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Mastering UPSC Answer writing

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HOSPITAL-ACQUIRED INFECTIONS

When hospitals infect you

A 2015 study finds that the rates of hospital-acquired infections and antimicrobial resistance were markedly higher in India than those reported by the CDC in the U.S.

CINTHYA ANAND

A large number of patients who go to hospitals come back with something more serious. According to the World Health Organisation, at any given time over 1.4 million people across the globe suffer from a nosocomial or hospital-acquired infection (HAI). HAIs account for 2 million cases and about 80,000 deaths a year.

The first step to combat this situation is to improve hygiene practices and implement standard operating procedures at each step, according to the president of the International Nosocomial Infection Control Consortium (INICC), Victor D. Rosenthal, who has been studying the problem for several decades.

"Most HAIs are caused due to [a] lack of compliance with infection control guidelines, such as hand hygiene, [and] use of outdated technology," he says. The most common types of HAIs are bloodstream infection, pneumonia, urinary tract infection and surgical site infections.

Key findings

A study published in 2015 by the INICC led by Dr. Rosenthal, studied the rate of device-associated infec-



THEY RUN RAMPANT: "The most common types of hospital-acquired infections are bloodstream infection, pneumonia, urinary tract infection and surgical site infections." — PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

tion rates in 40 hospitals from 20 Indian cities over a 10-year period from 2004. The study, which collected data from 236,700 intensive care unit (ICU) patients for 970,713 bed-days, found that rates of HAIs and antimicrobial resistance were markedly higher in India than the rates reported by the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention, the leading national public health institute in the United States.

The study found an incidence rate of 7.92 central line-associated bloodstream infections per 1,000 central line-days, 10.6 catheter-associated urinary tract infections per 1,000 urinary catheter-days and

a ventilator-associated pneumonia rate of 10.4 per 1,000 mechanical ventilator-days in adult ICUs. The study reports that these high rates could reflect "the typical ICU situation in hospitals in India".

"In India, adherence to practice bundles is irregular, hospital accreditation is not mandatory, and some of the technology applied is different from that of high-income countries. This situation is further emphasised by the fact that administrative and financial support in public hospitals is insufficient to fund full infection control programmes, which invariably results in extremely low nurse-to-patient staffing ratios — which have proved to be highly connected to high HAI rates in ICUs — and hospital overcrowding," reads the study.

Issue of overcrowding

Acknowledging India's serious problem of overcrowding of hospitals which leads to many basic hygiene processes being given the go by, Dr. Rosenthal says limited manpower is an important risk factor. "Having one nurse for three beds in an ICU is an important risk factor. With limited resources, there are limitations on providing a good enough manpower, proper guidelines, proper training, proper education, good behaviour, and right technology," he explains.

Today more than ever, pathologists are constantly in "catching up" mode trying to counter microorganisms rapidly mutating and adapting to existing known methods of treatment. And the persons most susceptible to infection are those whose immune system is already compromised, say after a surgery or a prolonged visit to the hospital. Referring to the overuse of antibiotic drugs, Dr. Rosenthal sounds a sharp warning to the overuse of antibiotics: "The misuse and excess use of antibiotics increase resistance. The approach should be to prevent infections and in the process bring down the HAI rate together with bacterial resistance, rather than waiting for infections and then treating them with antibiotics."

cinthyaa.anand@thehindu.co.in

BED BUGS

The risk that a patient will develop a hospital acquired infection is high

- 1 in 20 in the United States
- 1 in 10 in a European Union country
- 1 in 4 in developing countries such as India

(Source: International Nosocomial Infection Control Consortium)

India's looming BoP challenge

Next-generation trade reforms, backed by a supportive institutional framework, are urgently needed to stave off a balance of payments crisis

JAYANTA ROY

India now faces very severe global headwinds that can create a major strain on the balance of payments (BOP), since its exports have been stagnant for several years. The anti-globalisation and anti-immigration drives in the United States and parts of Europe may result in reduced market access for exports of goods and services. This coupled with a likely rise in US interest rates may negatively impact the flow of remittances and foreign institutional investments. Continuation of rising oil prices as a result of tensions in West Asia may increase our import bill.

Nationalist policies in advanced countries may limit the flow of foreign direct investment and dampen our "Make in India" initiative. Our information technology giants are already affected by the impending H-1B visa reforms. Trade barriers related to the emerging issues in data privacy and data restrictions are now the areas of maximum concern for the future growth of off-shore professional and technical services models (such as business process outsourcing or knowledge process outsourcing).

India needs to urgently implement the next-generation trade reforms to boost exports and promote sustained growth and jobs. The benign neglect of exports in the government and elsewhere is a cause of great concern. Our foreign exchange reserves were boosted largely by the global tailwinds of rapidly growing global trade and the sharp decline in oil prices in the last decade. These can be sharply eroded by the emerging global headwinds enumerated above.

Given the complexity of the current global trade landscape, trade reforms must be designed and implemented in a timely manner by a competent wing of the government. India urgently needs better management of its international economic relationship. The current institutional arrangement that disperses strategic decisions to the ministry of commerce and industry (MOCI) and the ministry of external affairs (MEA) lacks the necessary depth. MOCI has little understanding of the complex next-generation trade reforms that are needed, since it is run by bureaucrats with no experience in trade policy. The ministry is ill-prepared to deal with the complex trade negotiations we are likely to face, with the US giving up free trade and the Trans Pacific Partnership, and China positioning herself as the champion of free trade.

India needs to find a niche in a likely China-dominated Asian regional integration. Simultaneously, India needs to adjust to a new US-India strategic partnership. Unfortunately, MEA also has no trade policy expertise in the ministry. What is most puzzling also is that there does not seem to be any coordination between MOCI and MEA. Trade policy also seems to be outside the radar screen of the NITI Aayog, the PMO and the finance ministry. If this trend continues, the prime minister may have to go in for the next general elections in 2019 burdened with severe BOP problems.

Given the cross-cutting nature of the 21st century trade agenda, leadership should not rest with any line ministry. What is needed is an "apex entity" like the United States Trade Representative in the US, which has a clear mandate from the PM to consult with stakeholders and manage the process of developing strategy. This entity cannot be solely responsible for implementation, as that will by necessity involve many players inside and outside government. Instead, its role in the implementation phase is to act as a coordinator and convener, and to have



Anti-globalisation sentiment in the US and parts of Europe may squeeze market access for India's exports

the mandate to monitor and assess implementation by the relevant agencies within the government.

The proposed apex entity will ensure that all agencies that are involved with trade activities — line ministries, regulatory bodies, state governments — know what the goals are. They are fully informed of the priorities that are defined by the strategy, and use it as a framework that guides their activities. The entity would provide executive sponsorship, vision and strategic direction. It would lead the process of trade strategy design and oversee the overall trade performance and update the strategy when required, based on feedback and impact assessment.

The apex entity should have three trade experts to carry on the tasks, with a small secretariat. The first is a Trade Negotiator responsible for all trade negotiations at the multilateral, regional, and bilateral levels. The second is a Trade and Competitiveness Economist to provide a framework for policies related to domestic regulatory reform in various sectors to reduce the cost of doing business, and for strategic policy-making more generally to improve India's global competitiveness. The final requirement is a Trade Facilitation Expert responsible

for drastically reducing the trade transaction costs epitomised by high cargo dwell times in ports and airports, and time-consuming administrative processing of trade documents by numerous agencies.

To be effective, these economists should be internationally reputed trade experts similar to those recruited for the positions of chief economic advisor, vice-chairman of the NITI Aayog, and Governor of the Reserve Bank of India.

We also need to reverse the present situation of earmarking all posts of senior economic advisors for Indian Economic Service officers, and go back to recruiting top economists as economic advisors in MOCI, NITI Aayog, the energy sector, MEA, and in the PMO. We should, as before, let the Union Public Service Commission select the most qualified candidates from a carefully chosen short-list of the best internal and external candidates. We need to ensure that these economic advisors interact fruitfully with the three trade policy experts in the apex entity to help implement the 21st century trade reforms.

There is an urgent need to create the institutional framework described here for India's global trade and investment engagement. This alone could help India to avert the possible BOP problems that loom large on the horizon. But the time to act is now.

The writer was economic advisor in the Union commerce ministry

The Budget needed to be greener

AJAY MATHUR

The Union Budget, as expected, focused on rural development, agriculture and allied sectors, with allocations in these areas going up by 24 per cent, compared to the previous Budget. The prospects for India's agriculture, and about half of the country's workforce that depends on it, is intrinsically linked to the health of the natural resource base that sustains it. The declining gains in productivity of major cereals are a clear indicator of the need to attend to fundamental issues that are affecting the sustainability of the sector, including the pricing of resources and the extension machinery for agricultural research in the country. We hope that the government will take some bold measures in these directions as well.

Overall, TERI's analysis of the green quotient of the Budget suggests that it has done well when it comes to allocations to ministries and programmes that are directly engaged in the management of environment and natural resources and in enhancing access to clean energy.

Compared to the last Budget, allocations to such ministries and programmes is up by about 6.6 per cent in real terms, which is good news. However, there was need for a stronger statement in the speech on meeting our Nationally Determined Contributions with respect to renewable energy, energy efficiency and carbon sequestration through forests.

The finance minister has increased the allocations for the ministry of environment, forests and climate change by about 10 per cent. While a good signal, this increase is much lower than that between 2015-16 and 2016-17, and hence does not reflect any stepping up of efforts towards the NDCs, which will require a huge commitment of resources. TERI estimates suggest that about ₹100,000 crore would be required annually for conservation and afforestation measures that are needed to achieve the 2.5-3.0 billion tons of additional carbon sequestration alone.

It is obvious that this large a scale of investments cannot be met from the central Budget alone. However, it does highlight the need for the central government to provide a leadership role in terms of an integrated strategy across ministries and tiers of government for meeting this commitment. It also makes the case for the tactical use of limited central resources to effectively leverage resources from the private sector.

A case in point is the use of the National Clean Energy Fund (NCEF), which is funded out of a cess levied on produced and imported coal since 2010-11 under the "polluter pays" principle. The monies so collected are meant to be used for the purposes of financing and promoting clean energy initiatives, funding research in the

area of clean energy, or for any other purpose relating thereto. The rate of the cess has been progressively increased, from ₹50 per tonne of coal in June 2010, ₹100 per tonne (Budget 2014-15), ₹200 per tonne (2015-16) to ₹400 per tonne (2016-17).

Of the aggregate amount collected between 2010-11 and 2017-18 (Budget estimates), only about 35 per cent has been transferred to the NCEF, which itself remained underutilised to the extent of 20 per cent. The issue of under-utilisation of the NCEF has also been pointed out by successive reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

The ministry-wise break up of aggregate allocations from the NCEF shows that about 70 per cent has been allocated to MNRE (ministry of new and renewable energy). In fact, almost 50 per cent of the MNRE's budget this year is being met from the NCEF. A look at MNRE projects financed through the NCEF in successive years shows that the funds have been deployed mostly for the installation of individual grid-interactive or off-grid renewable energy projects and pilots (mainly solar) and for extending financial subsidy through commercial banks for the installation of systems.

It is essential that the NCEF be more efficiently and strategically employed as an enabler of large-scale change in the sector through its greater use for viability gap and seed funding that can improve the competitiveness of the industry in the long run. Another area where the fund should be deployed is applied research and development of viable technologies and business models for clean energy services in India. Unfortunately, NCEF allocation for R&D within the MNRE has progressively declined in the last three years, from nine per cent to only three per cent in this year's Budget.

Budgetary allocations can and do impact the environment around us when, for example, they are able to strengthen and expand municipal services, especially if they are able to also pull in state and municipal funding. But budgetary allocations, especially when they are bundled into funds, such as the NCEF and other financial instruments, also have the ability to attract other finance into activities which enable "pollution avoidance".

It is time for the finance minister to exploit the multiplicative power of such allocations to drive investments into business models which promote, for example, the briquetting of agricultural residues (whose burning is a prime cause of air pollution) or the installation of rooftop solar electricity plants (which enable energy security as well as mitigate climate change) in a manner that prods competition, leading to price reduction on the one hand, and scaling up on the other.

The writer is Director General, TERI

Wanted expansion, got contraction

EXPRESS PHOTO

across the
AISLE

P Chidambaram



A BUDGET is contextual. When the new year dawned, some things were abundantly clear. **Firstly, the external environment was no longer benign (rising oil prices and rising protectionism). Secondly, the growth rate of the Indian economy was slowing down (as in many countries of the world). Thirdly, while the Indian economy was growing, few jobs were being created. Fourthly, there was acute distress in the farm sector. Fifthly, three of the four engines of growth (private investment, private consumption and exports) were sputtering. Sixthly, demonetisation was a terrible disruption of the India growth story.**

The context ought to have set the overall objectives of Budget 2017-18. Those objectives ought to have been reflected in the finance minister's Budget speech, the numbers in the Budget documents and the provisions of the Finance Bill. Sadly, nothing was evident from the Budget speech. Nor did the finance minister spell out the objectives in his numerous post-Budget interviews to the media.

Context sets goals

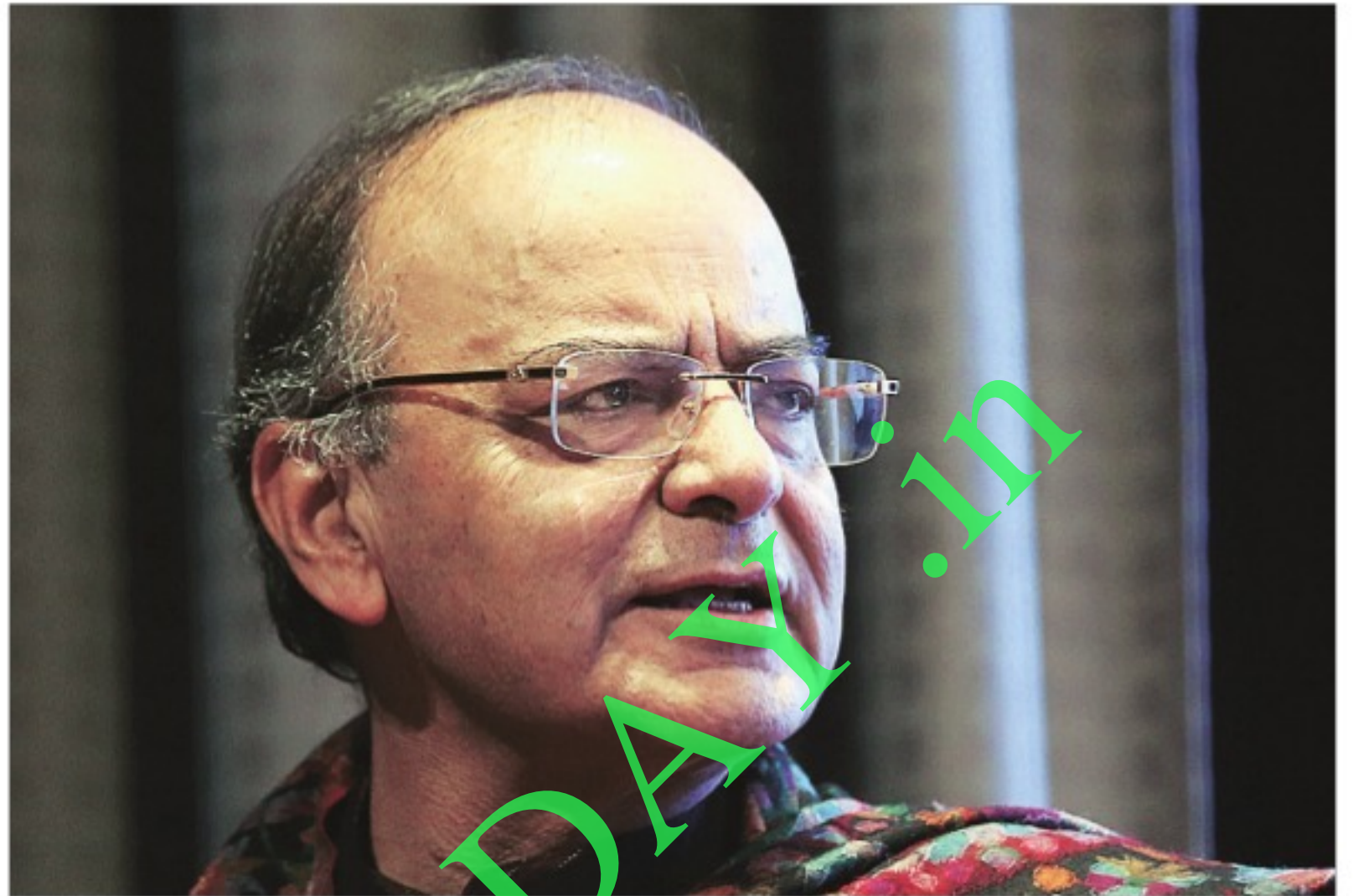
Under UPA I (2004-2009), we chased growth to lift the growth rate from the average of 5.9% recorded during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government (1999-2004). Beginning September 2008 and until 2012 (UPA II), the goal was to counter the consequences of the international financial crisis (September 2008) and maintain growth. After August 2012, the aim was to pull back the economy from the deviations and renew the commitment to fiscal consolidation. In 2012-13 and 2013-14, the objective was to deliver on fiscal consolidation, inflation control and growth. Such an overarching goal is absent in Budget 2017-18.

One thing is clear: demonetisation hangs like a dark cloud over the government and its exertions. The government wants to reboot the economy but it does not know what risks it can take. For an economy that is slowing down perceptibly, and not creating sufficient jobs, the textbook prescription is to increase public expenditure. **The finance minister claimed that he had done that and pointed to a rise in total expenditure from ₹20,14,407 crore in 2016-17 (RE) to ₹21,46,735 crore in 2017-18 (BE). That is impressive—but only until you convert all expenditure numbers into percentage of GDP.**

The contraction

When all economists were agreed and the Economic Survey had recommended an *increase* in government expenditure, the government has chosen to *reduce* its expenditure as a proportion of GDP! Not only total expenditure, but expenditure under crucial heads has *declined* as a percentage of GDP in the Budget for 2017-18 (see table above).

Even in a crucial area like defence capital expenditure, there will be a decline in expenditure. The capital outlay on Defence Services (Army,



Finance minister Arun Jaitley

Head	(as a per cent of GDP) (GDP for 2017-18 projected at ₹168,47,455 crore)		
	2015-16	2016-17 (BE)	2017-18 (RE)
Total Expenditure	13.09	13.36	12.74
National Education Mission	0.20	0.19	0.18
MGNREGS	0.27	0.32	0.28
PMGSY	0.13	0.13	0.11
Fertiliser subsidy	0.53	0.46	0.42
Food subsidy	1.02	0.90	0.86
Interest subsidy on farm loans	0.10	0.09	0.09
NSAP	0.06	0.06	0.06
Mid Day Meal scheme	0.07	0.06	0.06

Navy and Air Force) was the following:

2015-16	₹71,674 crore
2016-17 BE	₹78,586 crore
2016-17 RE	₹71,515 crore
2017-18 BE	₹78,078 crore

The conclusions are obvious. The defence ministry is not expected to spend the amount allocated to it in 2016-17 for capital expenditure. It will fall short by ₹7,071 crore, nearly 9% of the allocation. Hence, the finance minister has cut the Budget allocation for 2017-18 from ₹78,586 crore to ₹78,078 crore. Since that would not look 'nice', he has puffed up the number by adding ₹8,364 crore by the simple expedient of showing sums allocated to the heads of Defence Ordnance Factories, R&D and DGQA under 'Capital Outlay on Defence Services'!

Also, if you **look at the table (at the top)**, you will be alarmed to find that the allocation (as a per cent of GDP) remains the same for 2016-17 RE and 2017-18 BE for crucial programmes such as Interest Subsidy on Farm Loans, National Social Assistance Programme (old age pensions) and Mid Day Meals Scheme. Allowing for rise in the number of beneficiaries and rise in cost in the case of mid-day meals, the effect of such 'constant' allocation may actually turn out to be a 'reduction'.

Fear haunts govt

Why did the government, against all advice,

adopt a contractionary strategy? The ostensible reason is 'to meet the fiscal deficit target', but even after contraction the target has not been met. It has been set at 3.2% in 2017-18 BE when it should have been set at 3.0%. **It is obvious that**

- the government fears that it has overestimated the GDP for 2017-18; or
- the government's revenue projections are aggressive and may not be achieved; or
- the government's estimates of expenditure are under-stated; or
- all of the above.

Will the strategy work? Will it boost economic activity and deliver growth of over 7%? Will it attract private investment? Will it create jobs? I doubt it.

The government should have adopted an expansionary strategy coupled with bold and broad reforms. It should have attempted a more ambitious disinvestment programme. It should have implemented the recommendations of the Expenditure Reforms Committee (appointed by it) and cut wasteful expenditure and expenditure that have yielded no results.

Fear haunts the government. It seems to have given up on bold reforms.



Website: pchidambaram.in
@Pchidambaram_IN

Wouldn't it be lovely if India's 84 billionaires followed Yale?

BY INVITATION



PETER FRANKOPAN

2016 was a year that made everyone sit up and realise that the world is in transition; identifying what this year has in store is vital for those in politics and business, where big decisions and big money rest on getting things right. But it is important for other sectors too — like charity and education. Oxfam recently released a document titled 'An Economy for the 99%'. The report contained some mind-boggling facts. The authors noted that the world's richest eight people owned as much as the world's poorest 50% put together. They reported too that the richest man in Vietnam earns more in one day than the worst-paid worker earns in ten years. And that one in nine people on the planet go to bed hungry each night.

The report highlights some figures from India



GIVE IT LIKE GATES: The tech billionaire, who could become the world's first trillionaire, has pledged to donate more than half of his wealth to charity

too that make for startling reading, both about global trends, but also about the country itself. The annual dividends paid to the owner of the Zara fashion house are 800,000 times the annual wage paid to a garment worker working in India. Most striking of all though is the fact that the wealthiest one per cent own 58% of the country's total wealth. This is particularly problematic given recent research that shows that a country's growth is slowed down by the number of billionaires it has.

Tackling inequality is perhaps the most important thing that politicians do in any country. Working out how to manage the ultra-rich who have strong vested interests in minimising tax bills and maximising their own returns is no easy task, especially given the efforts the wealthy put into lobbying politicians, and the important role that business can and does play in helping an economy grow.

What is less difficult, however, is encouraging philanthropy. This is an area that is changing fast in India today. According to a recent report prepared by Bain & Co, the number of Indians giving

money to charity the last six years has climbed dramatically, with fully 100 million more people giving time or money to good causes in 2013 than in 2009. That highly encouraging trend appears to be continuing — which is important given that despite the impressive change, the 28% of the population who give to charity is a far cry from the 74% who make donations in the UK.

Of course, the contributions of the super rich can be transformational not just in the short but also in the long term — especially in the most important driver of social change and equalisation: education. Oxford University's Worcester College (of which I am a Senior Research Fellow) recently celebrated its 300th anniversary, following the gift of an English baronet, Sir Thomas Cookes, for the foundation of a place of learning for scholars in Oxford. He was following in the footsteps of other major donors, like John de Balliol, who left a grant intended to 'provide perpetual maintenance for poor scholars' at the same university some 750 years ago. Balliol College is still going strong.

Then of course there is the most famous philanthropic donation in this field — which connects directly to Chennai. An employee of the East India Company who rose to become governor of the British fort of St George, he did well for himself (too well, in fact, because he was relieved of his post following repeated complaints about how good he was at lining his own pockets).

The epitaph on his tomb would have done attendees to the World Economic Forum in Davos proud — since like them, he was a true global citizen. 'Born in America, in Europe bred, In Africa travell'd and in Asia wed' (at the Fort of St George in Madrassapatnam, no less). 'Much good, some ill, he did,' reads his tomb with rather touching honesty.

Being rich brings responsibilities. The game is not how little you can get away with paying in taxes, but how much you can give back, especially if good fortune has smiled on you. The gift given by the former governor of Fort St George, Elihu Yale, lies behind one of the best and most famous universities in the world — in Yale's case, with the second largest university endowment on the planet.

Would it not be lovely if each of the current 84 billionaires in India took inspiration from history? Many have made fortunes in the past, but their names disappeared like ashes in the wind. Those who respect their fellow men and women make the greater impact over time, because they used their resources to transform the lives of others, rather than spending on themselves. No one ever puts up statues or names universities and colleges after those who are rich; but they do for those who are generous.

Frankopan is the author of 'The Silk Roads: A New History of the World'

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INBOX

Blinkered Budget

Our Budget is like a bursting firecracker — all sound and fury, signifying nothing. Kudos to Swaminathan Aiyar for stating the simple truth (ATM, Feb 5). Instead of making high-sounding promises, the FM should have apologised for the lives lost after demonetisation and announced compensation for the victims' families. There is no glimpse yet of the huge, anticipated cache of black money nor the means to recover it. Fifty days... we are still counting!

Subhankar Saha, Sindrani, WB

...

In their columns on the Budget (Feb 5), Swaminathan Aiyar and Chetan Bhagat missed one important point — rampant corruption can play spoiler, no matter how good the Budget might look

Hero Vaz, Bengaluru

Rise, people

Apropos Shobhaa De's column ('What two Bollywood films tell us about the state of politics', Feb 5), many films were made in the past too, showing the nexus between politicians, bureaucrats and criminals. But they had no salutary effect on the ground. To bring real change, people need to rise and fight back. Leaders and public servants must realise they are here to serve the people, not suppress them.

S C Vaid, New Delhi

REPLAY

'Looking at opposition leader and smiling at them isn't a crime. I think smiling is not a crime'



TN CM O Panneerselvam on AIADMK leader Sasikala accusing him of exchanging smiles with DMK's Stalin

'Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned, nor hell a fury like a woman scorned'

William Congreve

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The one good thing you did not know Trump was doing

BY INVITATION



AMIT VARMA

The first three weeks of Donald Trump's presidency have been frightening. This is because he seems to be that one politician who actually intends to do what he promised on the campaign trail. He's hitting out at immigrants, attacking free trade and it looks like he'll build that wall, with his own tiny hands if he has to. Put in the middle of this carnage, Trump's appointment of Betsy DeVos as education secretary is a move in the right direction.

DeVos has been demonised by the Democrats, who tried to block her appointment, but their attacks were mostly personal ones that did not focus on the substance of what she proposes to do in office. For decades, DeVos has been a proponent of School Choice. This would transform education in America, and would show a way forward to other countries, including India. I've been writing in favour of School Choice in India for many years, so let me break down what it means in an Indian context.

Education in India, as we know, is in an abysmal state. The government devotes vast amounts of money to it, but outcomes are terrible. A recent Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), described by the government itself as "pretty depressing," showed that 52% of students in Class V were unable to read a Class II textbook. As much as 58% of Class VIII students could not do simple division, and teacher absenteeism was rampant. Teachers are not the problem, though, but a symptom of it. The problem is incentives.

Government schools are guaranteed their funding, and their teachers, who are paid many times what teachers in budget private schools get, are more or less tenured. They have no reason to aim for excellence and try to provide quality education. How does one make them accountable, and make sure that our money is better spent? One answer is school vouchers.

Under a voucher system, the government, instead of giving money to government schools, gives vouchers to parents. Parents decide what is the best school for their children, and submit the voucher there. That school then gives the voucher to the government and gets the money.

This changes the incentives for government schools and their teachers. They have to perform now, and deliver quality education, or parents will take their kids elsewhere. Competition brings accountability. This also empowers parents with choice. They are the people who should decide what is best for their children, and not a distant, unaccountable government. In a nutshell, the state funds schooling, not schools.

Vouchers are only one piece of the puzzle, of course. They are pointless if there are harsh entry barriers for private players in education. For 70 years, we have had insane regulations in place that disallow or disincentivise private schools, especially for the poor. If a school provides budget education to children in a slum,

why should it matter if its playground isn't big enough? Let parents decide what they value.

As it happens, there is a vast informal economy of budget private schools, and poor parents vote with their feet. Organisations like the Centre for Civil Society have long documented how thousands of poor parents in slums and villages across India prefer to pay to send their kids to a budget private school rather than to a free government school. This speaks volumes.

Private schools are demonised, but contrast their incentives with those of government schools. In a marketplace with no entry barriers, which India is not, the profit motive is the best incentive. After all, you can only make a profit by delivering value to others. When I was growing up in the 1980s, telecom, airlines and education were all government monopolies, and delivered abysmal service. Today, two of them allow private players to compete freely, and because of competition and the profit motive, we the people are better off. But not education, which is so important for our nation's growth.

When you fight the system, of course, the system fights back. The status quo is always fiercely defend-



CLASS ACTION: New US secretary of education Betsy DeVos's prescription for transforming education in America holds lessons for India as well

ed by the special interests that benefit from it. (Since they are beneficiaries of the status quo, they also have the money to spend on it.) In the US, for example, teachers' unions are the biggest opponents of education reform, as the current system gives them power and privilege without accountability. They happen to be prominent donors to the Democratic Party who, as a result, oppose School Choice.

As an illustration, consider that the sanctimonious Elizabeth Warren actually advocated school vouchers in a book she wrote in 2003. She changed her stance when she joined politics and realised who the most influential donors in the Democratic Party were. That's the whole game of politics right there: special interest groups purchasing politicians to benefit at the expense of the common people. It's ironic, then, that Trump should be on the right side of this issue.

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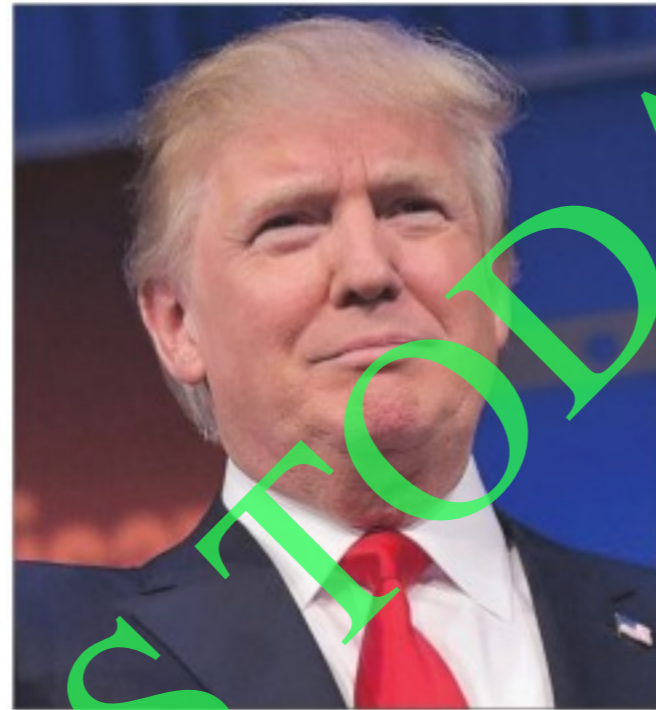
Dear Leader trumps Trump

WE must conclude that US President Donald Trump has beaten Dear Leader at existing on a plane where he operates with the use of facts that no one else knows about. All that Dear Leader has done lately is make speeches in parliament as if he were in a public rally, he's accused a former prime minister of wearing a raincoat (nothing wrong with the garment), a fellow MP of imbibing liquor when he should be drinking ghee (cheers to that), he's mentioned dogs (remember the puppies who come under cars?), and he's not even suggested that his electoral opponents are about to give quotas to Muslims as he once did before a crucial election in Bihar.

The most powerful man in the world has however detected a conspiracy of gigantic proportions that's not been hatched in Moscow (because Putin is a friend) but by liberals and the media in the US. Earlier this week Donald Trump said that the American media intentionally failed to cover acts of terrorism around the globe. "It's gotten to a point where it's not even being reported," he said in a speech to military commanders. "And in many cases the very, very dishonest press doesn't want to report it. They have their reasons, and you understand that."



Do note the emphasis on the "very, very" dishonest press. What the 'reasons' could be is a matter of speculation, imagination, mega conspiracy. There is indeed a terrorist act that was not reported in the US media probably because it never happened. That's called the massacre of Bowling Green (a place in Ohio). This is the incident that never happened but has an entire Wikipedia page dedicated to it as senior White House aide to Trump, Kellyanne Conway mentioned the 'massacre' in several interviews as justification for the immigration and travel ban



from some Muslim countries. Conway also uses the phrase "alternative facts" to describe facts that people have a hard time confirming.

So we have a universe turned upside down in the US where a White House aide provides hard facts to confirm "facts", while it's the reality TV stars like Kim Kardashian who now give the hard facts on their social media feeds, along with the sources of information listed below. Here's a list that the dazzling lady put out: 'Number of Americans killed annually by': Islamic Jihadist immigrants: 2; Far

right wing terrorists: 5; All Islamic jihadist terrorists: 9 (including US citizens); Armed toddlers: 21; Lightning: 31; Lawnmowers: 69; Being hit by a bus: 264; Falling out of bed: 737; Being shot by another American: 11,737 Our celebrities, do note, how beauty and brains can go together in males and females.

Frankly, Trump is being given a pretty rough time. Besides mega celebrities registering protests, there are huge gatherings against his immigration policies across the US. The media has been having a field day really tearing Trump apart, lampooning him, and so on. It's actually quite a treat to watch Steven Colbert and other hosts of late night shows, tear into Trump.

Our not-so-brave troopers in the Indian media are a downright bores in comparison. When they shout the loudest it's usually when they are making the argument for the status quo and/or against Pakistanis.

Meanwhile, there's a theory that makes absolute sense to me that Trump is being hit hard not just because he is crazy, stupid, awful and successful but because he is an anti-system figure in his own way, as Hillary Clinton would never have been, as Barack Obama held out the promise of being, but never was, and as the two

Bushes never were.

Let me confess that I have a perverse view of the world and little interest in a US visa as some of our great nationalists have. I think it would be a great trade-off if Trump promises to leave the world alone as a price for not allowing the world into the US. The not-so-crazy presidents of that country have entered into bloody wars and stoked conflicts that have uprooted millions, (a few of whom do want to go to the US).

The world is so complicated that it's better to contemplate Dear Leader, who beats Trump in the way he carries the system with him. Every now and then he also produces "alternative facts" but because he says it is so some of us believe it is so. He could certainly give Trump some lessons on creating an alternative reality.

Dear Leader is also ahead in the number of twitter followers that stand at 27 million while Trump has 24.3 million (a little more than Shah Rukh Khan at 23.2 million). Trump's twitter style is however more in keeping with that of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal. The US president keeps tweeting feed and clips about fake news and puts out polls that show how many people agree with him in spite of what *The New York Times* says.

THE HINDU GS NOTE

DATE 12.02.2017

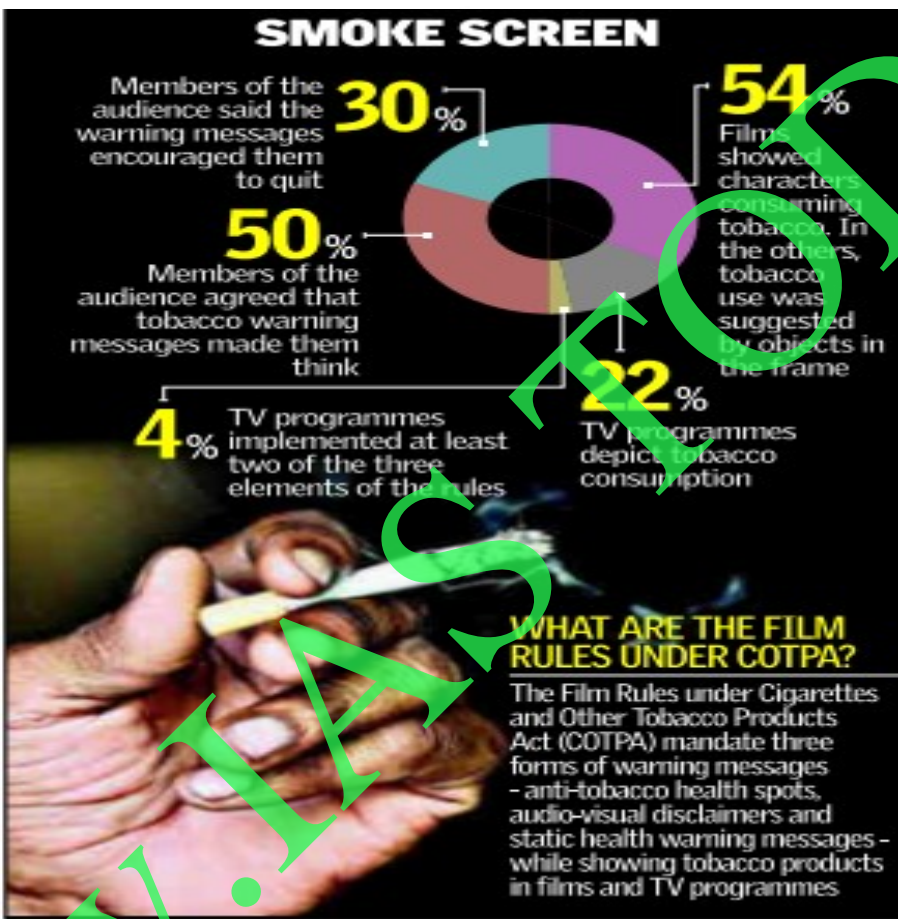
G.S.-02

⇒ **Government committed to independent judiciary**

- Constitution of India follows separation of power among legislative, judiciary, executive and its directive principle of state policy under article 50. Also it is fundamental principle of constitution that can not be alter
- Recently deadlock between judiciary and executive on appointment also making in news because judiciary has scrap NJAC on the base of sovereignty and executive now not ready to accept memorandum of procedure formed by the judiciary

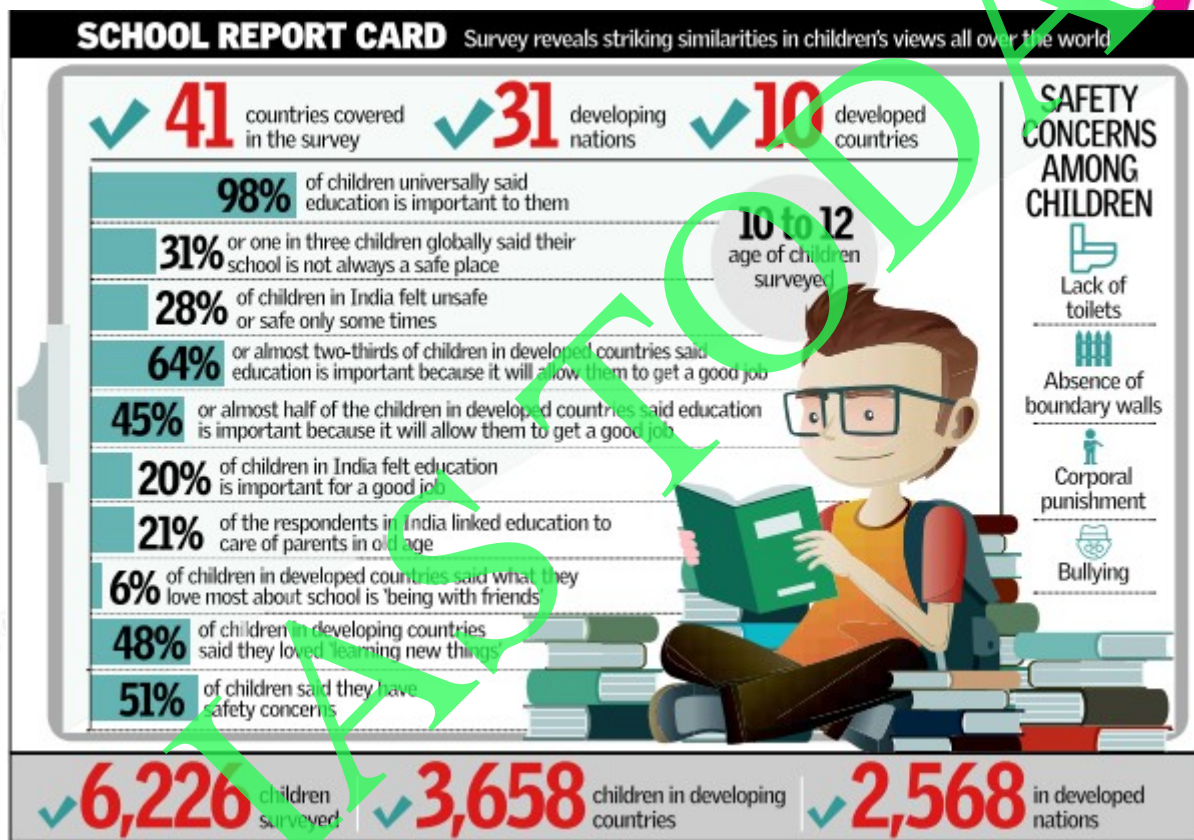
○ **COPTA act and role of media in its implementation**

- Cigarette and other tobacco product act have provision about showing that tobacco is dangerous to health in film or TV show



o **Fears of student about Schools**

- Recent survey show that student have fear about safety in school most of fear are lack of toilet, lack of boundary wall, punishment and bullying are major threat



o **Right of women on pregnancy**

- Supreme court in judgment revealed that women have absolute right on pregnancy, abortion etc.
- This is fundamental right as no one can forced women to take about decision
- But social structure of the country prevent this from implementation because in india hardly a few women have right to take decision on its own
- Reproductive right is one of the human fundamental right related to dignity of life

G.S.-03

• **India successfully tested interceptor missile**

- India tested interceptor missile successfully by targeting another balastic shield missile

- Another missile launched from bay of Bengal as mimicking enemy missile and interceptor missile launched from abdul kalam island destroyed enemy missile successfully
- This missile indigenously developed by the defense research and development organization to combat target in endo and exo atmosphere

⇒ **Infection from hospital**

- Survey told that when patient go to hospital return with more serious infection due to lack of the cleanliness in hospital
- This phenomena is called hospital acquired infection

⇒ **Health story of rural india**

- People have less income + do not have awareness about importance of cleanliness > health issue > people not going to hospital due to economic constraint > more serious infection
- Rural india > less population > no private hospital > government lack fund > no access to hospital > witch, quack doctor number are being increasing
- Low government funding > more out of pocket expenditure
- **Bank now in position to lower down rate : RBI**
- In last monetary policy committee meeting bank adopted accommodative trend to neutral trend

- RBI strongly old about possibility of the rate cut due to micro economic slow down after demonetization
- NPA also becoming major problem as long gestation project will bear fruit in long term basis
- **SEBI give view of reform to be taken up during FY 2018**
- Foreign investment promotion board has been scraped to make investment procedure more simple
- Now all the work to be done with the online procedure and SEBI will work toward better cyber security to manage this complex system of the investment
- Special focus for the SEBI in near future will be commodity market to make it more

competitive to give farmer reasonable price and lower down core inflation

o **Rescue by human chain to stranded whale**

- Recently lots of whale stranded from golden sea to coast of new Zealand and many found dead
- Environmentalist and volunteers helping whale to return in golden sea nearly 200 whale rescued by this way
- Whale generally found in group while migrating to warm water and work on basis of SONAR techniques to find out its way
- It is first time incident of whale coming in super pod[big group]

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