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# THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2020 THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE  $\boldsymbol{M}\,\boldsymbol{S}$  is not the next Gilchrist,

HE IS THE FIRST M S DHONI.

# The Indian **EXPRESS**

SFOUNDED BY 

RAMNATH GOENKA

# A crisis without villains



Current economic contraction is different from previous ones. Governments should borrow and spend

# FOR BETTER HEALTH

National ID would improve medical care, patient experience  $Challenges\, of\, privacy, doctor\, shortages\, will\, have\, to\, be\, addressed$ 

Challenges of privacy, doctor shortages will have to be addressed

TS FITTING THAT the bunch of the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) was the centrepiece of Prime Natendra Modi's speech on the country's 74th independence Day, With comorbidities—most of them lifestyle dessess that Indians have become increasingly prone to in the past 15 years—emerging as one of the main causes of mortality in the negging (2007b.-19 pandemic, the salience of a repository that can alert the physician to a patient's medical history at the click of a computer key cannot be overstated. "Percy Indian will be given a health! Ditt will work like a health account. This account will contain details of every disease, the doctors you striet, the medicines you took and the diagnosis," PM Modi said. The health will work like a health account. This account will contain details of every disease, the doctors you striet, the medicines you took and the diagnosis, "PM Modi said. The health Dit will allow patients to virtually share files between hospitals and doctors. The creation of a digital ecosystem for healthcare and the attempt to leverage 1To enhance the well-being of people in the country will, however, require surmounting challenges, including correcting some of the medical sector's longstanding problems.

In 2017, the National Health Pikey underlined the need for a repository of medical information of the country's citizens. A year late, the Nith Agop proposed the creation of a National Health D'to reduce the risk of preventable medical errors and significantly increase the quality of medical acter." This urge at least, the Nith Agop proposed the creation of a National Health D'to reduce the risk of preventable medical errors and significantly increase the quality of medical acter. This urge to create a patient—centric system has, by all accounts, informed conversations on the NDHM in the past three years. The vedcome endeasour has, informed conversations on the NDHM in the past three years. The vedcome endeasour has, informed conver

The core building blocks of the NDRM — the Health ID and Health Facility Registry— shall be owned, operated and maintained by the government. However, private opera-tors will have equal opportunities to integrate with these systems and create products for the market. Such linkages across public and private players could enhance medical effi-ciency and improve the patients' experience. Patients can choose the documents they would like to share, with whom and for how long. Even then, given the asymmetrical re-altons between health service providers — doctors, hospitals, instrance companies — and medical care seelers, apprehensions of privacy breaches are not unfounded. The country's data protection law — in the works for almost three years — will have to factor in such concerns, arm patients with safeguants. In the coming months and years, the government and the country's legal, IT and medical systems will have to come together to translate the NDHM's patient-centric vision into reality.

## THE BOY FROM RANCHI

Win, lose or retire, Mahendra Singh Dhoni never lost his poise or perspective. His legacy will endure

FTER 16 YEARS in India colours, Mahendra Singh Dhoni left the interna-tional stage much before the deadline. Having winressed from close quar-tices several high-profile departures, most of them delayed. Dhoni knew the pitfalls of owe-staying in the dressing room. In Indian cricket, your the pitfalls of owe-staying in the dressing room. In Indian cricket, your lasts till the time you walk down the pavilion stairs and reach the crosse. The moment the formoutly fidds shoot offeren crick and only the power of the initio career, questions were being asked about Dhoni's role in the team. However, till his last game, the restablish finisher remained the teams harbinger of flow. The man who meremed to be

questions were being asked about Dhoni's role in the team. However, till his last game, the text while finisher remained the team is harbigger of hope. The man who preferred to be on the fringes of most team celebrations — Dhoni, extreme left, back rows — left on his own terms. Win, lose or on the edge of retirement he never lost his poise or perspective. Those tracing Dhoni's fordprints on India's cideling mega-sape would be spoil for horice. The boy from Jankhad mproved that mega-standow was not the preserved pedi-gred players with refined skill sets. Dhoni joined the national team during the days of clasticious, cricketers ciscriffic in their approach and woulded for by the coaching manual. It was an ear when Tendullar, Cangpily Dravid, Kumble Laxman were talked up as Beatles Plas One. In the Indian dressing room as The high table of claimer, Dhoni, with his tennis-hall circuit borrowed helicopter shots, was the Average Joe. Blame it on the tenacity and that high port the shoulders of self-made small towners. Dhoni didn't mimic the greats. He had respect but he wasn't in awe of seniors. While his contemporaties — Harbhajan, Yuvraj, Jakees, Selwage — settled in comfortable coeries, Dhoni lives at distance from the team's

respect but he wasn't in awe of seniors. While his contemporaries — Harbhajan, Yuvraj, Zaheer, Schwag — settled in comfortable corteies, Dhori lega distance from the team's several power centres. Later when he went on to be the captain, he would have his own trusted aides. Dhori was a born leader, he believed in tight groups, but he was no grouple. So what next for Dhoril? Known to keep the world at arm's length, he doesn't show his emotions or reveal his plans. In these times of trending opinions and popular twitter stands, he doesn't believe in public pointification. He is a one of-kind celebrity who is an influencer without being the slave of social media. Settled in a farm outside Ranchi, he is concurrent section. Who locus we have the not stand of the navel below he doesn't be concurrent section. a consummate recluse. Who knows, the next step of the natural-born leader and influ-encer could take him closer to public service — the grandest sport.

FREEZE FRAME EP UNNY



INDIA HAS NEVER experienced negative economic growth since 1979-80, and before that in 1972-73, 1865-66 and 1957-88. All these were drought years with 1957-58 allow reverse drought years with 1957-58 allow reverse drought years with 1957-58 allow reverse drought years with 1957-68 allow reverse drought years and years an

those with jobs are saving more than spend-ing because they aren't sure when their luck

Everybody knows the solution. If there's anybody at all that can spend and invest today, it is the government. There are two probable reasons, though, why it isn't doing that. The first is the expectation/hope that once the worst of the pandemic is behind us, people will start spending and businesses, too, will spring back to life. However, this assumes the economy wasn't doing all that badly previously and that the lockdown hasn't caused too much of permanent damage.

would run out. The same goes with businesses. Many have shut or are operating at a fraction of their pasket yan by the control of their post of the strength. The shift and their post of the strength of the strength of the strength of the strength of their post of thei

n't caused too much of permanent damage. The truth is that growth had already slid to 3 per cent in 200-20 and we don't know a 3 per cent in 200-20 and we don't know a street the COVID uncertainties lift.

The second reason for not doing much is, of course, the state of government finances. The second reason for not doing much is, of course, the state of government finances and the course of the course of

# A Progressive Economic Agenda Production, devolution, universalism, market-building are key to wrest narrative

ANUSH KAPADIA

ANUSH KAPADIA

THERGITAWIK: 148-captured the "reform" arraive Progressives focus almost enclusively on amelionation rather than transform for the common and the common and

market-building.

The first principle must be production. "Self-reliance" captures this rhetorically, but hat is hardly a new thought. The symbol on our flag is there because colonalism (ascording that is hardly a new thought. The symbol on our flag is there because colonalism (ascording that is the state of the sta

Fiscal power must be transferred to the state and local level if we are to get policies form-fit for specific markets and conditions, if we will be a specific markets and conditions, if we we will be a specific market and conditions, if we well-reast consistent properties and the specific markets and the specific properties of the specific pro

## AUGUST 17, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO



GUJARAT TENSE
THE GUJARAT GOVERNMENT declared Kheda, Mehsana and Sabarkanth districts as disturbed areas under an ordinance promulgated on August 16. Earlier, Ahmedabad trush adheende and earlier desired and activity had been declared a disturbed area. The declaration late in the evening followed reports of disturbances from Nadia in Kaira district, at Mehsana and Klafol in Mehsana district, at Mehsana and Klafol in Mehsana district, at Mehsana, I persons were injuried when the police fired nine rounds to quella rioting mobihat attacked a market and held uptraffic on the national highway. Meanwhile, the studies of the production of th

Welfare is critical, but its governing principle must shift to universalism. The technocratic obsession with

targeting, fuelled by electoral competition and fortified by cold middle-class morality, must cease. Dividing people into scheme-based categories also divides us politically

> MORADABAD SIMMERS MORADABAD SIMMERS
> MORADABAD PSOWD one again, as Aligath didin the past, how childshib) simple it to start a serious communal conflagation in Utata Pradesh. No one enally knows if angio grapis actinally entered the Edgah compound during Edd prayers on August 31. If they did, were the animals driven purposely or did they stray in P Arumour Utata ap ghad to the strain of the strai

FOOTBALL RIOT
AT LEAST 12 football fans were killed in a
sampede and ower 100 injured following
clashes between supporters of roll teams in
feat Bregal-Aholmu Bagan serior division league encounter at Eden Cardens. The
flories and 10 bolosic were taken to the SSKM
hospital and two to Sambhunath Panditt
frospital. The cashidy figure could be higher.
24 were admitted to different hospitals instructure of the control of the control of the roll of the roll to the first of the roll to the serve involved in a fight on
the field. A free-for-all ensued on the
stands.

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS MONDAY AUGUST 17 2020

# The Ideas Page

# **VOLUME & VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL FUTURES TRADED ON NCDEX** 0

# Getting agri-markets right

New agriculture infrastructure fund is a major step forward. Policymakers must also realise potential of futures markets, have stable policies for them



BY ASHOK GULATI

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ON AUCUST 9, Prime Minister Narendra
Modi I aunched the 18: 11 lah crore
work and the 18: 11 lah crore
between the control of the 18: 11 lah crore
sed over the next four years. This find will
be used to build post-harvest storage and
processing facilities, Jarely androwed at the
farmer Producer Organisations (PPOs.) but
an also be availed by individual entrepreneurs. The fund will also be used to provide
loans, at concessional rates, to PPOs and
culture credit societies (PNCs). NABARD will
seet this initiative in association with the
Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers
welfare. The implication of this for the
Central government budget is not going to
be more than Rs. 5000 core over four years
in terms of interest subvention subsidy in
aterady large demand for storage facilities
and other post harvest infrastructure.
The fund is a major step towards getting agri-markets right. The Narendra Modi
government had earlier issued three ordinances related to the legal framework to
agri-markets with a vew to bringing about
agri-markets modities Art. allowing farmeers to sell their produce ourside the APMC
and is an encouraging farming contracts
between farmers, processors, exporters
and retailers. Changes in the legal framework are a necessary condition, though not
fully control to the legal framework. The AFI will help fill
this gap. Its positive impact will be evident
in due course, depending upon how fast,

and how earnestly, the states, FPOs, and in-dividual entrepresensis implement the reform of the control of the control of the creation of 10,000 more FPOs, it can
Since NABARD is also ne sponsible for the creation of 10,000 more FPOs, it can
create a package that will help these outflits realise better prices. Here are a few missing elements of the puzzle. There is no doubt that more and better storage facility in the control of the

ume of contracts traded on agri-futures was more than 1,000 million in 2015; in the VIS, it was more than 1,000 million in 2015; in the VIS, it was more than 1,000 million in 2015; in the VIS, it was more than 1,000 million in 2015; in the VIS was a considerable of exchonitars in ormally much How do we fix this puzzle to have a full set of right instruments for farmers to minimise their market risk and have better price realisation? First, as NABARD forms 1,0000 FPOs and creates basic storage facilities through the AIF, it should devise through the AIF, it should better through the AIF, it should better and an avigate the realm of agri-futures to hedge their market risks. Second, government agencies dabbling in commodity markets – the Food Corporation of India (FCI), Nationaly in commodity markets – the Food Corporation (STC) – should increase their participation in agri-futures share Indiago Corporation (STC) – should increase their participation in agri-futures markets. Third, the banish that give loans to FPOs and traders should also participate in commodity futures are 're-insurers' of the Indiago Corporation (STC) – should increase their more than the state of the state of the Indiagonal Corporation (STC) – should increase their more than the state of the Indiagonal Corporation (STC) – should increase their more than the Indiagonal Corporation (STC) – should increase their more than the state of the Indiagonal Corporation (STC) – should increase their markets and the Indiagonal Corporation (STC) – should increase the Indiagonal Corporation (STC) – should increase their members of the Indiagonal Corporation (STC) – should increase their members of the Indiagonal Corporation (STC) – should increase the India

The writer is Infosys Chair Professor for Agriculture at ICRIER

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Many Western countries have Confucius Institutes, but only the US, the world's sole superpower, feels threatened. Where is the US' confidence? Where is its cultural tolerance?" — GLOBALTIMES, CHINA

# All guilty as charged

Prashant Bhushan judgment spells out a chilling lesson which undermines that most valuable fundamental right — the freedom of speech



IQBAL CHAGLA

elember to cantal law, justification was used as ference. My only raison of cries was that one fewer was produced to the control of the contr



# The echo chamber strikes back

avoid userses sealing immediately after the harvest, when prices are generally at their lowest. But small farmers cannot hold stocks for long as they have urgent cash needs to meet family expenditures. Therefore, the value of the storage facilities at the FPO level could be enhanced by a negotiable warehouse receipt system: FPOs can give an advance to farmers, say 75-80 per cent of the value of their produce at the current market price.

Since NABARD is also

Since NABARD is also responsible for the creation of 10,000 more FPOs, it can create a package that will help these outfits realise better prices. Here are a few missing elements of the puzzle. There is no doubt that more and better storage facilities can help farmers award distracts calling

avoid distress selling immediately after the

Facebook is in the dock; we need to resist Left-Congress assault on free speech

RAJYAVARDHAN SINGH RATHORE

INGEORCE ORWEILS 1984 it was at hought-crime to actually disagree with the view-points established by tilg Brother. The latest manifestation of this Orwellian concept is the Left-Congress cability aboutes you extra media house's hit-job on Tacebook, an al-ready left-Congres schaes bearing platform's car-medy left-Congres schaes bearing platform in easy left-Congres schaes the control of the scatching the surface reveals how this storm in a teacup's innergy an exercise to browbest Facebook for "allowing" certain opinions to even exist.

even exist.

It is no secret globally that Facebook has been hauled up by various government bodies for controlling the flow of facts. The Singapore Parliamentary hearings in this context have become rather famous – representative famous – repres

quote Kapil Mishra but say nothing on Sonia candhi who echorted people in Delhi to do "aar paar kialara" (prepare for the final battle). There are millions of posts mocking Hindu gods and abusing right-of-centre leaders. But Tacebook's advanced algorithms and committee of the c

The problem, however, is much larger, and intellectually rooted in the fake "post-truth" world phenomenon handied about by a bunch of elitists afiald to lose their power of labelling views as thoughterimes. Scared of being shown the mirror of reality, an entirecabal has decided to rally their contrades to the state of the signature of the signa

After the decline of the grip of mainstream media as the sole abbiter of mult, the battle for native has med to so sold media. Originally, these were not platforms that he Leff-congress controlled, because there were nogates or gatekeepers. However, since then, a planned campaigh has taken over these platforms too.

This latest mod of manufactured out. This latest most site left site mercine warfare to control an already-Congress and Left-leaning platform and punish them for even the most minor of thoughterimes—allowing alternative wisopoints. This is yet another attempt to regain a monopoly over narratives and disenfranchising alternate to control the platform and punish gaternate search and the platform and platform fall to tendentious voices from the Left and become etcho chambers, the more they will be their

tendentious voices from the Left and become echo chambers, the more they will lose their credibility. We should all stand up and resist this organised assault by the Left-Congress ecosystem onur fundamental right to exer-cise our free speech within the boundaries set by Indian law.

The writer is a former Minister of State of Information and Broadcasting (2018-19) 

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST WITH CARE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, Bengaluru challenge', (IE, August 14). The commund violence in Bengaluru has put social media platforms under scrutiny once again. There is an urgent need for legislation on social media. People too must behave responsibly. Ayushi Singh, Agra

MILK PURITY

MILK PURITY
ITIS REFERS TO the report. 'Drive against milk adulteration' (IE. August 13), The Maharshtra government's announcement of a crackdown against milk adulteration is a step in the right direction. But crackdowns must have suprise element. The state government should also ensure follow up measures. Lack of sincere efforts could be the main reason behind rampant adulteration.

MD Aftable, Dombbvili

## TAXPAYER BENEFITS

TAXPAYER BENEFITS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial. 'Good steps on tay (IE, August 14). The launch of a platform to simplify cases, a citizers professional commitments by the tax department are welcome steps. They will help taxpayers in resolving tax compliance difficulties that arise from the complexity of the law and filing processes. This will have a positive spin



off on investments.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

DEMOCRATS AHEAD

DEMOCRAIS AHEAD
THISREPERS TO the editorial Candidate
Kamlai (IE. August 13). Senator Kamala
Amris's career already hoasts a string
of firsts and now she has become the
first black woman and the first person
of Asian descent to be on the ticket of a
major party. If it wins, she will also be
America's first woman vice-president,
anjor party and the consoft trump both
nationally and in swing states, though
much can change by November 3.

Vandana, Chandigurh

# **Healthcare efficiency** at the cost of privacy

With one's health status being seen as a public good after covid-19, the case for a database of medical records is easy to make. This can expose confidentiality to risk. We need a data law

ndia's latest initiative of an Aadhaar-like Health ID for every Indian could ease healthcare services, no doubt. But it also raises big questions about the extent to which a government should have access to personal information of such nature, and the risk of data leaks from a widely-linked central database; the promosed national and the risk of data leaks from a widely-linked central database, the perposed national health stack. Given the covid contest, the Mission was among the highlights of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech on Saturday. It will bring a "revolution" to the country's health sector, he said, laying out the benefits of a digital ID for everyone that would link online all records of test results, diagnoses, prescriptions and other aspects of illness. Every detail will be only a few clicks or swipes away. It would enable high efficiency for sure. Dectors could attend to an emergency case, for example, with alacrity, Unlike some networks of this kind abroad, which emerged from billing systems, this one is said to be patient-oriented, with a software system that can let private services join its portal. Beyond its offer of expedience, the analysis of its anonymized data could have research value, too, In time to come, it could even guide public health policy.

To the extent that the scheme deploys technology for a public cause, its broad objective is laudable. It is meant to be voluntary, not coercive, and its confidentiality is said to be assured. Yet, network effects and its adoption by health providers will make it hard to opt out of. Also, since we have no law that grants us explicit ownership of our data, it could compromise our privacy—which is part of our fundamental right to life—and expose us to data

ndia's latest initiative of an Aadhaar-like

misuse. If Aadhaar was vulnerable, this could be too. Moreover, even if safeguards are put in place, that would still leave our history of ailments available to the state. In the post-pandemic phase, a perception seems to have taken hold that we should all be aware of the health status of others. Aarogya Setu, our covid tracker app, underlines the value of such data as public good. Given the infectivity of this disease, sharing information is clearly useful in fighting it. But what applies to our current health crisis need not apply to all medical conditions and illnesses.

Old reasons for letting every citizen retain some control of the conditions and illnesses.

Old reasons for letting every citizen retain scare, for example, one worry was social life marred by a new kind of untouchability. Low levels of literacy on various aliments and conmisuse. If Aadhaar was vulnerable, this could

scare, for example, one worry was solt an ine marred by a new kind of untouchability. Low levels of literacy on various ailments and conditions—say, of a psychiatric nature—and false assumptions drawn from sketchy knowledge can add up to give patients even more misery. Those who do not wish to bare themselves to state agencies should not find themselves forced to yield to an invasive system. As author Yuval Noah Harari has cautioned, today's covid-constrained circumstances are conducive to a wholesale invasion of what we guarded earlier as our own space. This is not to say that India's project to pool health data should be scrapped. What we need is a robust law that assures us legal control over our data stored anywhere on our behalf. We should also allow citizens the right to be forgotten—that is, to have all their files erased if they so choose. There should be no ambiguity on these core principles. If our draft bill needs choose. There should be no ambiguity on these core principles. If our draft bill needs revision for all this, so be it. Healthcare for all can be achieved with new tools. But don't let privacy short shrift.

# India shouldn't expect anything special from Kamala Devi Harris

She's an ambitious American politician who'll likely do what she deems best for her political future



he suphoris in India over Demo-cratic Party presidential candidate local Real Party presidential candidate local Real Party presidential running mate is amusing. From polliti-ciants to pleebans, from newspaper headlines to tweets, iegions have expressed their pride and joy over an 'Indian' woman who could be vice-president of the United States constituted their president of the United States constituted that the Tamal Ity green along has already been dissected. By the time this column paperas in print, countless that cousins and neighbours of long gone aunts would have been tracked down, and would have been tracked down, and suppersident the proper of the president of the countries would have been tracked from, and the proper of the president of the president details of the times they met the young Kamala on her visits to Chennai. Is this some sort of deep inferiority complex that our still -colonized minds suffer from, this need for constant vali-dation from the Western world? Harva-can' in the US census, not "Asian-Indian", And that is entirely her choice be if for personal or political reasons. She ticked that box, knowing fully well that her Indian-born mother and Jamal-can-born father had divorced when she was a child, and she was raised by her mother.

In her 2019 memoir The Truths We Hold: An American Journey, she refers to her mother as the reason for everything, and writes that "there is no title or honour on earth I'l treasure more than to say I am Shyamala Gopalan Hardon and the say I am Shyamala Gopalan I hardon and the say I am Shyamala Gopalan I hardon and the say I am Shyamala Gopalan I hardon and the say I am Shyamala Gopalan I hardon and the say I am Shyamala Gopalan I hardon and I say I am Shyamala Gopalan I hardon and I say I am Shyamala Gopalan I hardon and I say I say

Rhodesia—now Zimbabwe—which had declared independence from Britian. This is hardly US secretary of state—This is hardly US secretary of state—As for being an "original Freedom fighter, this impossible, since Gopalan was born in 1911. And. according faster, the simpossible since Gopalan was born in 1911. And. according the state of the state

the state of the s

## 10 DEARS AGO



## TEDUCET A TEOUCET

Under observation. which means we effectively are less free.

MY VIEW | MODERN TIMES

# Why the melancholic are unable to find a 'cure' for joy

MANU JOSEPH



ven before the coronavirus pandemic began, though not very long before that, modern people had rehabilitated melancholy and ended its shame. As a result, that reasonless urban sorrow itself has assumed the character of an epidemic. May be it is the newness of the conversation, may be it is the newness of a democracy in communication where every one has a voice toolly that only had the properties of the conversation. The state of the conversation where the conversation was a state of the conversation o

years, a new "solution" would arrive and they would get deeply immersed in that. The birefinktory of the pussuit of happiness by my sad peers is more or less this it begins in a careful reading of Li Krishmanurthy and the philosophies of other deadpeeple, then the philosophies of the deadpeeple, then the philosophies of the deadpeeple, then the philosophies of the deadpeeple, the the philosophies of the deadpeeple, the the picture of the deadpeeple that the page of the deadpeeple that the dea

succeeded in converting sorrow into a spectrum of clinical depression that can be alleviated by a pill. The capitalism of cures has frequented in the capitalism of cures has frequented by a pill. The capitalism of cures has frequented by a pill. The capitalism of cures has frequented by a pill. The capitalism of cures has frequented by a pill. The capitalism of cures has frequented by a pill. The capitalism of cures has frequented by a pill. The capitalism of cures has been called by the capitalism of a definite cause to melancholy. The stribution of a definite cause to melancholy. The stribution of a definite cause to melancholy. The stribution of a definite cause to melancholy. The wellness word, including India. The wellness industry is a bit like Steve Jobs' and the capitalism of the capitalism of the mind seems word, including India. Never had a notion of depression. There were as it is by highly personal to a pathological type, or even victims.

Apple, powered as it is by highly passionate from of organized emparation of self-absorption into compassion.

Interest by a pill. The capitalism of cures has the proper whose minds have never end and the disproportionately by people whose minds have never end cannot be properly whose minds have never end cannot be seen calm. Even as cures continue to fail the said continue t

owinto a pecular of the wellness industry is a bit like Steve Jobs' Apple—everything about its transmitted by highly passionate sort of the wellness industry is a bit like steve Jobs' Apple, powered as it is by highly passionate in the wellness industry is a bit like Steve Jobs' Apple, powered as it is by highly passionate in the wellness in the we

do some sad people feel oppressed by the happy, and do they feel superior to other sadder people?

The happy often respond to the sad with the fine.

But the popular curse of every age might themselves take the melanchoic further from a solution: the over-articulation of what one is going through; the coaseless talk of human suffering the vanited post-mod-tart strength and aerobic enhalteration, and the immersion in lament arts and spurious books about "the mind", and the conversion of the reasonless innate melancholy into a sadness that has villams, usually the very people who love them.

As we can see, the sad are interesting. They have deeper things to say, The Joyful, They have deeper things to say. The Joyful, they have deeper things to say. The Joyful, properly the proposition of the reasonless into the sad are interesting. They have deeper things to say, The Joyful, properly the same than the property of the prope

MONDAY, 17 AUGUST 2020 NEW DELHI **VIEWS** mint

MY VIEW | THE INTERSECTION

# A retreat from global trade will hurt India's geopolitical stature

 $Self-reliance\ is\ achieved\ through\ robust\ economic\ expansion\ and\ not\ by\ shutting\ the\ world\ out\ and\ losing\ foreign\ support\ problem and\ support\ problem\ problem\$ 



Imost a year ago, this column had warned that the economic slow-down that India was experiencing would have a negative impact on India's geopolitical standing, because it is 'presumptions to be special standing, because it is 'presumptions to be special standing, because it is 'presumptions to be sympathetic to India's 'president and companies to be sympathetic to India's 'man of the properties of the standing that the conomic upside'. 'Sheer momentum will allow Indian foreign policy to tide over a mild, short slowdown. If, however, we go into a deep, prolonged slump, we should expect a tought time in international relations.' This was before the covid pandemic began. Events and India's own policy choices since then have worsened the prognosis. With an economic recovery of stand. I rising trade wider geopolitical contest against China, India risks undermining its relevance as a world power. For its part, Beijing is unlikely to miss any opportunity to push is begenomic agenda further and box New Delhi into a sub- subcontinental role. The international environment that was conductive to India's developmental and political interests over the past three decades might turn against us over the past three decades might turn against us over the past three decades might turn against us cover the past three decades might urra against subvenient of the prognosis of the pr

the late 1960s. This year's call for self-reliance first came during e national lockdown as a way to cope with the emands of living in a period in which domestic



movement was restricted, international travel impossible, and global supply chains were in disarray. After China Strangerssoos in Ladaha, official restrictions on Chinese apps and imports became a figure, So much is strangerssoos in Ladaha, official restrictions on Chinese apps and import became a figure, So much is justified. However, poth official policy and public discourse are proceeding in a direction of self-sufficiency and import reduction as desirable ends in themselves. Punitive customs duties on Chinese imports, applied strategically in an attempt to change Beijing's behaviour, are one thing. But raising customs duties in general and thing. But raising customs duties in general and domestic purchase quota for defence equipment might sound patriotic, but shielding domestic producers from competition will eventually lead to lower quality products. In defence, as in other areas, it is far better to purchase the best equipment that money can buy—forcing Indian manufacturers to become globally competitive. It is unfortunate that "self-reland" is being a manufacturers to become globally competitive. It is unfortunate that "self-reland" is being a large public, it is possible to be self-reliant, but impossible to be self sufficient in the modern world. For all my life-long admiration of Mahatrus Gandhi, I think his isde of a crevent into self-reliant, but impossible to be self-reliant, but

growth, is the surest path to self-reliance.
Reducing dependence on imports from China or fuel from West Asia doesn't mean trying to make everything in India, even if if were possible.
Rather, it means diversifying the sources possible.
Rather, it means diversifying the sources possible and the source of the

Assarcioun his volun't eveginz/me mannix in man as a counter weight to China. To the extent that New Dehi recedes in importance in the pursuit of their interests, they will be less inclined to back their interests, they will be less inclined to back. There are some concerns in New Dehi over whether a Joe Biden administration—if elected in November—will take as ofter line on China and a harder one against India. Such a view tends to ignore our own agency. If we reduce the common ground, then the differences will be come relatively more important regardless of who is in office. In India must resist the forces of dee globalization and lead the charge for a new, more balanced international economic order. The openness that we seek in the global economy must start at home.

## MINT CURATOR



## Birds and reptiles have tears that are like ours

Index and registes may not resemble humans in many ways, but they cry similar tears. The composition of human tears is well known, but until now, there was well little research into the composition of structures of tears in registes, birds well little research into the composition of structures of tears in registes, birds well as the resemble of the manural production of the register of the regi

### An AI-vivified snap flashes a man back 75+ years

Then Tokuso Hamai saw the colorized version of an old black- and white hoto of a picnic held under chery tree blosoms sometime before World Warl I, forgotten memorises off annily members, most of whom died in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945, came pouring out. The power of a colorized photo reignite lost memories was eye-opening for 4nd) Nivata, a student who gave Hamai the colorized photo as a present three years ago. The 78th anniversary of the and of World Warl I [was Slaturida, and Nivata, now 18, said she hopes it will bring attention to ber project with a Tokyo University professor to painstakingly colorize photos using artificial intelligence and their own research to spark lost memories for the rapidly aging generation who experienced the war...

## Go environment-friendly with algae flip-flops

escarchers at University of California, San Diego hope to make future beach sists both environmentally and fashion-friendly, with a new formula for biodegadable lip flops. Miles Burkart, professor of chemistry and biochemistry at the public research university in San Diego, California, has developed a polymer from algae, which decomposes naturally. We begin by gowing algae and we grow them in raceway ponds where we can grow them up to very high density, "said Burkart during a tour of the alb for Reuters." At that point when they are fully grown, we take the water out of them. and basically we're able to get the algae down to a very viscous paste." Then what we do is extract all the lipids out of that algae and it's those lipids that we're making our materials out of, "he said.

\*\*Reuters\*\*

## Elephant seals assist an Antarctic climate study

It is known about the marginalice zone is that it is an important storage when for earbon and heat emitted by humans. The global occurs as whole stores anore than 10% of Earth's excess beat and the Soathern Occurs is the portal through which much of this heat is transfer of from the attemptore. This makes importance of the region particularly worrisome. But De Seart and Louise Biddle, aresearcher also at Gothenburg, found a way around this methodological roads to clock in apper partialshed mily a Todo so, they turned to unique organic instruments that can gather consistent information from under the ice southern elements of the contraction of the cont

## Did the Swedish invent the trendy staycation?

A sin many parts of the world, staycations are popular here this summer, with Covid-19 putting would be travellers of venturing too far from home. Plus. Swedish tourists are more limited in where they real goved to go internationally than many other Europeans, with some countries imposing travel restrictions be too the Nordic nation shigh infection rate in relation to its population size. Even before Covid-19, there was a long-running national obsession with staycations in Sweden. Here, they're known as hemset, "which comes from the Swedish words for home, 'hem', and holdiday, 'semester'. Despite a growing trend for international holidays over the past few decades, spending time in summer homes remained a calendar staple for both wealthy families and those on lower incomes.

MY VIEW | GENERAL DISEQUILIBRIUM

# A new monetary policy panel amid central banking flux

RAJRISHI SINGHAL



oon after the Monetary Policy Com-mittee (MPC) ended its legal tenureat the Reserve Bank of India (RBD on 6 August with a clinical decision to hold inter-est rates, all focus shifled to the selection process for a new lot of members. Coinci-dentally, the new MPC, its members and its immediate remit—which includes finalizing. And additional to the control of the use of five immediate remit—which includes finalizing a flexible inflation target for the next five years—are all in a flux at a time when central banking globally is also at a crossroads. And though the challenges are very different, it will be interesting to see how these global trends influence Indian central banking and the inflation that the challenge in the challenge its inflation targeting regime. Three external members will be selected

Three external members will be selected to join three existing RB1 nominees. The process involves intense negotiations between the central bank and government on identifying candidates with fealty to monetary policy. For example, the last MPC's voting patterns: clearly revealed the government nominee's identify and policy stance. The MPC framework is governed by

with stronger banks, because of work done position of the search committee cabinet secretary, RBI governor, economic affairs secretary and three setteral experts handpicked by the government. Clearly, the skeet favours New Delhi.

This comes when the pandemic has both revoluncible, with banks most of central banks action in the absorned filts of the common state of the common sta

two "credit" policies a year to six monetary policy announcements was necessitated by the increasing centrality of markets to mon-etary management or price stability, and the need to convey the central bank's thought process to agents clearly. Its communication process to agents clearly. Its communication policy springs from the International Monetary Fund's transparency code of 1999. That code has now been updated under the guidance of a high-level advisory group, which included former RBI governor YV. Reddy. The new code is voluntary and comprises he pillars of transparency, governance, policies, operations, outcome and official relations (say, with government or international counterparts). Although RBI is under no compulsion to accept it, increased transparency will be critical for central bank credibility in asset markets and improving transmission from benchmark rates to real lending rates.

rates.

The burden of expectations on the new The burden of expectations on the new MPC will be heavy: recognizing threats to future financial stability, reorganizing the tools at hand, and clearly communicating actions to markets. Plus, there's a new elephant in the room: how to exit unscathed from a bloated central bank balance-sheet, which had swollen to 24.3% of gross domestic product by March 2020. 6 EDITORIAL



## Lapsing into contempt

Finding Prashant Bhushan guilty of contempt reflects a low threshold for criticism

Finding Prashant Bhushan guilty of contempt reflects a low threshold for criticism. The begreene Court's order finding advocate Prashant Bhushan guilty of contempt of court reflects poorly on the institution's tolerance of criticism. The judgment of a three-judge Bench on the suo moto contempt proceedings against Mr. Bhushan hardy adds to the dignity and majesty of the Court that it ostensibly sets out to uphold. It is unfortunate that two weets, and not any set of scandadous or scurrious allegations, have occasioned this heavy-handed treatment. In the 108-page opinion that largely draws upon past judgments delineating the circumstances in which the Court will act in add of its institutional reputation and authority, there is little more than a perfunctory analysis leading to the finding that the tweets amount to addition, and the size of the court will act in all off its institutional reputation and authority, there is little more than a perfunctory analysis leading to the finding that the tweets amount or criminal contempt. The first tweet, in which an image of Chief Justice of India S.A. Bode for fundamental rights violations, may be an exaggerated or even unwarranted view on the absence of physical hearings now. However, it is quite a stretch to say that it undermines the Court's dignity, lowers its authority or interferes with the administration of justice. At best, it touches partiality on the Cill's personal conduct and partially on his administration of justice. At best, it touches partialism that the judiciary ought to be able to shruge off.

The second tweet, in which Mr. Bhushan has blamed the court, more particularly, the last six years, "even the court of the proper particularly, the last four Cils, for "the destruction of democracy" in the last six years, it is clearly in the nature of a political opinion, be it with reference to the working all Buergency", requires no defence. It is clearly in the nature of a political opinion, be it with the backdrop of some former, mine and sweep, Mr. Bhushan's

the world now, it may only be because of a growing per-ception of judicial evasion, self-imposed reticence and quiet acquiescence in the face of executive power.

## Big goals

While celebrating milestones, India must not lose sight of governance challenges

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech on the 74th Independence Day – his seventh consecutive one – on Saturday sought to reassure the nation on the twin challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and external aggression. He has always used his oratorical skills to foreground concerns that have traditionally not have considered worth or 2 britism Misister's personal

the twin challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and external aggression. He has always used his oratorical skills to foreground concerns that have traditionally not been considered worthy of a Frime Minister's personal attention. The very fact that he mentioned menstrual hygiene will encourage health workers to be more attentive to the Issue and create more awareness. Sanitation and access to drinking water have been issues dear the four fact that the july great many the properties of the first part of the first part of the great mission that seeks to provide piped drinking water to every home, along with the expanding networks of electricity, the internet, banking and cooking say, will equip hald to robe higher. Solgans such as self-reliance, "vocal for local", "make in India to make for lend world" are just oft rhetoric for a new occasion, but their reiteration could spur the state apparatus into action, besides galvanising opinion. Mr. Modit has been an exceptional user of the 1-Bay pulpit to outline priorities, and deserves credit for it. Wille celebrating the nation's milestones, the massive challenges of governance and development must not be glossed over.

Announcing new schemes that do not resolve, but camouflage, these challenges are of little help. The PM promised to bring a revolution, as the National Digital health 10 that links up all her medical records. But the real issue is the abject alco deprinary health facilities in much of India. Digitalisation is welcome but is no substitute for inadequate human resources and infrastructure in the health sector. Mr. Modi also reiterated his vision for India in relation to the world a tightrope walk of promoting import substitution on the one hand and eaking global partnerships on the other. The challenge in managing such an approach were apparent when he mentioned India's successes in attracting PDI and talked about self-reliance in mundracturing PPSs in the same breath. He did mention 'Vastudhará Kumumbakan' the world is one family – as india's guiding princ

# Adversity has mellowed the leader

In his Independence Day speech, the Prime Minister had to assure the nation that he was not clueless amidst troubles



It was a becomingly chastened Narendra Modi who stood at the nation's grandest pulpit at the Red Fort last Saturday, Last In-dependence Day he was glowing with a newly furnished electoral mandate and hast the "370" tro-phy neatly tucked under his belt. This year the "Inne Militaset could ran uneasy land; and, the country has slipped up badly under his watch during these last 12 months.

Much trauma
The India that Narendra Modi faced this August 15 was in desperate need of an assurance that the nation's affairs were in safe, competent hands. A nation stands joil end out of its comfort zone as a foreign power has made ingress into regn power has made ingress into our territory and there seems very little that our leadership or gener-als can do to restore the status quo ante. The nation has been forced to breathe the pre-2014 air of help-lessness.

to breathe the pre-2014 air of help-lessness.

The India this Independence Day is a land also devastated by an unseen enemy, a deady virus that refuses to fade away. In March the refuses to fade away. In March the Malabharata imagery to promise a decisive victory in 21 days, that has turned out to be just one more empty promise. Instead, India to-day has the dubious distinction of having the world's third largest coronavirus caseload, behind only the United States and Brazil. Thanks to an unappressible virus, India today is a land devastated by India today is a land devastated by and and destitution, a kind of suffering

not seen in a long, long time, even if no one is talking — or wants to talk — of the millions of fellow indiased to were forced to migrate the control of th

Strategy of rhetoric
In the end he did what he does
best: dig deep into his rhetorical
armoury to shore up the spirits of
a deeply dispirited nation. But
even by his standards, it was, at
best, a belaboured effort, an overthe-top invocation of curative and
creative potential of the "will" and
the "dreams" of over a billion peo-



ple. He had to necessarily give hope to a traumatised nation, and even promised that as many as three anti-cornovarius vaccines were on the arrival. Otherwise, Mr. Modi devoted much of his time at the Red Fort particular to the second prime to the second prime desired to the count Prime Ministers ordinarily give at the end of the debate on the President's Address to the two Houses of Parliament.

There was a sobering tone to this cataloguing of 'achievements'— an acknowledgement that slo-

this cataloguing of "achievements" – an acknowledgement that slo-gans do not produce governance and that the un-glamorous task of brick-by-brick grinding chores still have to be performed. These six years have seen an excessive pre-occupation with headline management but governance is certainly much more than the sum total of spectacularly manufactured and produced the produced of the produced that the sum total of spectacularly manufactured and the produced that the sum total of the produced that the sum total of the produced that the produced spectacularly events. manufactured

Sober and muted All this beating the drums of self-congratulations was predictable; but equally significant was the note the Prime Minister did not strike. To begin with, there was no Hindutva triumphalism. Many of his admirers must be dismaved

Hindu political community. May be the Prime Minister is keeping his powder dry for the next electo-ral battle, but for now the minori-ties have not been made to feel spurned or unwanted. The repu-blic has been spared needless trauma.

spuried or unwanted. The repu-blic has been spared needless trauma.

In there was no mention of the control of the spare of the control of the control aged to feast on senophobia and a virulent nationalism, which has paid rich electoral dividends, but there must now be a sobering real-sation that the Chinese have truly settled the Prime Minister's hash. the Red Fort this year must have understood that his over-invest-ment in personal summit diploma-cy with China's President Xi Jipu-go only helped the Chinese size him up – and, the country has to suffer the humilation of a military kind. The bravado was definitely Mowthystanding the periodic

kind. The bravado was definitely muted. Notwithstanding the periodic invocation of 'national pride' and the regular serenading of the valued of valued o

To the middle classes
A third significant course correction was an attempt to repair the relationship with the middle classes at home. There was this extended ode to the middle classes. Implicit in this wooling was a concession that too much of this mandir business and too much of an encouragement to the Yogi Adityanath-type of rough governance and rough justice can only cause

deep disquiet among the Hindu professional middle classes – the very old, original Manmohan Singh constituency, whose defec-tion away from the Congress had brought respectability to the Na-rendra Modi Prime Ministerial

brought respectability to the Narendra Mod Prime Ministerial project.

Beyond electoral calculations, the Narendra Mod Prime Ministerial project.

Beyond electoral calculations, the Narendra Mod ir egime should know that the grand vision of 'Atmaniribhar Bharat' cannot be achieved without the requisite global skills and talent, which could only come from the middle class only come from the middle class only come from the middle class of the control of

omission and commission of past governments.

The onus is on Prime Minister Narendra Modito help the country extricate itself out of a quasi-civil war and a sinking economy. After six years the nation is entitled to ask him to grow out of his deeply ingrained truculence and become much more than the leader of a political faction. He did hold out a hint.

# Freedom and identity, the right to be

The aspirational values in the Constitution will make sense only when the average Indian realises the freedom to be



DEBASHIS CHATTERJEE

Tulsidas, who wrote one of the several influential versions of the Ramayana, described Ram Rajya as a place where everyone felt free to do what they were supposed to do and where there was no fear, so-row or disease. Mahartma Gandhi recognised the values of Ram Rajya as a shared universal consciousness. Underlying the articular columns of the control of the contro Jya as a snared universal con-sciousness. Underlying the articu-lation of both these exponents of Ram Rajya was the conception of a citizen as a free being.

citizen as a free being.

Bound by laws
The final quest of all of life is freedom. This means that life as we
know it is not free. We are all struggling from bondage to freedom.
What binds us? We are bound by
a law? Any event or phenomenon
hat repeats itself is a law. For example, an apple seed will always
produce an apple. This seed will
keep on producing apples — per
haps one million apples will come
from that one seed. An apple seed
will not produce bananas because
an apple seed is bound by its own

III THE COISIMMAND WITH A WAY IN THE CONTROL THE PROPRIES OF T



On choices

Many people confuse freedom
with multiplication of choices,
with multiplication of choices,
political outfits, or shampoo
brands tend to confuse us rather
than help us choose better. Fewer
good options would have been a
better way to weed out undesirable options. At its core, freedom is
not about choices; it is rather
about identity. Do I get identified
with a compulsive and conditioned mind-body or do I identified
with a compulsive and condifree being that is our self, expresses itself not through an algorithm
but awareness.

In the Mahabharata, in a deep
dialogue, Yakhisa sales Yudhishthi-

In the Mahabharata, in a deep dialogue, Yakhas asks Yudhishthira this question, What is the strangest thing in this world? Yudhishthira responds: The most startling a ling is, shough humans have a mortal body, everybody goes about ther life as if they are going to live in their body forever.

The awareness of atma, inherent in pure being, sets us free from the illusion that we are nothing more than our bodies and our

e average Intital realises the Irection to be to history and the teas and make I tappear to be both Likewise, it is the amust tar person to be the body mind that is responsible for our experience of the world.

On choices

Many people confuse freedom with multiplication of relevision channels, political outliffs, or shampoo brands tend to confuse us rather than help us choose better. Fewer good options would have been a better way to weed out undesirance.

to our own freedom.

Not being co-opted
From Ram Rajlya to Swarajya is a
continuum – the journey from the
temporal to the transcendental;
from the civic to the sacred. The
Preamble of the Indian Constitution promises the delivery of aspirational values of justice, liberty,
equality and fraternity for its citzens. They make sense only when
freedom to be and not be co-opted
by the politics of identity, machinations of the market or the dictanations of the market or the dictanations of the market or the dictamarket or the dictamarket or the dictaby the politics of identity, machi-nations of the market or the dicta-torship of the digital world. Swara-jya in thought and education that liberates the free being, sa vidya ya vimukraye, can only rescue India from a myopia of the post-colonial leadership. Until then, Ram Rajya will remain an enchanting utopia.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials. To read more letters online, scan the QR code

A health account
The Prime Minister's
announcement during his
Independence Day address,
of the launch of a National
Digital Health Mission that
would "work as each
Indian's health account", would "work as eight indians health account", where the AZ of a person's medical record will be stored, is a bit intriguing. This appears to be one more initiative in the "one more initiative in the "one more initiative in the other accounts of the account of the other accounts of the account of the other accounts of the account of th may fluctuate and specialists to be contacted may vary depending on the disease, to look at one

aspect of this. It is not understood what purpose is going to be served. D. SETHURAMAN, Chennal

Case of contempt
Right from the beginning, there have been calls to drop the suo motus contempt proceeding initiated against civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan. Norwithstanding this, the Bench proceeded to hear it and convicted flim. Only and convicted flim. Only the statements issued by persons of stature such as Sitaram Yechury and D. Raja and the former Chief Justice of India R. M. Lodha and many other responsible persons as to the unseenly hurry in taking up this matter when there are other burning issues other burning issues pending seem to point to general apprehension that the Bench was likely to

ers emailed to lettersgibrheindu.

convict him. Such an
impression does not augur
well for a fearless and
independent judiciary.
The general impression
among lawyers and judges
is that Mr. Bhushan is a
trieless crusader for larger
causes of civil liberties and
democracy and is a man of
conviction. All his life, he
has been not in the pursuit
of wealth, but excellence.
Convicting him for
contempt is making a
mockery of democracy and
scandalising the system.
It is said that lawyers and
judges are two arms of the
judiciary I that be so, to
amount to maining one
arm of this lystid news of

amount to maiming one arm of this vital organ of democracy.

Tax assessment The Prime Minister has announced a taxpayers' 

charter which is a welcome feature for homest taxpayers. Its proper implementation should be implementation should be addition to this charter it would have been a bigger boon for the honest taxpayer to have had their income level raised for paying income tax or a tax reduction to a minimum level. One wonders why the reduction to a minimum level. One wonders why the government stays away from the advice of economists such as Dr. Subramanian Swamy who Subramanian Swamy who openly declare that the personal income tax system should be done away with. This will encourage more people to come into the taxpayers' circle and investments will flow into government-regulated banks even if there is a lowering of integer in lowering of interest in savings bank accounts. As announced by the Prime Minister, if the assessment

system is judicially implemented, corruption can be brought down to an extent. There should be stringent punishment for corrupt officers in the IT department. V.P. DIMANAJAYAN, Chemnal

Out of the blue The Instagram announcement of August 15, 2020, that from '19.29 hrs', Mahendra Singh Dhoni has retired from international cricket signals the end of a glorious chapter in Indian cricket history. It would be fitting to remember 'Mahi' as an embodiment of post-liberalisation India. He was

one of the very few who gave confidence and courage to middle class India to shed its inhibitio and aspire for success and aspire for success through his meteoric rise. From small town Ranchi, the metamorphosis of the long-haired lad into a marauding grey-bearded gentleman was stuff of legend. We need to salute the genius of MSD and celebrate him for all that he has achieved as a cricketer on and off the field. Thank you Captain Cool for everything.

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In a Sunday Magazine feature titled "Experiment and experience" (August 16, 2020), Anuradha Kapur had been inadvertently referred to as ex-fierctor, National School of Design. It should have been National School of Drama.











THE HINDU OPED 7 MONDAY AUGUST 17 2020

# The centrality of devolution in development

In Sri Lanka, the Tamil people's political and economic aspirations must not be separated



MEERA SRINIVASAN

The outcome of Sri Lanka's August 5 general election had few surprises. The Rajapakas family is decisively at the country's helm for the next five years. The fragmented political opposition is struggling to come to position is struggling to come to great the country's helm for the first and in some cases, sealed fate.

In the north, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), which almost solely represented Tamils living in the north and east for a decade since the country's civil war ended, is swallowing a bitter pill. Its presence in the 225-member Parliament, where the Z25-member Parliament, where the Z25-member Parliament, where the Z25-member Parliament, where the Z25-member Parliament in the north not only chose three candidates from harding the properties of the three candidates from hardinates from parties aligned to the ruling sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP or People's Front) of the Rajapakassa. In fact, they gave Angajan Ramanthan of the SLPP-aligned Sri Lanka Freedom Parry the highest Canadas from the control of the SLPP-aligned Sri Lanka Freedom Parry the highest with the Canada Canada (SLP) or People's Front) of the Rajapakassa. In fact, they gave Angajan Ramanthan of the SLPP-aligned Sri Lanka Freedom Parry the highest control of the SLPP-aligned Sri Lanka Freedom Parry the highest control of the SLPP-aligned Sri Lanka Freedom Parry the highest control of the SLPP-aligned Sri Lanka Freedom Parry the highest control of the SLPP-aligned Sri Lanka Freedom Parry the highest control of the SLPP-aligned Sri Lanka Freedom Parry the highest control of the SLPP-aligned Sri Lanka Freedom Parry the highest control of the SLPP-aligned Sri Lanka Freedom Parry the highest control of the SLPP-aligned Sri Lanka Freedom Parry the highest control of the SLPP-aligned Sri Lanka Freedom Parry the highest control of the SLPP-aligned Sri Lanka Freedom Parry the highest control of the SLPP-aligned Sri Lanka Freedom Parry the highest

Letting down its own people It is not hard to appreciate this read-ing, given that the TNA-led Northern



election in 2013. MERIES ASSEMBLYSAN MISSEY, It was neither able to envision a revived economy to help families cope with the war's cruel after the content of the content

diture Survey.

An unhelpful separation
The grave economic conditions of Tamils living in the north and east, and the apparent shift in their voting and the apparent shift in their voting the shift of the shift of

not be rubbished in retrospect, for the TRA, like many others, believed that the prospects for such reform were greater under an unprecedul that the prospects for such reform were greater under an unprecedulation on the prospect for many dependent of the prospect for many description and the such such as the prospect for managed to author of the prospect for managed for a prospect for managed for a prospect for the prospect for prospect for managed for a prospect for managed for a prospect for the prospect for prospect for the prospect for pro

tarianism that swept the island since Independence. The Tamil Ieadership, including the TNA, may deem the 13th Amendment insufficient but the 13th Amendment insufficient but a sary, Afrer all, at the heart of the Tamil's long-pending demand is the legitimate desire for greater control of their lives. To be able to actively shape their political and economic destinies is first and foremost a democratic right, but also a vital check against a majoritarian state deriving power and legitimacy from its core ethno-nationalist base. Moreover, political europowerment is prover and legitimacy from its core ethno-nationalist base. Moreover, political europowerment which the Rajapasks brothers have promised to now expedite— will prove futile unless citizens have the political agency to inform the process. For development to speak to the needs of the people, devolution of power is central, not incidental. Devolved political power atone can resure citizens are able to build, strengthen and access contaminists of the people, devolution of power is central, not incidental. Devolved political power atone can resure citizens are able to build, strengthen and access for alminist can be added to the people. Aevolution of power is central, not incidental. Devolved political power atone can resure citizens are able to build, strengthen and access for alminist population of power is central, not incidental. Devolved political power atone can be present, and the challeng of a just a future of the people. The properties of the people and the southern leadership knows this well. The Tamil people have no appetite for another armed struggle and the southern leadership knows this well. The Tamil people have no appetite for another armed struggle and the southern leadership knows this well. The Tamil people have no appetite for another armed struggle and the southern leadership knows this well. The Tamil people have no appetite for another armed struggle and the southern leadership knows the southern leadership knows the southern leadershi

national leaders and their own elect-der persentatives has been unam-biguous in every crucial election post-war, about their political and so-cioeconomic priorities – be it the 2013 northern provincial election, the 2015 presidential and parliamen-try polls, the 2019 presidential election and the recent parliamentary elec-tion. Are the leaders willing to listen?

## FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

# The uncertainties over COVID-19 numbers

The problem with data confusion lies with the government, not with researchers who are trying to make sense of the numbers



On Jugues 10, The Hindu carried an op-ed,
"COVID-19 deaths may be higher than reported", by two community physicians, Hen
The Covid Covi

Flagging issues surrounding data I would like to give the piece some context before I evaluate the complaints against it. The Hindu has been flagging issues of data suppression and data manipulation since the Central Statistics Office started re-basing GIP estimates. Economist R. Nagaraj has explained in more than one lead article why there is distrast in the GIP flagress. Writers have spoken of how the integrity of numbers should be restored. In this column, I wrote about the dissatrous effects of data manipulation by quoling Nobel Prize winning eco about the disastrous effects of data manipu-lation by quoting Nobel Prize-winning eco-nomist Ronald Coase: "If you torture the da-ta long enough, it will confess to anything." With reference to COVID-19 numbers, there are many speculative reports from go-ternment bodies themselves. For instance,

vernment bodies themseves. For instance, in June, a PTI report quoted scientists associated with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) saying that the pandemic in India would peak around November 2020. When The Hindu carried the report, the ICMR issued a clarification on Twitter: "The ICMR Issued a clarification on Twitter: "The mews reports attributing this study to ICMR are misleading. This refers to a non-peer reviewed modelling, not carried out by ICMR and does not reflect the official position of ICMR." Another report by PT, "Facing criticism for 'under reporting' of COVID-19 deaths, Delhi sisues SOP for hospitals' (May 10), flagged the issue of under-reporting' of Sonce the break of the pandemic, this new-spaper has carried analytical articles as well as ground reports. The 'Ground Zero', "Te-langana's COVID trials and tribulations' (Ju-

to make sense of the numbers

ly 18), was about lack of transparency of data
and inadequate testing. It is in this context
that one has to read the recent ope do not
cliridhara R. Babu, Professor of Epidemiology at the Indian Institute of Public
Health, Bengalaru, in his lead article, "The
challenges in counting the dead" (August 14),
explained the complexities involved in calculating COVID-19 deaths. He wrote: "To obain unbased, reliable estimates, nationally
representative verbal autopsy surveys such
ain unbased, India has to adopt a strategy
of transparency in data flow and reporting,"
with increased investments in innovations
for improving data collection and reporting."

with increased investments in innovations for improving data collection and reporting."

A fair assumption
The August 10 article flagged major lacunae in the indian system of collecting data relatives of the control of the control

# The cost of stifling voices

In doing so, we risk the disengagement of those most invested in preserving our democratic institutions

## ROHINI SOMANATHAN

Ethical explorations often begin with emotional injury. Something simply feels wrong, and you ask yourself whether you are missing an impor-tant bit of information or the right perspective. This happened when I read the Supreme Court Judgment protouncing seriol tawyer Prashant Bhushan guilly of criminal contempt or his two "Scurribous" tweets. I Brussha guily of criminal contempt for his two "scurrilous" rweets. I have known the Bhushan family for over three decades, a family of lawyers defined by the commitment of the decades and the decades

raise our voices within public institutions and hope to improve them.

Exit and Voice

Students who are interested in economics often ask me what they
should read. The little book on the
top of my list is always Albert O.
Hirschman's Ext, Voice, and Loyalty. Each time I look through it, I come
away with something new. I opened
of my thoughts. Hirschman contrasts
Exit and Voice as two alternative mechanisms for the repair of societal institutions. When consumers switch
from one firm to another, an employee moves to a job with better
working conditions or a family moves
across neighbourhoods, they are all
anarriage complains of abuse, or
workers protest against management
action, it is voice. Exit and voice work
together. Without any possibility of
exit, voices would remain unheard,
and if exit were too easy, very few
would invest in voice. Public health
and education work best in countries
wealthy and most educated exit to
private providers, public systems are
often starved of resources and ideas.

In politics, exit is used at the time of

elections, while voice makes inco

elections, while voice makes incumbents accountable. The relative importance of the exit and voice mechanisms varies across organisation types, but, as filtrschman points out, "In a whole gamut of human institutions, from the state to the family, voice, however cumbrous", is all their members normally have to a substantial to the control of the cont

tion of India which could be used to eliminate child hunger.

Strengthening institutions
Courts exist to promote justice by adjudicating on disagreements. The judiciary relies on listening to testimonies and deciphering them to extract evidence. The many voices they hear are rarely non-partisan. They lear en miffled, broken, acrimonious, verigedil, disingemous, arrogina, verigedil, disingemous, arrogina on listening to all of three and separating the wheat from the chaff, if hey were to restrict themselves to the cool and candid, the result would onten be sellence. Most of us do not yet the feeling while it lasts.

Woke has the potential to strengthen institutions and debate are needed if we are to pool information, negotiate our differences, and make beginned to the control of the control of the control of the control of the very control of the control of the very control of the v

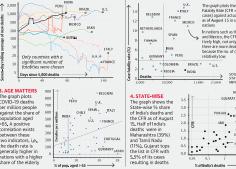
Rohini Somanathan is Professor, Delhi School of Economics



## DATA POINT

# Deaths on a steep rise

2. DEATH RATE | Along with Brazil and the U.S., India has recorded a high number of fatalities but a relatively low Case Fatality Rate as the number of cases is significantly high 1. AVERAGE DEATHS | As of August 15, on an average India recorded 948 deaths per day, slightly behind Brazil (965) and the U.S. (1,008)



MANABLE GUINEAU CUINEAU COLUMN COLUMN

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# The Man Rindu.

## 12 Amarnath pilgrims die in storm

12 Amarnath pilgrims die in storm
Twelve pilgrims die dysterday when a
15,000 strong pilgrims' procesion to the
Amarnath cave shrine was caught in a rain
15,000 strong pilgrims' procesion to the
Amarnath cave shrine was caught in a rain
and snow storm atoy Sheshnag mountain,
15,000 fit, above sea level, according to official reports. The authorities have advised
the pilgrims to abandon the pilgrimage. The
decision to abandon the pilgrimage was taken at an emergency meeting this morning
presided over by the State Tourism Minister,
Mr. Noor Mohammad. The meeting was held
in Pahalgam, the base camp of the pilgrimage. The Minister is there to personally supervise rescue and relief operations. An official spokesperson said contigents of poldand teams of medical personnel in addition
to those accompanying the pilgrims have
been rushed to Seshnag and other advancedice personnel and a team of doctors left with
the pilgrims for the boly cave. Wireless contact is constantly being maintained with the
pilgrim for the boly cave. Wireless contact is constantly being maintained with the
pilgrim party - FII reports

Self-supporting education (from an editoria)
The various defects in our existing educational system have induced great reformers install system as the self-state of the result of the self-state of the self-stat

CM VK

# Opinion

# Hard road back to power for Germany's Social Democrats



centrist votes to win

# **Bidenomics** and the new New Deal



a Biden presidency as their chance to pass reforms that stalled under Obama

# Covid-19 prompts rethink of the case for real estate

Dambisa Moyo

# Annihilation of India's political opposition is almost complete

politics for the foreseeable future

FINANCIAL TIMES



Remote work experience helps to break down old barriers

• WORK & CAREERS

## Is 2020 shaping up to be the year of the introvert?



Kesewa Hennessy Business Life



softer-spoken in a culture that rewards loudness: the levelling power of the volume control

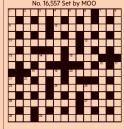
Lex.

## Tech heirs: Zuckerberg Jnr 7 and Evan Spiegel III



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