders whose philosophy, principles and actions were guided by selfless service and patriotism. There is nothing common between the past and present leaders, who can even wipe out personalities like him from history.

SARJIT SINGH GILL, LUDHIANA

When technology spurs killers

ROOPINDER SINGH IN CHANDIGARH

The highly interconnected world has proved to be a fertile ground for planting misinformation. These half-truths often escalate quickly through social media, sometimes with negative consequences

ANXIETY — an emotion that is the lynchpin of our collective existence in the world. Our world — one where we want answers instantaneously, where information flows in nanoseconds, where mass hysteria can be triggered by mass postings on Internet media — Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, et al. Even as Twitter wars between opposing ideological groups have occupied much news space, the damage caused by misinformation, outright lies, and rumours on WhatsApp is considerable and has been directly linked to instances of lynching in the recent past.

It is unfair to blame the media alone. Indeed, for any rumour mongering to succeed there has to be a fertile ground of highly agitated volatile mass of humanity, already on edge. We have, unfortunately, allowed our society to degenerate to a level where mutual trust and accommodation have receded and the sharp edges that they blunted, indeed camouflaged, are all too visible. The highly interconnected and interrelated world has proved to be fertile ground for planting misinformation. Soon it spreads, and just the fact that it is common knowledge is often considered to be enough reason to believe that it is true.

Rumour on steroids

What used to be said over a neighbourhood fence or in a closed group can now be magnified manifold with technology, which allows everything to be quickly escalated. The power of print to propagate the world was long recognised, but there was a certain commitment to truth, accountability and anything that violated this was called 'pamphleteering'. Newspapers were a serious business that disseminated credible news. A sub-section, often called the 'penny press' or 'yellow press', catered to the crowd that wanted salacious journalism.

The ability of technology to enhance the message is well recognised. It is not a coincidence that governments regulated both the radio and the television. The liberalisation of the electronic media allowed private players more access and led to, among other things, the 24-hour news cycle, if not hourly. It has often been debated that this is what debased news since it is an insatiable beast. The hurry to feed it and be the first off the block has often led to unverified information, including tweets and WhatsApp messages being picked by mainstream media instantly, sometimes with



AT YOUR SERVICE: If rumour-mongers have used WhatsApp to gather mobs, (left) the messenger service has also been used by those protesting against these killers to gather support on ground AFP

negative consequences. It is a vicious cycle that needs to be understood and broken.

Another major change is that technology has introduced the option of anonymity for the person who seeks it on the Net. The idea of anonymity started with the best of intentions. In the early 1980s, the founders and early Internet evangelists expected that the World Wide Web would create a level-playing field for sharing information and other collaborative activities among people, organisations, governments, and businesses.

In 1996, there was a 'Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace,' by John Perry Barlow, and the mode was full of optimism.

However, what starts with noble intentions can also fail because it may be dependent on people who may not share such values. Even as the Internet provides the necessary infrastructure for global interaction, and is integrated into the everyday life of every modern society, its ugly side has raised concern among those very people who founded and nurtured it.

A foretaste of the future

One of the largest early social networking experiments on the Internet was

America Online or AOL. It also gave us a foretaste of the future — at one time AOL forums acquired a reputation for being a haven for paedophiles! The charge was not warranted, but not entirely unwarranted either.

Social interaction at an unprecedented scale was the promise of many of the early movers — SocialNet, Match.com, Meetup.com, many cropped up before and during the time Facebook was born, but they were all to be eclipsed by Mark Zuckerberg's brainchild.

With so much use, the possibility of abuse was ever present. Indeed, the anonymity, rather the ability to hide behind the handles or screen names, seemed to unleash the uncivil beast in computer users. Trolling has a long history on the Net, as do disinformation campaigns, all aided by anonymity.

Facebook & WhatsApp

While the West focused on Facebook and the damage it caused to the American democracy and institutions within that nation, in India, it is the other app that the social media behemoth owns, WhatsApp, which is

used as a tool to spread disinformation.

India has more than 20 crore active WhatsApp users. The country is the biggest market for the platform, which has become ubiquitous in a mostly mobile internet environment. Political parties have used the app and other social media services for their propaganda.

While the BJP rules the roost, other parties, too, have upped their social media presence. Facebook is said to have 25 crore Indian users and has also been widely exploited to mislead, misinform and misguide people.

Electioneering gives oxygen to the worst kind of propaganda. The recent Karnataka elections had the criticism of the state government, false claims about Hindus being murdered by Muslims, and even a fake BBC poll purportedly showing a BJP win in the state.

Malicious messages

While people widely acknowledge that there is a lot of fake news on social media, they find it difficult to identify it. In a heated atmosphere, vision becomes narrow, and prejudice or anxiety finds an outlet in sup-

porting "evidence". Now that the country is in a perpetual election mode, the chances of reasoned or logical weighing of what comes on the net have shrunk dramatically.

Over 29 Indians were killed since the last year in nine states, including Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Tripura, West Bengal and Maharashtra. The killers were fellow citizens. Their motive? A belief, based on the rumours of child-lifting, that the individuals were child-lifters. And where did the rumours come from? WhatsApp messages!

We need to keep in mind that WhatsApp is a platform that is for interpersonal interaction with end-to-end encryption. Thus, the messages came from someone they knew. Often, that someone was mindless in forwarding a message. It is wrong to believe that the disclaimer "Forwarded as received" absolves the sender of any responsibility.

Government response

As outrage arose over the lynching deaths, the government responded by asking the company to be more proactive in countering fake news. The company's response: "WhatsApp cares deeply about people's safety and their ability to freely communicate. We don't want our services used to spread harmful misinformation and believe this is a challenge that companies and societies should address."

The company has announced some measures, but more needs to be done, including finding ways for users to flag suspicious messages. Another more radical suggestion is of tagging forwards so that they are no longer private and the tail is visible to the users. This measure would help in establishing the provenance of such messages/pictures/videos.

WhatsApp is a platform, an electronic messenger. Police forces in various states have often used it for finding missing children, too. Even as WhatsApp takes measures to minimise its abuse, we need to remember that the cure lies not with technology alone, but with how we use it. A healthy environment, one where suspicion has not replaced trust, would allow for a moment's reflection after the receipt of an inflammatory message. That moment could save a life.

ing it for greater accountability. WhatsApp has assured the government of new features, including one that will enable differentiation of the original message from a forward, and has pledged to step up awareness activities on the safe use of technology.

But IT experts shrug off these responses as "piecemeal". Cyber crime law specialist Pawan Duggal accuses the government of being overtly soft towards Facebook and WhatsApp. "Section 79 of the IT Act mandates intermediaries like WhatsApp and Facebook to exercise due diligence. WhatsApp has not been able to show how it is compliant with the Indian law. The government can initiate criminal prosecution against WhatsApp or penalise it, make it tough for them to access Indian networks," notes Duggal. India leads WhatsApp's use in the world with 200 million active monthly users. That explains the potential danger from fake news circulating on the medium which now says it will hold workshops with law enforcers to help them deal with fake news and messaging.

That said, the rising trend of mob lynching in India reflects poorly on the state of law enforcement.

Nimesh Desai, a leading mental health specialist based in Delhi, says, "Current trends point to three things — one, mass hysteria earlier seen in closed groups has now become disseminated. Two, hysteria multiplies manifold when the issue is as sensitive as child protection. Three, the hysteria is reflective of people's frustration with the legal system." Desai suggests better legal control of the social media.

Getting down to brass tacks though, only people can prevent the dehumanisation of society. Families of mob victims have shown how love can prevail over hate. Yashpal Saxena, father of Ankit Saxena killed for loving a Muslim girl, hosted Iftar to send a message of peace.

Far off in Bengal's Asansol, the imam of a local mosque, Moulana Imdadul Rashidi refused to allow his son, a victim of communal riot, to become a prop in the hands of politicians. It's another matter that both these fathers are awaiting justice for the murder of their sons at the hands of the mob.

That's a law enforcement issue, and the real issue.

Real consequences of fake news

ADITI TANDON IN NEW DELHI

The rising trend of lynching reflects poorly on the state of law enforcement across country

THE violence we have seen over the past four years follows a trend. Mob lynching is a political tool being used to polarise society. Law enforcement has also become part and parcel of the attacks. Police officers who act fairly are transferred. The idea is to create a fear psychosis by unleashing the mobs on a certain community. This will get worse as 2019 draws closer. **Activist Shabnam Hashmi**

MOB KILLED HER BROTHER SAFDAR HASHMI IN GHAZIABAD IN JUNE 1998

Mob lynching poses major challenges for law enforcement agencies because the mob sees no reason and believes in the culpability of their target. The challenge has to be met by quelling rumours in time. Any service provider must have in-built checks to prevent potentially harmful content from getting circulated. Facebook Inc has to build these tools for safety. **DCP Madhur Verma, SPOKESPERSON, DELHI POLICE**



A crime scene after a mob lynched one person in Mohanpur in Agartala last month AFP

REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT

Joblessness is one of the reasons behind this murderous rage. Children spend a fortune on education and the degree does not get them anywhere. This is a potential recipe for disaster. As for me, I feel abandoned by the system. Five months have passed since Ankit was killed. The Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal visited me twice at that time, promised me legal and financial help. The case comes up on July 17 in Tees Hazari courts and I don't even have a lawyer. The CM doesn't answer my calls anymore. No one is willing to help. All I want is a good lawyer so that I can get justice for Ankit. I'm already despairing. **Yashpal Saxena, FATHER OF ANKIT KILLED IN STREET VIOLENCE**

Andhra Pradesh, Bengal and Telangana and one each in Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh.

This explains the Centre's July 5 advisory to states and UTs to "take measures to prevent incidents of mob lynching fuelled by rumours of child lifting circulating on social media." The Ministry of Home

Affairs had, in August 2016, issued a similar advisory on cow vigilanism directing states to adopt "zero tolerance towards those taking the law into their hands".

No punishment has, however, been announced or witnessed so far. The first-ever conviction in mob lynching over cow smuggling happened this March when a fast-track

court in Jharkhand convicted 11 of the 12 accused of killing 55-year-old Alimuddin Ansari on June 29, 2017, on the suspicion of cow smuggling. They were handed life sentences but the Jharkhand High Court on July 2 granted bail to eight of the 11.

"The state and the police are deliberately not recording hate crimes. They offer a special immunity to those targeting the minorities. Perpetrators shoot triumphant videos of the horrifying acts and political rulers maintain a cynical silence. The police fails to record mob lynchings for what they are — cold-blooded murders. The deaths are filed under routine IPC sections with victims labelled as accused in most cases. In Hapur district of UP, the police file recorded the lynching of Qasim, as death due to road rage. The crime data must reflect the deadly motives of the accused," says Harsh Mandher, who launched a unique journey called Karwaan-e-Mohabbat last year to spread peace in areas that had witnessed mob violence.

Mandher and his friends visited families of mob victims who were killed over suspicions of carrying beef or smuggling cows. The victims included Pehlu Khan (55) killed by a mob in Alwar on April 1, 2017; Junaid (16) killed on a train near Okhla over a spat; Mohd Afazul (45) killed in Rajasthan in the name of "love jihad" and Ankit Saxena (23) from West Delhi, murdered by his Muslim girlfriend's family.

The data collection on lynching remains a challenge. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) doesn't collect this data. "Lynching is not defined in the IPC. The NCRB can only include in its performance, crimes defined in the IPC Sections. Lynching deaths are currently recorded under the IPC sections of murders and attempts to murder," says a source in the NCRB.

Independent data journalism initiative IndiaSpend has, however, maintained a hate crime tracker since 2014 and puts incidents in this category at 85, deaths at 33 and victims at 285. In the listed cases 55 per cent of the victims of hate crimes are Muslims followed by 21 pc unknown, 12 pc Dalits, 10 pc Hindus, 2 pc tribals and one per cent Sikhs and Christians each.

With evidence suggesting that social media fuelled these crimes, the government recently put WhatsApp on notice asking

for greater accountability. WhatsApp has assured the government of new features, including one that will enable differentiation of the original message from a forward, and has pledged to step up awareness activities on the safe use of technology.

But IT experts shrug off these responses as "piecemeal". Cyber crime law specialist Pawan Duggal accuses the government of being overtly soft towards Facebook and WhatsApp. "Section 79 of the IT Act mandates intermediaries like WhatsApp and Facebook to exercise due diligence. WhatsApp has not been able to show how it is compliant with the Indian law. The government can initiate criminal prosecution against WhatsApp or penalise it, make it tough for them to access Indian networks," notes Duggal. India leads WhatsApp's use in the world with 200 million active monthly users. That explains the potential danger from fake news circulating on the medium which now says it will hold workshops with law enforcers to help them deal with fake news and messaging.

That said, the rising trend of mob lynching in India reflects poorly on the state of law enforcement.

Nimesh Desai, a leading mental health specialist based in Delhi, says, "Current trends point to three things — one, mass hysteria earlier seen in closed groups has now become disseminated. Two, hysteria multiplies manifold when the issue is as sensitive as child protection. Three, the hysteria is reflective of people's frustration with the legal system." Desai suggests better legal control of the social media.

Getting down to brass tacks though, only people can prevent the dehumanisation of society. Families of mob victims have shown how love can prevail over hate. Yashpal Saxena, father of Ankit Saxena killed for loving a Muslim girl, hosted Iftar to send a message of peace.

Far off in Bengal's Asansol, the imam of a local mosque, Moulana Imdadul Rashidi refused to allow his son, a victim of communal riot, to become a prop in the hands of politicians. It's another matter that both these fathers are awaiting justice for the murder of their sons at the hands of the mob.

That's a law enforcement issue, and the real issue.

The many shades of Indian secularism

The role of the state has been of balancing the interaction between various communities even as it ensures that the fundamental right to freedom of religion is safeguarded. Secularism is rooted in equal respect for all religions.

ROOPINDER SINGH

THE seeds of evil are sown when any group of people is looked at homogenously. They bloom when the group is regarded as "the other." History is replete with examples of how a particular section of society was demonised as 'the other' and then damned. Yet, we human beings are condemned to repeat history since we fail to learn from it.

Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar's message to the people of Haryana on the eve of his departure from India to Israel and the UK is not one that would ensure calm while he is away. It was one that reassured his core constituency about his commitment to the cause. The CM told the Press that "namaz should be performed in mosques and idgahs."

The statement sets the tone for his state's administrators since it comes soon after namaz was disrupted by individuals connected to the right-wing Hindu organisations in Gurugram. Thereafter, prayers were offered by Muslims under police protection, mercifully without any subsequent clashes.

In a feeble attempt at damage control, a carefully worded statement was later released in which it was clarified that the CM had "never said anything regarding stopping anyone from offering namaz."

Let's take the CM's original statement to its logical conclusion. Is he suggesting that there should be no public display of religious ceremonies? If we were to apply it to all religious, it would imply that all adher-



FREEDOM OF RELIGION: Our respect of all religions is based on tolerance, something that is increasingly in short supply. AFP

ents of all religions should not use any public space for offering prayers or observing religious functions. They should pray in the confines of temples, mosques and churches that are built for them. Would we not then be banning religion from public spaces in a country where it is so much a visible part of the way people express themselves? The *jagrangs*, *nagar kirtans*, singing of Christmas carols on the streets, *tazias*, all these are public displays of religious beliefs and rites, and they make the country so much the richer.

The role of the state in our country has

been of balancing the interaction between various communities even as it ensures that the fundamental right to freedom of religion, granted under Article 25-28 of the Constitution, is safeguarded. Secularism in India is rooted in the precept of equal respect for all religions. This is so because of our proud history; four major religions — Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism — started here.

True, there are other interpretations of secularism, but these too are rooted in the local history and culture. The domination of the Catholic church in affairs of the State

led to a backlash from the rulers and the people, as a result of which separation of the Church and the State is practised in most of Europe and in the USA. The French Revolution shaped the French interpretation of *laïcité*, a strident form of secularism that is now used to stamp out religion and religious symbols to preserve secularity in the country.

Our respect of all religions is based on tolerance, something that is increasingly in short supply. Secular expression needs to be more strident to combat the narrow bigoted mindsets that stain our nation today.

Much of it is tainted by the 'them' mindset, where the other is demonised. The actions of those who violate the law are sought to be trivialised. Is it a coincidence that the disrupters of namaz in Gurugram were released on bail shortly after they were arrested, and the latter happened after much hue and cry was raised?

The government behaviour leaves it open to the charge of exceptionalism, where one group believes that it can be treated differently from other members of society, because of its 'exceptional' nature.

It could well be argued that evil starts when we make an exception of ourselves. Our society is based on a certain perception — things will get done our way if we know people. Individually, it is when we request an official to adjust, to 'help', to 'overlook' our transgression. Collectively, it is when we justify actions of those we perceive as "our boys" and condemn the other.

We must get out of the ghettos we have built in our minds and let in the freshness of diversity into our thoughts. The government is wrong in believing that the lowest common denominator of behaviour is all it needs to address. It is wrong in believing that we are uncaring individuals. The onus is on us as individuals to show that such regressive thought is wrong. We can, and must, raise our voice against the one-sided cacophony of disharmony that is disrupting the unity of our nation. This is our moral duty to ourselves.

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Banking sector in doldrums. PTI

Massive structural reforms are needed to clear the mess in PSB banks and the government has already announced a bailout package of more than ₹2 lakh crore over the next couple of years.

Banking scam: A drag on the economy

KR SUDHAMAN

Veteran Economic Journalist

A humongous problem that is being brushed under the carpet in India is the grave sickness in the banking industry, particularly the public sector banks (PSBs). In fact, the banking scam is far bigger and widespread than coal scam or 2G spectrum scams. The Diamond merchant Nirav Modi banking woes and the Vijay Mallya Kingfisher airlines cases are only the tip of the iceberg. The rot that has set in public sector banks is far greater and unfathomable.

Gajendra Haldea, who retired from the erstwhile Planning Commission and former IAS officer, is of the view that corruption in the banking sector is perhaps worse than China when banks there had huge non-performing assets (NPAs) in the 1990s, similar to the situation in India at the moment. The Indian banking crisis is triggered by sub-prime lending to infrastructure, particularly to the power sector and highways.

In a discussion paper in 2015, titled 'Sub-prime infrastructure: Crony capitalism in public sector banks', Haldea had warned that the principal cause of slowdown in infrastructure lies in the widespread sickness prevailing in a large number of projects which were imprudently financed by PSBs. Just as irresponsible lending for sub-prime housing caused a slowdown of the US economy with global consequences, the reckless lending for sub-prime infrastructure projects has slowed down the Indian economy, though the scale of these two episodes is not comparable.

PSBs had lent Rs 6 lakh crore to the power sector and about Rs 3 lakh crore to high-

ways. Gold-plating of costs in these two sectors apparently due to widespread corruption in the banking system is the root cause of the mess that the PSBs are in. The state electricity boards alone would have to shell out at least Rs 3 lakh crore to clear the mess. The Central government's UDAY scheme is meant to restructure these cash-starved boards. The increased allocation of 42 per cent share to states, from the central pool of taxes by the 14th Finance Commission for developmental activities have come in handy. There are unconfirmed reports to suggest this money is being diverted by some state governments to clean up this mess and that is going to create a problem to state finances in future.

Earlier, when the Planning Commission was sanctioning central projects, there was some check on states. The next tranche of money was released only when proof was shown for spending the previous tranche.

Now, states have the autonomy to spend that money and are happily diverting, at times to clean up the mess and on wasteful revenue expenditure, which will hit developmental and social programmes of the state, thereby messing up state finances in subsequent years.

Massive structural reforms are needed to clear the mess in PSBs and the government has announced a bailout package of more than Rs 2 lakh crore over the next couple of years. The crisis is one of the reasons for bank deposit growth falling to 6.7 per cent, the lowest ever since 1963. Bank NPAs have grown sharply to nearly Rs 9 lakh crore.

In April-December 2016 alone, over 3,500 cases of fraudulent transactions were reported involving Rs 177.50 billion, which were alleged to have been facilitated by 450

employees in private and public sector banks. PSBs lost at least Rs 227.43 billion owing to fraudulent activities from 2012-16, according to a study by the IIM, Bangalore. RBI data showed 455 cases of fraud transactions of above Rs 1 crore in ICICI, 429 in SBI, 244 in Standard Chartered and 237 in HDFC Bank. In Nirav Modi's case, PNB has suspended 20 employees in view of the Rs 11,400-crore fraud. Since 2011, several cases of fraud have been reported and FIRs filed involving PSBs.

China faced a similar situation when its banking system was in the doldrums in the 1990s when the economy got overheated, with inflation as high as 24 per cent as its economy clocked 13-14 per cent GDP growth consistently. One of the reasons for the soft-landing of its economy was massive restructuring of banks and cleaning up of bank balance sheets. Corruption was rampant and banks ran huge NPAs. China issued state bonds of RMB 270 billion to recapitalise state-owned commercial banks.

In his recent lecture on the 'Rise of China in the International Monetary System', IIM officer V Srinivas, said China placed banking sector reform at the centre of its overall policy agenda at that time. China also utilised its massive foreign exchange reserves to recapitalise banks. Srinivas, who has served in the IMF and the Indian finance ministry, said as much as \$45 billion was pumped into the recapitalisation of just three banks—the Bank of China, the China Construction of Bank and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China.

Srinivas' assertion sparked a debate on whether India too should use a portion of its over \$420 billion foreign exchange reserves to recapitalise ailing PSBs. Of

course, India's foreign exchange reserves are peanuts compared to China's, which is over \$3.5 trillion. Haldea said this issue had cropped up during the UPA government as well and after a debate by top economists and officials, the considered view was that it would not be prudent to use it as the reserves are not government money.

Former Chairman of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council and former Reserve Bank Governor C Rangarajan, at a recent lecture, cited Thailand's example during the East Asian currency crisis of the 1990s, indicating that high reserves cannot provide a shield if the fundamentals were wrong. Also, China's huge reserves are built by huge current account surplus. China has a trade surplus of over \$800 billion with the United States alone. India has hardly had current account surplus. At one point, India's current account deficit went beyond 4 per cent of the GDP a few years ago. Now, it hovers around 2 per cent of the GDP. Besides, India is over-dependent on imports for its oil requirement. Nearly 80 per cent of oil is imported.

Till India builds current account surplus like China, it would not be prudent to use foreign exchange reserves to recapitalise banks. Building current account surplus through boosting merchandise and service exports is unlikely to happen in the immediate future.

So, the government is left with no option but to use taxpayers' money at this juncture to bail out the public sector banks hit by corruption and sub-prime lending to infrastructure in the last around eight years. Warning signals were there as early as 2015, but the government has been a little slow to respond. At least now it should respond quickly before it becomes too late.

ON THIS DAY... 100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, SATURDAY, MAY 11, 1918.

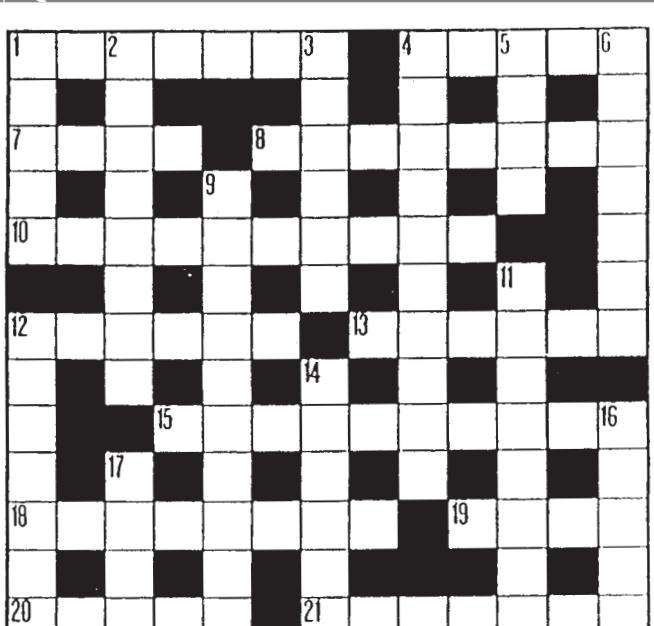
Social versus Political Reform.

IN the course of his Presidential address at the Bombay Provincial Social Conference, Mr. Natarajan, the editor of the *Indian Social Reformer*, gave a crushing reply to those self-constituted friends of social reform in India who imagine that the only thing needed to advance reform is to deprecate political reform. Some of these gentlemen who talked glibly of the importance of social reform had had ample opportunity, while in this country, of giving practical effect to their sympathies. What had they done? They had not only not availed themselves of the opportunity, but had actually opposed the reform. Mr. Natarajan instanced the case of Lord Sydenham who, as Governor of Bombay, had opposed such innocent reform measures as Mr. Gokhale's Elementary Education Bill and Mr. Basu's Marriage Bill. The fact is the advocacy of social reform in preference to political reform is either a monstrous prelence, or a deliberate attempt to put off what from the point of view of the advocates is an evil day, the day of India's political redemption.

A new College at Jullundur.

FOR some years past there has been a great rush for admission into the Arts Colleges at Lahore, and a large number of students had to be refused admission. The matter has created strong feelings all over the province. The D.A.V. College society, which is the largest non-official educational body in the Punjab, had this matter under consideration for some time. After full deliberation, the society decided to open a Second Grade Arts College at Jullundur, which is a large educational centre, having as many as seven High Schools in the town itself, besides about twenty other High Schools in the neighbouring districts.

QUICK CROSSWORD



Jallianwala: What global press said in 1919

On the 100th anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, we look into the archives of The Tribune. They point to an expression of horror at the event. Some excerpts....

Lahore, December 21, 1919

FOREIGN TELEGRAMS.

THE JALLIANWALA BAGH HOOTING.

'VIEWS OF THE "TIMES".

London, Dec. 16

The "Times" draws attention to the profound impression made throughout the country by the disclosures of what happened at Amritsar and says that the public has been shocked by the occurrence and the delay in publishing the facts. The "Times" recites the broad facts of the risings and expresses the opinion that they constituted open rebellion. The paper mentions that the secret leaders were associated with Bolsheviks and, after detailing the events at Amritsar, says that the result of the firing on April 13 was massacre. It declares that General Dyer's conduct, on his own showing, was indefensible, the worst feature being the continued firing although the crowd instantly began to disperse. General Dyer's evidence suggested that he held an excessive and unwarrantable conception, both of his own powers and of the steps necessary to restore order.

The "Times" assumes that the telegram approving General Dyer's action from the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab was despatched on insufficient knowledge. While awaiting fuller information, the "Times" urgently inquires why Mr. (Edwin) Montagu (Secretary of State for India) and Lord (Frederic Thesiger) Chelmsford never alluded to the happenings in Amritsar.

Lahore, December 20, 1919

The British Press on General Dyer's Action.

As might have been expected, the progressive section of the Press in England is as strong in its condemnation of General Dyer's action at Jallianwala Bagh as all sections of the Indian Press. The *Daily News* says that "the impression created must be removed at all costs if our credit and honour are not to be fatally impaired." The *Daily Herald* describes the proceedings as "Imperial atrocities". The description is rather premature, because the Imperial government neither sanctioned nor have so far publicly upheld, the action



LAHORE, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20 1919 NO 230

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Indian Reforms in the Lords

Tax speeches on the second reading of the Government of India Bill in the House of Lords were on the whole more sympathetic than one would have expected from a book with

of General Dyer, and it will, we are confident, turn out to be incorrect, because it is inconceivable that either the Imperial Government or the Government of India will, after the disclosures now made, have any opinion of those proceedings except the opinion of those proceedings except the opinion of India herself and of the better mind of England. But it certainly shows what the great Labour party thinks of these proceedings. And thus the *Manchester Guardian*: "The shooting at Amritsar is as though a mad man had been set loose to massacre at large." The paper gives General Dyer credit for honesty, but adds: "If General Dyer and his procedure were to be regarded as precedents for the future government of India, we might well despair of success in that tremendous and difficult task." To which we will only add that the question of precedent or of future is not the only or the most important question in this case. The only organ which supports the General is the notorious *Morning Post*, the most anti-Indian of all English papers at the present time, and which has constituted itself the mouthpiece of Sir Michael O'Dwyer even

Lord Sydenham's Discomfiture. But none of these exponents of re-actionary views made even a distant approach to Lord Sydenham's glorious isolation, as the only enemy of the attack among certain schools of thought against the Government of India.

As if the attacks upon Indians themselves, sometimes upon whole races, classes and castes, amongst

men of the nation and

since he left this country.

December 25, 1919

More British Press Comment on General Dyer's Action.

The latest comments of the British Press on the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy draw attention to an aspect of the affair that is as important as it is serious. The *Pall Mall Gazette* says that Mr. Montagu's statement that he was ignorant of the details of the Amritsar affair until they appeared in the papers in England is astonishing and leaves an almost indescribable impression of the meanness of Indian administration. The paper urges full disclosure of the official communications.... The *Times* goes further and is even more pointed in its comment, which is the *Times* way, when it is able to make up its mind as to what it should do. It says that "so far as can be gathered Mr. Montagu never received a detailed account of General Dyer's action at Amritsar on April 13." How comes it, then, asks the paper, "that a British General can inflict nearly 2,000 casualties on an unarmed mob in the Punjab without the full facts being forwarded within a reasonable time by the Viceroy to the Secretary of State?" This, indeed, is the question which the people of England who, as Mr. Montagu stated in his recent speech in the House of Commons, are at present the sole trustees for

the good government of India, must ask, and ask ceaselessly until the wrong is righted and things in India are put on the right footing. The *Times* has rendered a service of the greatest value both to India and the Empire by leading the way in this vitally important matter. For once its position as the greatest English paper stands truly vindicated. We can only hope the *Times* will go on hammering at it, as it always does when it lays its finger on an evil which it wishes to see eradicated. Only thus can it get an answer to the "How" and also make sure that the state of things to which it refers shall never again be repeated in India or in any other part of the Empire.

Lahore, December 25, 1919

Where the Shoe Pinches.

It was only to be expected that the righteous indignation exhibited by a number of British papers and especially by the *Times*, the greatest of them all, both at what occurred at Jallianwala Bagh and at the delay in making the facts known to the British public, would be keenly resented by such a journal as the *Civil and Military Gazette*. The paper charges the *Times* with being subservient to the political whims of Lord Northcliffe, and with taking Mr. Montagu under its wing and discrediting the Government of India. One does not know where subserviency comes in the direct and outspoken comments of the paper on an obviously indefensible proceeding, nor is there any question of protecting Mr. Montagu or discrediting the Government of India, if, as is alleged and has not yet been denied, the latter did not, for reasons with which we have nothing to do, disclose material facts in connection with the Amritsar affair to the Secretary of State who is responsible for all their doings, first, to Parliament and then to the British elector.... We suppose the *Times* has just as much right to express its opinions on such material it has before itself. Nor is it at all clear that the material on which the *Gazette* bases its comments is at all fuller than the *Times*' material. The *Times*' "nearly 2,000 casualties" is not a wild guess, but is based on the evidence of General Dyer himself.

....Fast forward to 2018

Nationalistic spirit of Jallianwala Bagh

ROOPINDER SINGH

THE narrow entrance that opens to the road leading to the Golden Temple; the well in which people jumped to save themselves; bullet scars on walls; the flame-shaped memorial—all now are familiar to us all.

Jallianwala Bagh and what happened there is a part of the collective memory of India. We all know the basic contours. On April 13, 1919, a peaceful gathering of Amritsar residents was fired upon by a Gurkha-British Army contingent led by Brigadier-General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer. The soldiers fired 1,650 rounds into the crowd and killed and the protesters by the hundreds. The British official figure is 379, whereas it is commonly believed to be three times higher.

A look at the time and the people and their leaders would be illuminating. Amritsar was then led by Dr Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew, the Cambridge-educated lawyer who was a friend of Jawaharlal Nehru. He had been awarded a PhD from Munster, Germany. As Nigel Collet writes in *The Butcher of Amritsar*: "Kitchlew, a Muslim barrister, was chairman of Punjab satyagrah sabha and a rousing advocate of both political change and Gandhi's non-violent methods.... He was a prominent Khilafat activist and the local National Congress leader, the man behind the invitation for the All-India National Congress to be held in the city."

Dr Satyapal earned his BA MB degree

from Panjab University, Lahore. He served as a Lieutenant in the British Army Medical Service in Aden. To quote from the book again: "On March 29, Dr Satyapal was prohibited from public speaking, though he was a man who had hitherto only advocated non-violent civil disobedience and who had been the leader of the campaign to restore the sale of platform tickets to Indians at Amritsar station. Though he had served Crown loyally in Aden, he was a Hindu of strong beliefs, and active member of Arya Samaj, as well as many Hindu charitable organisations."

At Mahatma Gandhi's direction, they joined the nation in organising a bandh and a fast in Amritsar on March 30, 1919. They would later learn that the strike had been postponed and that the new date was April 6.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, was badly rattled by the deteriorating situation in Amritsar, and other cities of Punjab. His government issued orders banning local newspapers and prohibiting the main leaders, including Dr Satyapal in Amritsar, from speaking in public. The strike took place, nevertheless, and Dr Kitchlew, who had not yet been banned, addressed the gathering at Jallianwala Bagh.

Another general strike followed on April 6, despite the efforts of the local Deputy Commissioner, Miles Irving, who had barely settled, having joined a month ago. He was rather rattled by the Ram Navami procession on April 8 at which boys dressed as

Turkish soldiers, clapped disrespectfully on seeing Irving. The band, however, played "God Save the King" for him and he was saluted by those in the procession. There was no violence whatsoever, but the anger in the general population against the British administrators was palpable. A sense of disquiet, a feeling that the writ of the British did not run in the city was now quite high even among the Europeans living in Amritsar.

To quote from the Hunter Commission Report: "The 9th April was the day of Ram Navami — a Hindu festival on which cars are commonly drawn in procession, accompanied by people raising cries in honour of Hindu deities. This practice was followed as usual in Amritsar, but contrary to previous practice, the festival was very largely participated in by Muhammadans, and along with the usual shouts, political cries were freely raised 'Mahatma Gandhi hi jai', 'Hind-Musalmans ki jai'! The effect of the evidence before us is that the festival became a striking demonstration in furtherance of Hindu-Muhammadan unity — people of the different creeds drinking out of the same cups publicly and by way of a demonstration." Such was the spirit of the composite culture that manifested itself in the Ram Navami celebrations in Amritsar.

British administrators' insecurity led to deportation order against Dr Kitchlew and Dr Satyapal and a ban on the entry of Mahatma Gandhi who was on his way to Amritsar. Dyer and his men were unleashed

with fateful consequences.

Today we look back from the comfort of the present-day democratic and free India, brought about, in no small measure, by the sacrifices of freedom fighters who were incarcerated, deported to Andaman Islands, faced the noose in British jails and were killed by bullets in protest gatherings like the one held on Baisakhi day at the Jallianwala Bagh in 1919.

Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims had gathered together to face British colonial imperialism. Let us also remember the original spirit of nationalism that brought persons of various denominations together to fight for the motherland. Our nationalism subsumed sub-nationalisms for a higher humanistic goal and brought out the best in Indians — non-violence, no matter what provocation, what the privations faced. The leaders consolidated the multiplicity of opinions through a spirit of accommodation and made the effort to include everyone — men and women of all castes, creeds and religions — in the struggle against the colonial power. This inclusive core ensured its success. It always will.



ILLUSTRATION: SANDEEP JOSHI

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ON THIS DAY... 100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 1918.

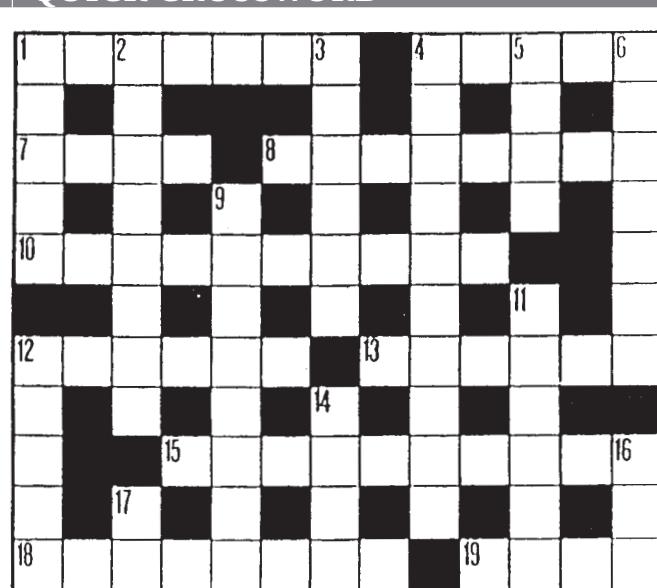
Just the Right Thing to do.

A SIMLA telegram states that the tour of His Excellency the Viceroy is cancelled, and that His Excellency is returning with the Secretary of State to Simla where conference will be held in connection with the Prime Minister's appeal to India for increased efforts in the prosecution of the war. This, as our readers are aware, is exactly the step we have urged in these columns. We only hope that the conference will not be a conference mainly of officials, including only a sprinkling of non-officials of the kind of whom officials have relied hitherto in the matter of recruitment. The question before us is not one merely of stimulating recruiting on the present lines, but, for the first time since the outbreak of the war, of initiating recruiting on a national scale. For this co-operation between the Government and the people is necessary, and such co-operation is possible only if the Government will take the people's accredited leaders into confidence.

Bengal Government's Blunder.

WE cannot help thinking that the Government of Bengal have made a blunder in taking undue notice of a part of the speech delivered by the President of the last session of the Bengal Provincial Conference which, so far as we are aware, excited no interest in any quarter except one. The exception is a certain Anglo-Indian journal of Calcutta which suggested both in its correspondence columns and otherwise that the President should be asked to explain what he meant. Extraordinary as this suggestion was, the Bengal Government have actually improved upon it. The journal asked that the explanation should be asked that the explanation should be asked by the President's European colleagues in the Council. The Government went out of its way to ask the explanation itself. This would have been unfortunate at any time.

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS

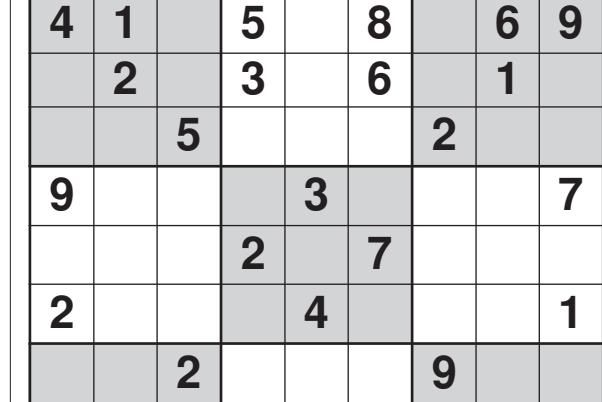
- 1 Distracted (7) 4 Hose (5)
- 7 Smell strongly (4)
- 8 Evergreen fragrant shrub (8)
- 10 Hidden (3,2,5)
- 12 Equality (6)
- 13 Glossiness (6)
- 15 Possessions (10)
- 18 Without parallel (8)
- 19 Incentive (4)
- 20 Instructions for counsel (5)
- 21 Argue angrily (7)
- 24 Do without (5)
- 25 An opening (8)
- 26 Polish composer (6)
- 27 Perceive true nature of (3,7)

DOWN

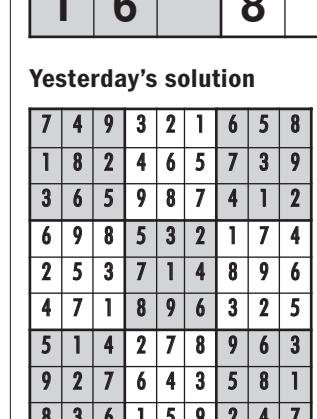
- 5 Friendly conversation (4)
- 6 To an exorbitant level (3-4)
- 9 Without preparation (3,3,4)
- 11 Canadian city (8)
- 12 Throw into confusion (7)
- 14 Insincere (6)
- 16 Suffice (5)
- 17 Nocturnal, flightless bird (4)

SU DO KU

EASY



Yesterday's solution



FORECAST

CITY	FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
	SUNSET:	18:49 HRS	SUNRISE:	05:56 HRS
Chandigarh	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Rainy
New Delhi	33	18	35	20
PUNJAB	Amritsar	33	17	
	Bathinda	34	17	
	Jalandhar	33	17	
	Ludhiana	34	16	
	Patiala	34	17	
HARYANA	Ambala	33	18	
	Bhiwani	34	19	
	Hisar	34	18	
	Karnal	32	17	
	Sirsra	35	18	
HIMACHAL PRADESH	Dharamsala	24	09	
	Manali	16	04	
	Nahan	26	13	
	Shimla	20	10	
	Solan	24	11	
JAMMU & KASHMIR	Jammu	31	17	
	Leh	17	04	
	Srinagar	20	07	
UTTARAKHAND	Dehradun	31	16	
	Mussoorie	20	10	
	Nainital	20	08	

TEMPERATURE IN °C

Flip side to an arduous journey to riches

Indian emigrants have left an imprint on the world since ages, but it is high time that their search for a better livelihood became one where they get a better life and more security.

ROOPINDER SINGH

THESE are no corner of the world where Indians have not migrated to. The long journey to other lands dates back millennia. A recent genealogical study found that the DNA of Indian males was present in a group of Australian males. The study puts Indian arrival in Australia at around 2217 BC, a time when the Indus Valley Civilisation flourished and engaged in sea trade. The Indian influence on South-East Asia and the West Asia is well documented.

Among Indians, Punjabis have also had a large footprint as immigrants. Families that trace their descent to Punjab can be found on all continents, even in South America. The British Raj contributed immensely to exposing them to far-off lands, and the enterprise and skills of these men — an overwhelming majority was men — made them successful in the lands of their adoption.

Dangers in journey
Yet, this journey was fraught with many dangers. Nothing brings this out more than the remains of the 39 Indians who were executed by the Islamic State in Mosul, Iraq, in 2014.

They were in a country that devolved into a war zone between the Islamic State, that overran much of Iraq, and the government forces that fought back with foreign support. Even as they may have made their way to Iraq from other destinations where they were permitted to



COFFINS RETURN: A casket holding the body of one of the 38 Indians, found in a mass grave outside Mosul, is loaded to be flown home from Baghdad on Sunday. AP/PTI

work, the government could have exercised more vigilance on countries that serve as funnel points to disturbed countries. The UK's efforts in attempting to safeguard its citizens who were falling prey to the jihadi lure serve as a good example of what can be done.

Now, that the remains of 38 of them are back in India, the worst fears of the families who have been seeking the return of their loved ones for four years will be confirmed. Twenty-seven Punjabis, four Himachalis and others from Bihar and West Bengal — all seeking a livelihood in a harsh environment — were caught in the crossfire.

Unfortunately, this is far from being an isolated incident. Indian immigrants come back in coffins with distressing frequency. Many languish in jails, often having got caught for minor violations or for seeking to cross borders illegally.

Then there are those who vanish without a trace, like the victims of the 1996 Malta Boat tragedy, in which 283 young men, most of them Punjabis, were swallowed by the Mediterranean Sea, near Italy. The death of the purported illegal immigrants just a day after Christmas dominated the headlines but did nothing much to prevent further tragedies, like

the one that took place off the coast of Panama in 2016. In this boat tragedy, 25 young men from Punjab died.

The lure of distant lands is strong, but death should not enter into an equation that envisages a better life for these potential immigrants. Well-educated and highly skilled immigrants are welcomed by host nations. They add value to their fields and are generally well feted.

The not-so-educated, largely from rural India, have only their skills and wits to survive. The failure of the vocational education component in our primary studies system had led to making of persons with poor skills, and thus they are often relegated to the lowest rungs of the pyramid.

This lot often falls prey to rapacious "travel agents" who paint unrealistic dreams. Such migrants seek to travel out of India on a valid visa but arrive at their destination through illegal means. Discomfort is a given, safety elusive at best. The desperation that drives such persons to take the plunge needs to be understood better.

Failure of homeland

It is not just the lure of "abroad", it is the failure of the land of their ancestors to provide a decent living. The socio-economic arrangement is such that they are ill prepared. Dignity of labour is seldom accorded to blue-collar workers in India, and thus the aspiration for "desk jobs".

Then, there is the issue of training. In Germany and the US, a high school graduate is considered capable of holding a job. Thereafter, only a select few attend colleges

and universities. Others receive training for various vocations and get jobs that pay them well enough. The agricultural sector has ceased to be remunerative, and land fragmentation has made small farms unviable. On the other hand, the state of vocational education in India is abysmal. Manufacturing industries are unable to absorb enough workers. One could go on and on. It is this state of unemployment that makes youth look towards foreign lands.

The Government of India had realised the importance of migration and had set up a ministerial arrangement for it, but the Protector-General of Emigrants has failed in its duty to ensure that Indian workers are safe and treated well. Besides regulating the processes of emigration and standing up for the rights of Indian workers abroad, the government must take proactive measures to ensure that the workers are well equipped. Of course, it must be conceded that many applicants are economical with the truth in various ways, and this makes everything so much more difficult.

Emigration is almost always the result of the failure of the mother country to provide enough for its people. Indian migrants have a long history of travelling to other nations and contributing richly to them. Now we have coffins coming back from Iraq. Even as we share the loss with the families of the victims, we must introspect about how such tragedies arise, and why they fail to stop.

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A formula for real autonomy in education

K SRINIVASA RAO

Director, National Institute of Banking Studies and Corporate Management

THE quality of higher education is the engine of economic growth, powering the supply of high-level skills, conceptual knowledge and scientific innovations that can eventually position India as a strategic global leader. Recognising the merits of maintaining high standards of higher education institutes (HEIs), the University Grants Commission (UGC) recently granted full autonomy to 60 of them, including five Central universities, 21 state universities, 24 deemed and two private universities, marking a move towards transforming HEIs in sync with international standards. Eight other autonomous HEIs are also included in the list.

With this freedom, they can now introduce their own curriculum and academic programmes to add substantial value in collaboration with global institutes; pursue research in science and technology; hire foreign faculty, pay different range of compensation and perquisites; enrol foreign students; run distance learning programmes; enter into collaborative arrangements with globally acclaimed entities.

These prime HEIs could get the autonomy based on the standards set by regulators and accrediting agencies.

Status of HEIs

Higher education in India has been spreading fast, even into rural areas, with 377 universities now located in the hinterland. According to the All-India Survey on Higher Education-2016, there are 799 universities (277 private universities), 39,071 col-

leges and 11,923 standalone institutions. Among the HEIs, 101 are technical institutes, 64 agriculture institutes and 50 medical colleges. The total enrolment in higher education is 34.6 million students, of which 18.6 million are boys and 16 million girls.

Gross enrolment in higher education in India (including in HEIs) is 24.5 per cent, computed on the basis of population in the age group of 18-23 years. More than one-third of such young population is not able to pursue higher studies. They should be gradually covered, with the involvement of government and voluntary agencies. Another 11.05 per cent of students get enrolled in distance education, of which 46.3 per cent are female.

Research appetite is very poor, with only 0.4 per cent students enrolling for Ph.D. of which many drop out when they get a job.

Serious researchers are too few, keeping in view lack of its recognition as a profession in creating a new body of knowledge and innovation and in helping policy reforms.

International measure of HEIs

Despite sustained focus on education, only 4.5 per cent of India's population is a graduate. The 1.5 million graduates passing out from colleges hardly have enough skills to be employed in the industry, befitting their qualifications. Due to very few postgraduates, many of them search for jobs for which many HEIs provide campus placements. Some opt for higher education abroad. The major weaknesses in our higher education are:

■ Low industry academic interface and on-the-job exposure.
■ Lack of development of research mindset and applied research is not encouraged.

In view of these factors, the quality of publications needs reinforcement in order to meet global standards.

Policy shift

With a specific objective to boost research and development (R&D) in higher education and to step up investments in research and related infrastructure in premier educational institutions, the latest Union Budget introduced the Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education (RISE) scheme with an investment of Rs 1 lakh crore spread over the next four years. Also, the Higher Education Funding Agency (HEFA) is proposed to be suitably structured for funding this initiative. It is estimated that spending in the higher education sector may grow at 18 per cent: from Rs 46,200 crore in 2016 to Rs 2,32,500 crore in the next 10 years. Outlay for the education sector is set at Rs 85,010 crore.

So, while the autonomy of HEIs is a welcome move, its synergy can be derived only if teaching quality is improved, with focus on applied research, high quality publications, intense academic-industry interface, student-teacher exchange programmes with global institutes of higher learning to imbibe improved teaching methodologies. Stakeholders have to demonstrate a high degree of professional commitment, much beyond short-sighted commercial view to position India in a quality orbit to eventually lead global higher education system.

(Views are personal)



Synergy of autonomy of HEIs can be derived only if teaching quality is improved, with focus on research, quality publications, academic-industry interface, and exchange programmes with global institutes.

ON THIS DAY... 100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 1918.

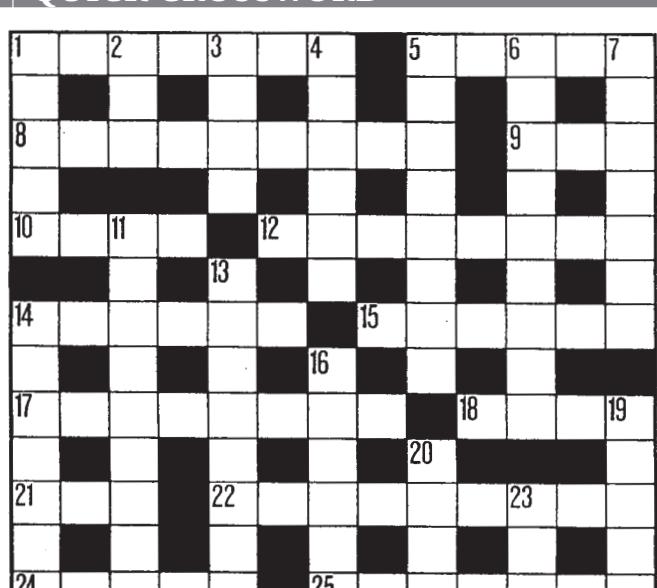
Mrs. Naidu on Women's Education.

THERE was appropriateness in the delivery by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu of a speech on the education of women at the anniversary of the Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jullundur. One of the most gifted and cultured of Indian women at the present time, no one could be better fitted that Mrs. Naidu to speak on this inspiring theme; and no place could be better fitted for the delivery of the lecture than the Kanya Mahavidyalaya. And the speech that she did make was worthy both of herself and the occasion. It was one strong, earnest, passionate and sustained plea for the education of the sex that gives us our mothers, our wives and our sisters. "Pray do not forget," she said "that a lame person can walk but slowly, that a one-eyed man sees only one side, and that a carriage with one wheel in order cannot move properly." As a matter of fact a society which neglects the education of women is an even worse position than any of the three things in the analogy.

Utilitarian Point of View.

FROM the immediate utilitarian point of view also the education of women is in the highest degree necessary as well as desirable. Mrs. Naidu quoted the example of the hundreds of thousands of European men "who are going to the battle fields with this consolation in their hearts that their educated wives will look after the house in their absence," and not only look after the house, but in some cases maintain their families. The great part which women have been playing in Europe in connection with the present war is, indeed, matter of common knowledge, and it is a part which they have been able to play because the disparity between men and women in respect of education is not great in Europe as it is in India. We in India may find ourselves in the same position any day.

QUICK CROSSWORD



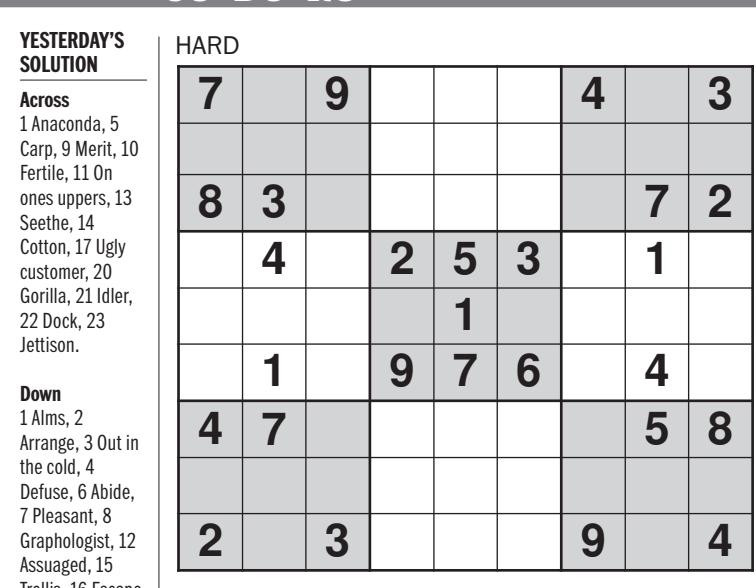
ACROSS

- 1. Amount short (7)
- 5. An extra benefit (5)
- 8. Mostly (2,7)
- 9. To court (3)
- 10. Critical examination (4)
- 12. In decline (8)
- 14. Harass (6)
- 15. Dirty, untidy place (6)
- 17. Biased (3-5)
- 18. Unfounded belief (4)

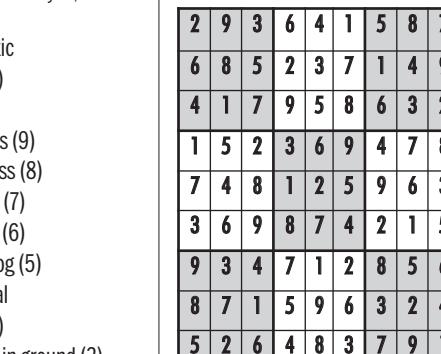
DOWN

- 1. Leeway (5)
- 2. Stuffy atmosphere (3)
- 3. Geometric solid figure (4)
- 4. Deep bowl for soup (6)
- 5. Country of east Europe (8)
- 6. U.S. Atlantic state (3,6)
- 7. Soon (7)
- 11. Amorphous (9)
- 13. Uselessness (8)
- 14. Trailblazer (7)
- 16. Custodian (6)
- 19. Hunting dog (5)
- 20. Ceremonial display (4)
- 23. Deep hole in ground (3)

SU DO KU



Yesterday's solution



FORECAST

SUNSET: WEDNESDAY 18:43 HRS		SUNRISE: WEDNESDAY 06:08 HRS	
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Rainy
34	22	22	Foggy
36	20	22	
Amritsar	33	20	
Bathinda	33	19	
Jalandhar	33	21	
Ludhiana	34	20	
Patiala	34	20	
Ambala	34	21	
Bhiwani	36	22	
Hisar	36	18	
Karnal	34	18	
Sirsra	35	20	
Dharamsala	23	14	
Manali	16	07	
Nahan	26	19	
Shimla	18	12	
Solan	23	12	
HIMACHAL PRADESH			
Jammu	30	18	
Leh	22	-02	Sun
Srinagar	26	08	
JAMMU & KASHMIR			
Dehradun	31	17	
Mussoorie	21	12	
Nainital	22	12	
UTTARAKHAND			
TEMPERATURE IN °C			



Let's welcome all, always

Some gurdwaras abroad banning the entry of Indian diplomats must take a cue from the Golden Temple and SGPC that are poised to give a warm welcome to the Canadian PM, as they have been opening the doors to everybody.

ROOPINDER SINGH

CANADIAN Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will be welcomed warmly at Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. He joins the growing list of Heads of State who have made the Golden Temple an important part of their itinerary while visiting India.

Gurdwaras have traditionally opened their doors to everyone, and hundreds of thousands of visitors walk into the portals of the Golden Temple every day. They come from all over the country, and from many parts of the world, to see, pay obeisance and pray. They all admire the architecture and what it signifies — the four open doorways, signifying that all are welcome — and partake of langar, which again is served to everyone.

Inclusion has been the focus of the Gurus' teachings, and of the institutions that they built. Indeed, the first gathering places of their followers were the dharamshalas, where they would meet regularly, as 'sangats', to sing praise of the Lord and to discuss matters of common concern. These were places that served the sick and the needy and provided shelter to travellers. In short, they were spaces where dharma was practised. From the 17th century, after the installation of Guru Granth Sahib at the Golden Temple, the word 'gurdwaras', abode of the Guru, started being used for what were dharamshalas.

The institution of gurdwara has an inclusive core, which has, sometimes, been eroded. Mahants, who were considered the custodians of institutions, started regarding these as their hereditary property, and over a period of time, caste



ILLUSTRATION: SANDEEP JOSHI

discrimination and other practices, inimical to Sikhism, crept in.

It was in response to these ill-practices that the Gurdwara Sudhar Lehar or Gurdwara Reform Movement gained impetus. Gurdwara Babe-di-Ber in Sialkot, associated with Guru Nanak Dev, was then administered by the widow of a mahant. In 1920, it became the first gurdwara whose administration was transferred to an elected committee, headed by Baba Kharak Singh. Other gurdwaras followed suit; sometimes the reformists

were resisted violently. The massacre of protesters by Mahant Narain Das at Nankana Sahib solidified the support for the movement and after many confrontations, many negotiations and some violence; the control of historical gurdwaras was handed over to elected bodies of Sikhs. This is the genesis of the formation of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in 1925.

Naturally, historical gurdwaras form only a part of the vast network of gurdwaras that exists in India and abroad. Such gurdwaras are independent bodies, but they are expected to take guidance from the SGPC in the conduct of various religious ceremonies. Sometimes, local matters are escalated to the SGPC and Akal Takht for resolution.

The Australian High Commissioner to New Delhi, Harinder Sidhu, is a Sikh of Indian origin. She had performed seva at the langar of the Darbar Sahib last week. The Canadian Prime Minister and his entourage, also that have Sikh ministers, are the next VIPs at Harmandar

Sahib. This time, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh is on board, something that was conspicuously missing earlier when Canadian Defence Minister Harjit Singh Sajjan visited Punjab. However, at that time also, Sajjan was welcomed with open arms by the SGPC, even as the CM refused to meet him.

The inclusive character of the most important gurdwara of the Sikhs, which extends to visitors sitting together for a common langar and some of them performing seva, is a feature that has found admirers among those of other faiths, too, and, indeed, is often held as an exemplar. This is where the discordant note is sounded by organisations that seek to ban the entry of Indian diplomats in gurdwaras in foreign lands, including Canada and Australia. It is not a coincidence that some gurdwaras, whose names were announced in the original ban statement, subsequently distanced themselves from it.

Gurdwaras are, and should be, open to all. Gurdwaras abroad should take their cue from the SGPC and keep their doors open even to those with whom the management committees have differences.

The moment one crosses Darshani Deori and enters the precincts of the Golden Temple, there is a sense of peace. The mellifluous notes of kirtan sung by Hazuri Raagis envelope every visitor, as the tumultuous temporal affairs recede into the background. This is the atmosphere one seeks in all gurdwaras: that of spirituality where everyone is welcome. Bans mark boundaries, and feed discord. They have no place in a place of worship.

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Logic of FIR in Major Aditya's case

LT-GEN SYED ATA HASNAIN (RETD)

Ex-GOC of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps

THIS write-up is not about defending young Army officers who bear the burden of operations in all kinds of unpredictable situations in Kashmir; it is about putting in perspective the functioning of the Army and its soldiers in counter-terrorist operations there.

It's a veritable minefield that the Army has to operate in. Mercifully, it usually gets it right. But the Army's involuntary involvement in messy situations needs some explanation and advice; more for the curious public as also for former and serving soldiers who do not have the experience of handling such situations or their blowback many years after the soldier has retired.

The social media has enabled the public to express all kinds of opinion, but most of it is bereft of a deep knowledge of the subject or experience.

Before plunging into the subject of an FIR against Major Aditya, here is a look at what the Supreme Court said in 2016 about deaths resulting from the Army's operations in an area where AFSPA is applicable: a two-judge Bench had ruled that every allegation of the "use of excessive force" by the security forces resulting in a civilian death must be looked into. It made the registration of a first information

report (FIR) mandatory in such cases.

Obviously, the SC was being simply prudent in directing that no coercive action be taken against Major Aditya for two weeks with reference to the incident in which a column of troops of 10 Garhwal under his command, had fired on a mob allegedly attempting to lynch his troops near Shopian town; the firing led to some deaths of civilians.

But the registration of an FIR is within reason and mandatory; it is just a narration of circumstances and in this particular incident, names Maj Aditya only as the column commander of the troops that opened fire.

Then what is the entire objection that has led to the uproar? That is circumstantial and needs understanding. The state government's withdrawal of FIRs against a couple of hundred first-time stone-throwers in 2016 was reasoned as part of the outreach and hearts and minds programme. There weren't too many pinched brows. The issue also did not draw much attention when FIRs were withdrawn against second-time offenders.

But a narrative emerged etching the stark difference and contrast between the FIR against the troops of 10 Garhwal and withdrawal of FIRs against stone throwers. Patriots were being censured for their actions of self defence while stone-throwers received the state's goodwill and largesse.

That is a powerfully negative narrative and did raise emotions and rallied support for the young officer, irrespective of the SC's 2016 ruling. His father moved the SC, which perhaps sensed the awkwardness of the situation, whatever the reality of what the FIR actually involves.

While as commander in all operations involving a body count on the other side, I had always insisted on lodging an FIR, irrespective whether the local police had lodged one or not. The unit always retained the copy in a 'Handing and Taking Over' file because in J&K or the North-East, it's always safe to retain the right documentation as there are comebacks, mostly many years later. This is especially so after many missing cases were filed years after the alleged events and there was a demand to produce in court officers and soldiers who had participated in those operations long back. In fact, if an FIR had been lodged, suitably followed up, investigated and a closure report filed, the legal actions are considered complete. It is then easier to defend alleged Army offenders against the spree of cases lodged against them; that is if FIRs are filed.

This rationale may not justify the lodging of an FIR in as obvious a case as that of Maj Aditya. However, consider 10 years later. Someone files a case in 2028 when in the third rotation, 10 Garhwal is deployed in the same area. There is no legal document if no FIR exists and Maj Aditya, then Col Aditya, would be running from pillar to post to defend his case. If he had left the Army prematurely, it would be a shade worse.

Unfortunately, those who have never experienced the true application of AFSPA think that there is total immunity for men in uniform. Unfortunately, AFSPA is not that strong an instrument. It partially shields the soldier from ultimate prosecution (Central government approval needed) and not from the process of investigation.

Further, a loophole has targeted the Army after a soldier has left the force. In 2011, Havaldar Swain (retd) of 7 Parachute Regiment was arrested from Orissa by the J&K Police and hauled to Srinagar to stand investigation and possible trial without any reference to an authority of the Central government. But we overcame that awkward situation and the veteran soldier walked free.

There is no doubt that the messaging to society is incorrect if an FIR is filed against a soldier performing his rightful duty, many times in self-defence. Either the Central government must review AFSPA, not for its dilution (as one may think) but for better soldier protection, or the society needs to be better educated to appreciate the environment and long-term effects of various actions which are taken in the course of responsibilities in a counter-terrorism environment.

The public perception over the FIR against Major Aditya has been mostly emotive. An FIR is the best action to be taken. But the Centre needs to review AFSPA for better soldier protection.

ON THIS DAY... 100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1918

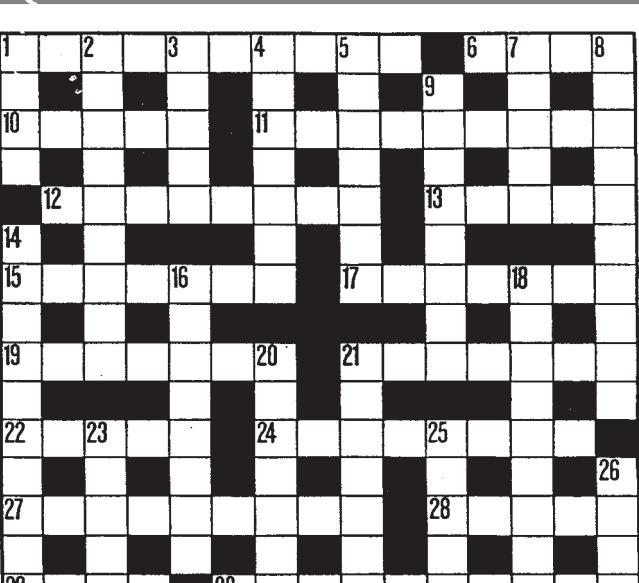
Sri Jagatguru and Democracy.

YESTERDAY we quoted a striking passage from a speech recently delivered by his Holiness Sri Jagatguru of Karvir Peeth. Here is another equally striking passage: "The whole world is marching towards democratic ideas and no Government, no system of repression can ever stop it. The attack makes the march swifter and more dangerous. Take one single instance. The action of the Government of Madras in interning Mrs. Besant only aggravated the situation in the country and people flocked in thousands round her banner, and even the greatest men began to fear what proportion the agitation would assume. Thank God her liberty and the influence of His Excellency the Viceroy and His Majesty's Secretary of State has calmed the political atmosphere. What I insist here is that for good or for evil the cards have been let loose and the march has begun. There is no use forcing the people to recede."

What is a University?

IN a speech at Maharaja's College, Mysore, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu drew a contrast between the Universities in the West and Universities in India. "We in India have too long associated the idea of a University with three or four of the best years of heavy, gloomy, wearying work, the net result of which at the end of the period may be contained in a role of parchment, a mere representation of our money value. But the true conception of a University, like that of Oxford, of which every Oxford man was so proud, or Cambridge of which she was so proud, or Edinburgh of which her husband was so proud, or Universities of France, of Germany, of Italy, made a University the embodiment, the living symbol of the glorious dreams of youth."

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS

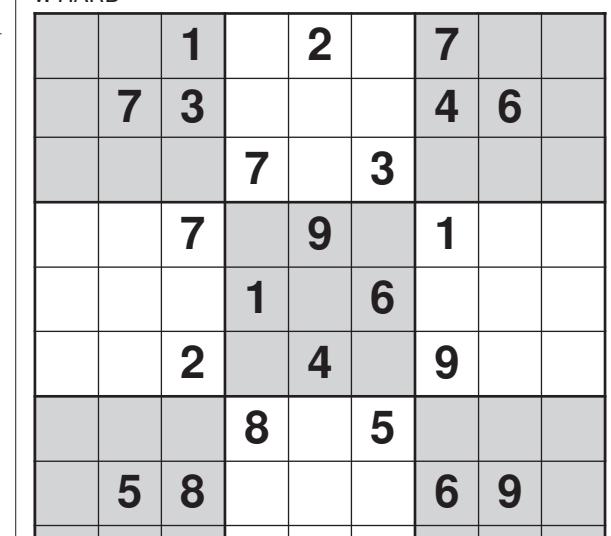
- 1 Script for film (10)
- 6 Type of leather (4)
- 10 Drink made from apples (5)
- 11 Artificial storage lake (9)
- 12 A venomous arachnid (8)
- 13 Burn superficially (5)
- 15 Permanent (7)
- 17 Author of Canterbury Tales (7)
- 19 Zealot (7)
- 21 To bear (7)

DOWN

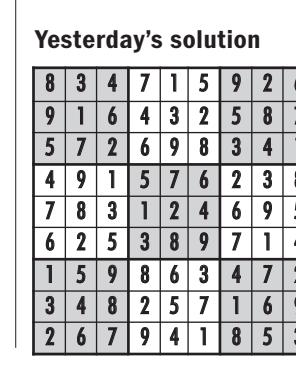
- 22 Swiss mountain (5)
- 24 As a rule (8)
- 27 In high spirits (9)
- 28 Imposing punishment (5)
- 29 Frog-like creature (4)
- 30 Free from suspicion (2, 3, 5)
- 1 Religious denomination (4)
- 2 Diminution (9)
- 3 Wrongdoing (5)
- 4 Leave-taking (7)
- 5 A deadly poison (7)
- 7 Beautify (5)
- 8 Patient (10)
- 9 Encroach (8)
- 14 Perplexity (10)
- 16 A detailed enemy alien (8)
- 18 Object to (9)
- 20 Keep in check (7)
- 21 Withdraw from competition (7)
- 23 A mild Dutch cheese (5)
- 25 A savoury jelly (5)
- 26 Disparagement (4)

SU DO KU

V. HARD



Yesterday's solution



FORECAST

SUNSET: WEDNESDAY 18:15 HRS
SUNRISE: THURSDAY 06:57 HRS

CITY	MAX	MIN			
			Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy
Chandigarh	26	10			
New Delhi	30	12			
PUNJAB					
Amritsar	25	09			
Bathinda	25	09			
Jalandhar	25	09			
Ludhiana	26	10			
Patiala	26	10			
HARYANA					
Ambala	26	12			
Bhiwani	26	09			
Hisar	27	08			
Karnal	25	08			
Sirsra	25	11			
HIMACHAL PRADESH					
Dharamsala	18	09			
Manali	12	-01			
Nahan	21	10			
Shimla	14	05			
Solan	18	07			
JAMMU & KASHMIR					
Jammu	23	10			
Leh	07	-09			
Srinagar	12	-01			
UTTARAKHAND					
Dehradun	26	10			
Mussoorie	18	07			
Nainital	18	07			

TEMPERATURE IN °C

CALENDAR

February 21, 2018, Wednesday

- Vikrami Samvat 2074
- Shaka Samvat 1939
- Phalgun Shaka 2
- Phalgun Parvishi 10
- Hijri 1439
- Shukla Paksha Tithi 6, up to 3:50 am
- Shukla Yog up to 10:54 am
- Ashwin Nakshatra up to 2:01 pm
- Moon in Aries sign
- Gangmool up to 2:03 pm



A cyber knee-jerk reaction

by Roopinder Singh

In the wake of the Kargil conflict, India can rightly feel good about a number of successes on the diplomatic and the military front. There was, however, a miscrene on the cyber front — the so-called ban on the Internet site of the Pakistani newspaper, Dawn.

At a fundamental level, the action smacked more of knee-jerk reaction than a well-thought-out manoeuvre. In one swoop we lost the high moral ground, earning condemnation from diverse forums, and that too for an action that was also technically untenable. What is the point of blocking something that remains accessible even after it is banned?

It has been proved over time that no matter what newspapers print, banning the Press is always counterproductive. Also, Dawn is a well-regarded Pakistani paper, which has maintained a fairly balanced coverage of events in Pakistan. Of course, the opinions are from a Pakistani perspective, which became an enemy perspective in the context of the recent war-like situation. But, as they say, better a known enemy than an unknown one. Incidentally, other Pakistani newspapers like The Nation, Frontier Post and The News could be accessed easily.

How was Dawn's Internet site banned? It was blocked through Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (VSNL). Since the VSNL is the largest provider of Internet services in India (even private operators go through the VSNL gateways) all that it had to do was to put Dawn's Internet address (its IP number) on the list of sites that would be denied access. That this denial was easily floated, with the help of some Indians, is another story.

Attempts at blocking something on the Internet are ineffective, as many governments have realised at various times. One of the primary properties of the Internet is its ability to defy attempts at stifling communication through it.

As John Gilmore, an Internet pioneer, said: "The Net interprets censorship as damage and routes around it." There are always ways around blockages. For us to understand this, we have to get a bit technical.

Nowadays most readers are familiar with the internet addresses, which are more correctly called URLs (Uniform Resource Locator) like <http://www.tribuneindia.com> which is the domain name of the Internet edition of The Tribune. URLs are used extensively on the World-Wide-Web.

While URLs are easy to remember, for computers, they just lead to an Internet Protocol (IP) address that uniquely identifies a node on the Internet. Thus, whenever you type <http://www.tribuneindia.com> in your browser, a message goes to a DNS (domain name system) server that a general-purpose distributed, replicated, data query service chiefly used on Internet for translating domain names into Internet addresses. This computer checks a directory, which has a list of domain names and their respective IP addresses. After it finds a match, it connects you with the site.

In order to ban access to the Dawn Internet edition, all that VSNL had to do was to put it on the "not allowed" list and block its DNS entry. The user got the message that access had been

denied and the browser did not display the contents of the web site. All this was apparently done under the authority of the antiquated Indian Telegraph Act.

A common way to go around a blockage of a site on the Internet is to use tools that allow people to maintain their privacy while communicating online. One such tool is an anonymiser service site, which does precisely what the name suggests — makes it possible to anonymously surf the net and get around the blockages someone might have put. It does this by acting as a conduit between you and the site that you are looking for. As we said, DNS lists are widely distributed and replicated. If you block a DNS entry to the nearest server, the anonymiser site (which is not blocked) will act as a conduit to another DNS server and will open the site you want through it. It will then tell you that you are going through the anonymiser site even when you visit the blocked site.

In fact, within days of the ban, a major Indian Internet site put out an item detailing various ways of getting around the blockage.

The ban on Dawn probably did not have any impact on the conflict. This one action of blocking the Dawn's site was adversely noticed in the foreign media, especially in the ever-widening Internet fraternity, and to some extent it negated Indian diplomatic victories.

The online magazine Salom had an article titled "India darkens Dawn," by Andrew Leonard, in which the subhead ran: "The giant nation's online censorship of a Pakistani newspaper highlights its disturbing hold on the Internet." This raised the rather unwarranted Orwellian spectre.

Dawn, on its part, displayed "This site is open in India," banner while the ban was on. The message has now been changed to, "This

site was banned in India," which leads to a message that says: "This site was banned in India starting June 25 or 26, till the morning of July 13. We are thankful to readers around the world, especially those in the Indian media, who made people aware of what had happened thereby helping getting the ban lifted."

The reaction of the Indians, both in the media and out of it, did bring about a positive response from the Dawn group's CEO, Mr. Hameed Haroon. In a statement issued on July 16, Mr. Haroon welcomed the decision to lift the ban on the Dawn website. "Quite apart from all the issues that are raised when attempts are made to assail the functioning of a free Press," he said, "the very character of the Internet made the ban ineffectual, as anyone living in India could still access our website by using the 'anonymiser' route." However, an important lesson to be retained from this experience is that sometimes a bilateral approach is the best solution.

The statement added: "When, in the last week of June, Dawn was alerted to the fact that its website had been blocked by VSNL, the natural course of action would have been to bring the matter to the attention of the international press."

"Dawn, however, decided to adopt a more measured strategy, which was to limit its protests to the Indian Government, via its High Commissioner in Islamabad, and the Indian Press. That this strategy paid off can be seen by the widespread support Dawn received from large sections of the Indian Press."

"We must not forget the role played by all those Indian citizens living abroad who wrote to Dawn to express their outrage about the ban."

"Another lesson to be drawn from the experience is the importance of being credible. One of the reasons why the Indian Press was united in its condemnation of the ban was because Dawn is respected in India for its sober and moderate approach on the many contentious issues that affect relations between Pakistan and India."

"The lifting of the ban in India was immediately reflected in a considerable jump in the number of visitors from India to our website. In fact the Dawn Internet edition has reached a new record in terms of visits from India. A fact we welcome and one that cannot but prove positive to the development of a better understanding of the issues affecting South Asia."

As it is probable that other legislative business, besides the consideration of the Tariff Bill, would be disposed of during the next session, attention may be drawn to the important private Bill of Dr Gour for raising the age of consent from twelve to fourteen years, which was referred to a Select Committee during the Delhi Session.

The report of the Select Committee was submitted and further progress of the Bill was to be stayed until there had been opportunity to elicit public opinion on it. The report was published in the Gazette of India and the opinions of interested bodies should be made available as soon as possible.

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Fundamentalism: shape of things to come

By M.S.N. Menon

WHAT is the future of fundamentalism? Rather bleak. Of terrorism? Even worse. As an ideology, fundamentalism has little attraction, except for the demented. As for terrorism, only the hopeless and desperate volunteer. What is pushing the two around the world is Arab money. Saudi money to be precise. That means, fundamentalism is a kind of Wahabism, the beliefs of the Beduin tribes of Saudi Arabia. Will non-Arab countries good for it? I have my doubts. Money cannot buy those who are not in need of money.

Arab fundamentalism has two fierce opponents — Iran and America. Iran is an inveterate enemy of the Arabs, particularly of Saudi Arabia. But it is also a proponent of Shia fundamentalism. Thus, two fundamentalisms are in conflict.

Twenty years have passed since the Khomeini revolution in Iran. It has, as is usual, run out of steam. The recent massive student demonstration against the clerics is a pointer to what is in store. The students are asking for reforms. The Iranian President himself is for reform, but he has to go slow.

The Khomeini revolution has failed because it challenged the might of the USA. Perhaps the clerics had no other alternative. The students should not repeat the folly. If Iran is to come out of its isolation and play a meaningful role in the world, it must give up its anti-Americanism. This is possible if the leadership of the country passes into the hands of the students. They alone can meet the modern challenges. But they should not fall into another error — become a client state of America.

Iran is a Muslim country. But it is not Arab. And it is Shia. Above all, Iran is inspired by its glorious past of millennia, which is still preserved. The Arabs have nothing similar. Their past has mostly been nomadic. Iran has never reconciled itself to the Arab conquest. Firdausi, the greatest historian of Iran and author of Shahname, had only contempt for the Arabs. He wrote: "It (Iran) was the home of mighty warriors and the royal seat of great monarchs. It has now become the scene of woe and want and the hunting ground of blood-thirsty dragon."

Firdausi was denied a Muslim burial. (He was buried in a garden). It was Raza Pahalavi, the last of the line and a true nationalist, who built a tomb for Firdausi.

Iran will never accept Arab leadership. Certainly not that of Saudi Arabia. And it is a fierce foe of Saddam Hussain, too. The Arabs have brought only ruin to Iran, say the Iranians. They can never forget it. Ibn Khaldun, the great historian and philosopher of Islam, has this to say of Arabs: "Mark how all the countries of the world which have been conquered and dominated by the Arabs have had their civilisations ruined..." Egypt and Persia, two of the oldest, are the best examples.

As the most powerful Shia state, Iran has a role to play in the consolidation of the Shia community all over the world. More so now when it is under attack by the Wahabi fundamentalists. There was mass genocide of

Shias at Mazar-i-Sharif, as also at Bamia, both in Afghanistan, when these cities fell to the Taliban. And more hundreds died when the Taliban set fire to the Charar-i-Sharif, the mosque of the Sufi saint Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani, in Kashmir. Noorani represented the ideology of Hindu-Muslim unity. The Taliban will have none of it. Shias are hunted down all over the world by the Sunnis in their present state of fundamentalist hysteria. Not a day passes in Pakistan without an attack on Shias. And there is the greatest challenge before the Shias: in Iraq a Sunni minority is ruling over a Shiia majority!

Iran has a mission before it: to free the Shias from their thraldom and to secure a reasonable life for them.

The confrontation between the Taliban and Iran could have led to a major war. But Pakistan and Taliban backed out. About three million Shias have taken shelter in Iran from Afghanistan. They have to be rehabilitated. But Iran can also turn them into soldiers of a Shiia fundamentalism. This will create new crises.

Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, Iran's Supreme Leader, has warned both Pakistan and Taliban — Pakistan to stop its interference in Afghanistan and the Taliban to abandon its criminal ways and make up for its past errors. He called the Taliban the "heartless and savage tribe."

Iran is the gateway to Central Asia. Its security and prosperity are tied up with Central Asia and Russia. And it is on good relations with China, too. As an economic power, Iran has a great future. It still has vast reserves of oil and gas, which can last for half a century or more. In short, Iran has the economic resources to play a meaningful role in the world in the next century. And I believe one of its major roles will be to oppose Wahabi fundamentalism. The world must welcome it.

Central Asia is going to be the most dynamic region of the world in the next century. It will also be rich and resourceful. As against this, both Pakistan and Afghanistan have a bleak economic future. The destiny of both is to be client states. Pakistan's ambition to emerge as the leading Muslim state in the region is thus a pipedream, even with nuclear weapons. The "Muslim bomb" has not carried much weight, for it is a weapon that cannot be used. And growing fundamentalism less appealing in the region.

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Osama bin Laden, currently enemy number one of America. Of course, sanctions against Kabul will make Pakistan uneasy, for it has been the patron of the Taliban.

Of late, fundamentalism has not found favour with the Kashmiris. Perhaps because it is spread by the Taliban. Nor do they favour terrorism. The London Times had said: "There are no longer effective Kashmiri militant groups left in the valley and foreign mercenaries are in full control."

PoK and other Kashmiri leaders have lashed out against the Hurriyat leaders, particularly Abdul Ghani Lone, for inviting the Taliban as mercenaries to Kashmir. They say it is "Totally irresponsible and shocking," and accused Lone of wanting to transform Kashmir back into an Afghan colony. They say that Lone has not learnt any lesson from two centuries of Afghan tyranny.

It is interesting that even Afzal Tahir, Chairman of PoK Kashmiri International Front, has chosen to criticise Lone, for he says: "You couldn't expect better from Hurriyat leaders." Referring to the report of Amnesty International on the mass genocide carried out by Taliban in Mazar-i-Sharif, Tahir says: "Obviously, the Hurriyat is not satisfied with the slaughter of thousands of Kashmiri youth. It is planning a mass genocide in Kashmir." Tahir went on: "Pakistanis by their depravity and barbaric killing have already left deep wounds on Kashmiri people, and, to top it, it appears Hurriyat leaders would like to invite Taliban bandits to sow killing fields in Kashmir." In fact, ISI highlighted the Lone invitation to Taliban prominently. Tahir fears that the first thing the Taliban would do in Kashmir is to start ethnic cleansing. And the Punjabi Muslims would be ready to buy up the property of those who are made to disappear. The covert war has already cost 18,000 lives.

In Pakistan, private armies of fundamentalist organisations have been to seek a domestic role for themselves. These are not small organisations. Dawat-al-Irshad, a fundamentalist organisation, has a trained army of 30,000 men! They all want to Talibanise Pakistan. Where will all these lead to? No doubt, to a form of theocracy, with power being shared by the army and the fundamentalists. And they are more likely to control nuclear weapons too.

Such developments will not go unchallenged, for Iran and Central Asian republics see the Taliban as a surrogate of Pak-Saudi expansionism. And America and India are unlikely to tolerate a nuclear-armed Pakistan under the fundamentalists. Perhaps, economic problems will overwhelm Pakistan, in the meantime. The same fate awaits Afghanistan, though its narcotic trade can keep alive its fundamentalism for some more time.

A US economist says: "India could over the next decade become the overwhelming regional power, next to which Pakistan cannot compare in any way, including militarily... India will be seen as the power of the future."

Will Pakistanis see the writing on the wall? Will they realise that parity with India is even beyond their dream?

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