## PREFACE

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## The Rise of A Science Superpower

## Ananth Krishnan

Driverless cars that can survive nearly all accidents. Hospitals and restaurants that use face recognition software to access patients' medical history and to order your favourite dish. Artificial Intelligence (AI) that guides a city's traffic movements, predicts traffic congestion and even arranges bicycles for commuters. Intelligent applications that get approvals for bank loans fa ster than one can imagine. A 'big brother’ surveillance that uses 'big data’ to predict street crime and also tracks citizens' movements using one of the most powerful face recognition programmes.

This isn't a peep into an Orwellian future. This is today's China. No country is moving faster than China in harnessing 'big data' and AI to power its industries-what most experts see as the next technological wave. In September last year, Beijing outlined a plan aimed at deploying AI technology across sectors-from education to transport. For China, AI is at the heart of its technological leap forward.

## THE NEW 'MADE IN CHINA'

For Many in India, a 'Made in China’ caricature that comprises fakes, cheap toys and electronics is widely pervasive. But in truth, Chinese manufacturing today is far removed from the "world's factory" that drove Beijing's export-led growth two decades ago. In Xian, for instance, robots have replaced workers in a factory that is churning out one of the world's most advanced laser diodes. In Guizhou, China is building one of the world’s largest ‘big data’ facilities. In Beijing's technological hub of Zhongguancun, internet companies that began as start-ups are now global behemoths. Of the top 10 biggest internet companies in the world by revenue, four are Chinese-e-commerce giants JD and Alibaba; Tencent, which is behind the social media app WeChat; and Baidu, which started as a search engine and is now leading the AI push, including in autonomous cars. In comparison, only one of India's top IT companies is among the top 25- Flipkart. China has more than 700 mi11ion internet users-more than double of India's.

China's tech push is rapidly closing the gap with the United States of America. Alarmed by China's strides, especially in AI, the Barack Obama administration had outlined a National


Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Strategic Plan, which noted that the trends of AI research "reveal the increasingly global nature of research, with the US no longer leading the world in publication numbers". That mantle has now gone to China. The US plan said that the impact of AI on society "will continue to increase, including on employment, education, public safety and national security, as well as the impact on US economic growth.
"In algorithms, the gap between China and America is becoming smaller", says Tu Zipei, a former president of Alibaba. " This is a big chance for China to become an AI leader", adds Tu, pointing to how China, more than any other country, is best situated to make the next big tech leap. As he puts it, "data is the soil for AI to grow".

## THE WECHAT GENERATION

The two biggest digital innovations in China at the centre of its data deluge have been Alibaba and Tencent's WeChat, which has 1 billion users. Alibaba has transformed businesses, and We Chat is perhaps the most innovative social media platform in the world. It's often wrongly described as a Chinese WhatsApp, but it's far more advanced. In fact, it introduced voice and video calls years before WhatsApp did. It's to some degree an amalgam of WhatsApp, Facebook and Paytm-users can post photographs, messages and use its e-wallet. In fact, this correspondent found that it's possible to spend a day completely cashless in Beijing-from buying movie tickets and ordering taxis to paying electricity and gas bills with the touch of a fingerprint. "WeChat generates 100 million photos every day." says Tu. "It's only logical that Tencent develops the best face recognition technology in the world. And it will transform into an AI company eventually."

## THE AI RACE

Among the companies betting big on Al is Uisee in Beijing. It is developing autonomous cars. "We want to use AI and 'big data’ to transform society," says Wu Gansha, co-founderCEO. "From traffic jams to accidents to air pollution to city layout, autonomous d riving can do a lot to remove society's problems. Our driverless cars are operating in Hangzhou without one accident in three months." Wu is working with the government to take the Hangzhou experiment nationwide, and believes China is more bullish than the US. "I have been involved in several discussions with the Ministry of Industry and IT, and they believe that autonomous cars are an

integral part of smart cities. China has planned 1,000 new towns by 2020. So We have the opportunity of having 1,000 new towns that are autonomous car-friendly" Wu says.

Kaifu Lee, who earlier headed Google China and now runs Sinovation Ventures, an Alfocused investment firm, believes that China’s AI industry incentives are "world leading". "If you are a credible venture capital fund setting up a fund in a region, the government will be a leading investor in your fund upto one-third. If you do well, you can buy back shares from the government. If you don't, they subsidise your losses," says Lee.

Lee adds that if the first wave was the internet, the second wave is "applying AI to businesses that have digitised data", which China is pushing under its AI policy across every sector-from banking to healthcare to transport. The third wave, he says, is robotics and autonomous vehicles, where China is positioning itself to dominate.

## THE NEW CHINESE WORKER

Robots have replaced workers on the assembly lines of Focus light, a company in Xi'an, the ancient city famous for its terracotta warriors. The 10 - year- old company manufactures advanced laser products used in industries ranging from space to information technology to life sciences. It's a story that reflects China's tech transformation.

China's success in manufacturing is underpinning it moves in AI and other fields, where the 'Made in China 2025’ plan envisages a revolution in smart manufacturing. Under the plan, China reached out to entrepreneurs like Focuslight founder Victor Liu, who, when he left Silicon Valley in 2006, was a reluctant returnee to his homeland. By then, China was a manufacturing behemoth, but was nowhere near the West when it came to innovation. Liu was part of the first batch of a government programme to bring back some of the talent that China, like India, had lost to the West.

However, where the two countries' experiences differ is in Beijing's determination to bring back this talent, demonstrated with action. Liu was told that he was required to innovate. He was offered a 10 million Yuan (Rs 10 crore) research fund, and a 1 million Yuan tax-free relocation package. Supported by the influential Chinese Academy of Sciences, he launched Focus light, which would make advanced laser diodes, and in less than five years, begin to rival

the American and European giants that Liu once worked for and become the third most advanced firm in the world in its field. Focuslight serves as a poster of ' 'Made in China 2025', and a company emblematic of Made in China 2.0-high- tech manufacturing that Beijing hopes will replace the older export-driven Made in China of cheap goods.
"What people do not understand is manufacturing is key to innovation; manufacturing allows you to have an idea of how to design and produce a product," Liu says, "I cannot emphasise enough how important the ecosystem, policy and administration are. It can make life difficult for you, whether taxes or something else, or it can be transformative."

## BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING

For China, building a digital state is being seen as a crucial weapon for the one-party regime to strictly maintain social control. In November last year, a video went viral showing a Chinese company's face-recognition technology being used by the government-at a busy traffic intersection every passerby was identified by an ID number. The company, SenseFaee, is deploying its technology in Beijing, Chongqing Guangdong, Sichuan and Hainan, and according to its CEO, it has caught 69 alleged criminals/ suspects in 40 days in one city. Sky Net is a nation-wide system of millions of AI-powered cameras that watch streets, tracking traffic violations and crime. While the government says this will stop crime, it may also mean the end of privacy.

## LESSONS FOR INDIA

In India, the impression that China can produce only cheap imitations is widespread. If anything, China's story warns of the dangers of complacency in such assumptions. "I don't think anyone would have foreseen 15 years ago that four of the 10 biggest internet companies would be Chinese," says Kaiser Kuo, who worked with Baidu until 2016. Kuo says there is a misplaced perception that only China is blocking foreign competition to enable the rise of its giants. "Twitter was blocked in 2009, Google didn't pull out until March 2010, but even by then these companies were far behind their competitors," he says.

There are lessons from China's digital economy that question conventional wisdom on innovation, Kuo says. Even Americas story shows the importance of government in creating the right conditions. "The mythology of Silicon Valley forgets the extent to which defence department expenditures played a role. The internet is a primary example. The state has been smart in China

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in knowing when to get out of the way, in setting the tax policies, in encouraging recruitment, in putting in place the infrastructure and in bringing back the Chinese entrepreneurs".

Shashank Reddy, who studies AI policy at Carnegie India, agrees. "In terms of data, India offers the same advantages as China-1.3 billion people have been en rolled in Aadhaar. The problem seems to be that nobody has managed to make use of these conditions. We don't have a Google or Baidu that create the data you need to build a credible AI system. The history of the biggest technological innovations of our times shows there's a lot of government backing and support that went into it," he says.

The Union government appears to be listening. For the first time, the Union budget has specifically mentioned AI, robotics and machine learning, while the allocation for Digital India has been doubled to Rs 3,000 crore, though a detailed policy is still awaited. The importance of AI to national security is beginning to be realised, with the defence ministry announcing a new task force on employing AI for national security and defence need on February 2. The task force brings together the private and public sectors, and will be chaired by N. Chandrasekaran of Tata Sons. Its members will include officials from the Defence Research and Development Organisation, government and educational institutions, IITs, and Reddy of Carnegie.

It is clear that the rise of digital China is changing conventional wisdom on what it takes to innovate. As Kuo puts it, "Indians, like Americans, have this idea that freedom of expression is a necessary condition for innovation to happen. What's dangerous is if you think it's a sufficient condition to make people innovate." China is rewriting the rulebook, and India will ignore this transformation at its peril.

## INDIA TODAY,

February 19, 2018.

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## Immune to Accountability

Kundan Pandey

Why, after all is the medical fraternity afraid of the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act? Back in 2010, when the law, henceforth referred to as CEA, was notified, it was hailed as a model one. The law, which is applicable to all types of health establishments and all streams of medicine, aims to streamline healthcare services across the country, while ensuring private hospitals do not engage in unethical practices. But eight years on, nothing much has changed on the ground. Doctors, especially those associated with private clinics and hospitals, are dictating the term of CEA to such an extent that states are succumbing to the pressure and dragging their feet over implementing the law, despite a recent reminder by the Centre.

Sample this : in November last year, as the Haryana government was getting ready to enforce CEA, which it had adopted three years ago, it faced a massive opposition from the state chapter of the Indian Medical Association (IMA). On December 15, outpatient services were suspended at all private hospitals in the state. Succumbing to pressure, the government has announced that hospitals that have under 50 beds will be exempted from the purview of the Act.

Doctors in Uttarakhand too are flexing their muscles to frustrate the state government's attempt to enforce CEA and are demanding amendments on the lines of the Haryana government.

Explaining reasons for the opposition, IMA Secretary General R.N. Tandon says it is impossible to deliver on the law's requirements. It requires private hospitals and clinics to provide standard facilities and yet charge minimum fees. The law also requires hospitals and clinics to stabilise patients, who are in a critical condition-those who are in danger of dying. Tandon adds this is not possible for all, as it requires certain degree of specialisation. Small-time practitioners, for instance, can only offer preliminary care and first aid. If the law is implemented, it will affect such practitioners who cater to 80 per cent of the people seeking health care, he says. Besides, Tandon asks, why the government which has failed to improve public healthcare system wants to regulate the private sector.


Health activists beg to differ. "Private practitioners are against CEA because it hurts their interest; says Abhay Shukla of Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, a network of public health activists. Arun Gadre, author of Dissen ting Diagnosis, a book on corruption in the medical sector says the law lays down the basic minimum criteria for setting up a clinic or hospital. "For instance, under the law, a health establishment should have sufficient sitting space, provision for proper waste management and must adhere to certain set standard, if they have facilities like operation theatre and labour room, he adds. In case of any discrepancy, the law allows patients or their kin to lodge complaints upon which action will be taken against the establishment. CEA also talks about maintaining data related to patients.

Gadre, however, agrees with Tandon’s gripe that "stabilising critical patients" should not be made mandatory under the law. "Maharashtra has changed this provision in its draft of CEA to administering first aid which will be enforced soon," says Gadre, who was part of the drafting process.

But will the state be able to enforce this tweaked version of CEA. Some experts doubt this. "Enforcement of CEA is a problem because health is a state subject and states are succumbing to the pressure of the private health care sector;" says E Premdas Pinto, director of research and advocacy at the Delhi- based Centre for Health and Social Justice. ‘The primary reason for this is that a majority of the country's population rely on private facilities for health care;' he adds.

The latest 2015 survey by the National Sample Survey Office also suggests that due to the dismal condition of public healthcare services people depend on private facilities for the treatment of more than 70 per cent of ailments- 72 per cent in rural areas and 79 per cent in urban areas. And the private health sector is not shying away from cashing in on this mad rush. Projections by global market research analyst Frost \& Sullivan show that the worth of private healthcare industry is expected to reach US $\$ 280$ billion in 2020 from the current $\$ 45$ billion.

Pinto cites another reason for this growing clout of the private health care sector. "Several politicians have invested in private health care industry and are hand in glove with the moneyminting private hospitals." For instance, Chief Justice of India Dipak Mishra is facing serious allegation over his alleged involvement in a controversial medical college scam.


As of now, CEA has been adopted in 14 states and Union Territories, including Assam, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand and Sikkim. But no one has enforced it as yet.

Even states like Karnataka and West Bengal that took their own initiative to regulate the private healthcare sector are feeling the heat. The former was the first state to introduce such a law, the Karnataka Private Medical Establishments Act, 2007, even before CEA was introduced. But not a single case has been registered under it in the past 10 years. To make it stringent, the government in December 2017 amended the law. But this spurred protests, following which the state government has diluted it. The law that is in force now states that no state-level authority can monitor the performance of private health establishments.

So far, West Bengal is the only state that has managed to rein in private hospitals and clinics through the West Bengal Clinical Establishments (Registration, Regulation and Transparency) Act, 2017. The commission established under the law has so far penalised two private establishments-Kothari Medical Centre and the svs Marwari Hospital-for lapses in service and unethical trade practice. But the law is applicable to only those hospitals with over 100 beds.

As states are dilly-dallying the implementation of laws to regulate the health sector, the Centre should establish an authority on the lines of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India or the National Green Tribunal, which can ensure their proper implementation and take action against defaulters, says Pinto. CEA, if implemented in letter and spirit, can go a long way in checking corruption in the health care industry.

## DOWN TO EARTH,

February 16-28, 2018.


# Quick Fix to 'Explaining India’ 

(A Review of the Book ‘The Superfast Primetime Ultimate Nation : The Relentless Invention of Modern India' by Adam Roberts)

Michiel Baas
There are probably few countries that evoke stronger opinions than India. Especially among foreigners, this can sometimes result in an almost competitive atmosphere of who understands the country better and who has learned its lessons the hardest way. India means "maximum experience points." If India were a computer game, levelling up could not be more of a challenge. There always seems to be one more quest to embark on, one more bastion to conquer, and one more beast to slay. It is perhaps no surprise that in recent years, there has been a burgeoning of literature focusing on "explaining" India. A frequent starting point here is the economic liberalisation of 1991, which not only ushered in a new economic era but also saw a speeding up of all sort of related developments of a political, social and cultural nature. Change is clearly of the essence in such studies. India is assumed to be changing and not just that, this change itself seems to be a deviation from what India was held to be in the past: unchanging, at a standstill, and worse, locked up in its own past and history, with the keys seemingly having been tossed into the Ganga. Authors even propose to see this as having resulted in a new India, one that neatly juxtaposes with an old India and one that heralds a departure of sorts.

## Explaining India

Gurcharan Das (2000) and Pavan K Varma (2004) were among the first to engage with this idea of a new India. Others were quick to follow suit, often with well crafted and detailed studies of India and its rapidly changing socio-economic landscape. Writer and politician Shashi Tharoor searched for answers inhis illuminating The Elephant, the Tiger, and the Cell Phone: Reflections on India, the Emerging $21^{\text {st }}$ CenturyPower (2007). Two years later there was entrepreneur, bureaucrat

and politician Nandan Nilekani’s Imagining India: The Idea of a Renewed Nation(2009). Sudhir Kakar and Katharina Kakar's The Indians: Portrait of a People (2011) should not be omitted in this list as well, nor Patrick French's insightful account of the country in India: APortrait (2011). Akash Kapur's ethnographically rich study India Becoming: APortrait of Life in Modern India (2012) was written after a prolonged absence from the country and as a way of coming to terms with how much it had changed. Like Siddhartha Deb's The Beautiful and the Damned: APortrait of the New India (2011), Palash Krishna Mehrotra’s The Butterfly Generation: APersonal Journey into the Passions and Follies of India's Technicolour Youth(2011), or Somini Sengupta's The End of Karma: Hope and Fury among India's Young (2016), these books often specifically focus on India's youth.

The question at the heart of such studies is usually how "change" is truly experienced, if people are profiting from economic growth, and how this can be linked to social and cultural transformation underway. What stands out also is that such explorations not only deserve, but decidedly also, require time. Kapur, for instance, spent considerable time with his informants to better understand the way they live their lives amidst change. Reconnecting with them over time also provided him with a detailed picture of how lives change, how perspectives shift and ambitions change course and direction. As also becomes clear from Sengupta’s book, a more recent publication, the quest to "understand India" is something that should not be hurried, perhaps in contrast to the speed of developments observed itself. As fast as India might seem to be developing, the lesson we learn from the burgeoning literature on this topic is that change is often also slow and sometimes, paper-thin.

Adam Roberts' Superfast Prime time Ultimate Nation: The Relentless Invention of Modern India (2017) fits in well with this rapidly expanding collection of books on changing India and of which, l have only mentioned a select few that have come out in recent years. For Roberts, a former South Asia correspondent for the Economist who resided in India for a few years, the main question seems to be about India's future: where is it going, where does it seem to be heading, and what should be done to change course? He seeks to answer these questions by engaging with India's economy, politics, foreign affairs, and the political reality at home in the four sections

that make up this book. While this promises a thorough analysis, what the reader is offered, however, is often a rather shallow and most of all "quick" assessment that lacks the necessary depth and sensitivity to make for a convincing argument in the way that related studies have.

Perhaps the title of the book itself should already have been an indication of this. Intended as a somewhat frivolous take on India's alleged addiction to exaggeration, it serves as little more than a "fun" description of a country which apparently cannot be described without hyperbole and a sense of grandiosity. Roberts himself notes at the very beginning of his book that: "Understatement gets you nowhere in crowded, noisy, easily distracted India" (p xiii). Yet if we examine some of the other studies that have attempted to make sense of what Roberts grapples with in this book (for instance, Deb, Kapur, or Sengupta's), we see that "nuance" is often the answer to the predicament of understanding change in India.

In his "Introduction," Roberts goes on to sketch the over the top way advertisements and billboards make use of over statements to describe their size, might, and capabilities. Hospitals are "max clinics," a new power plant is an "ultra mega power project," and even its tourist slogan embraces the "incredible." Here he is certainly not wrong to note how India's urban space seems to have an ostensive love affair with overstatements and superfluities. To the author these claims are best taken with a pinch of salt ( $\mathrm{p} \times \mathrm{xv}$ ), but what does not occur to him is that they might also be rooted in India's long and complex history with the English language. In fact, throughout his analysis of India's many socio-economic ailments, he seems to have little interest in how they are connected to and influenced by socio-historical developments. As such, it often comes across as if the notion of a "new India" is contrasted with an older one, which merely exists as stage and props in a Bollywood production.

## India's Future and Cherry-picking

Roberts' book is ultimately set up to engage with the idea of India's future. In the "Preface," the author meets a fortune teller who uses parrots to predict the future. Roberts asks the man about the future and receives the chipper answer that India's place in the world will be number one. He even says that "the stars ordain that India will become the greatest power on earth" (p

x). Although it makes for a colourful and anecdotal introduction, half a page later Roberts points out that this fortune teller is a "benign con-artist and charlatan." He is, therefore, "as likely to be right as anyone else, or as the flip of a coin" ( p x). Reflecting on some of the predictions made by the fortune teller, he finds most of them to have proven "comically wrong" ( $p$ xi). Yet, Roberts wonders, what would it take for the fortune teller to be right? "What is keeping his prophecy from coming true?" (p xi).

Roberts is keen to stress that he wants India to succeed, "not least because of the fun I have had and the genuine welcome from Indians, during my several years as the Economist's bureau chief in the country" (pxi). While this may be interpreted as a "thank you" for the pleasant time he has had in India, it did leave me wondering if Roberts sees the irony of this statement considering the enormity of issues India is still faced with, ranging from environmental degradation to immense poverty. Should not the main reason for wanting India to succeed be that it could potentially improve the lives of millions? Furthermore, should its success not be well-deserved and justified considering the way it was exploited during colonial days, something it is still paying a price for?

Roberts' claims and suggestions are often bold and striking, even if he offers almost no insight into his actual analysis or research. "Much of my grasp of India $\qquad$ .comes from reading and reviewing others’ books, research reports, and articles." His shelves are, therefore, "stuffed with thoughtful assessments of India." However, he adds, "I have not included a bibliography, nor-to avoid too many tedious footnotes-have referenced all the books." He wants it to be clear though that he has read quite a few of those and that "[o]ne of the great pleasures of reporting from South Asia is the chance to learn from others' work" (p 292). That some of these works must have been by authors who are far more informed about India's various issues, and the result of long-term extensive research, apparently did not necessitate it for the author to acknowledge this. Although, he does occasionally mention (Indian) authors, businessmen and politicians whom he met and/or interviewed over time, his arguments build almost entirely on so called "big names," ordinary Indians (for lack of a better term) are almost entirely absent from the account (unless

they are "fun" characters such as the above-mentioned fortune teller).
From the start, the book reads like a Wikipedia summary of India's most "notorious" developments. The first chapter kicks off in Cherrapunji, allegedly the world's wettest place (though without a footnote to explain that this has not been the case in a while), only to use the North East to make a case about how the region often gets left out of reflections on "mainland" India; only to then (literally) embark on the Vivek Express' that allows the author to connect his place of departure with various historical developments. Vivekananda’s biography itself here gets reduced to that of a "Bengali aristocrat revered by Hindu nationalists" and one who "did more than anyone to promote Hinduism globally in the nineteenth century" (p 5). Indeed, there is not possibly more to be said about the topic of Vivekananda's impact on Hinduism and various related reform movements. Much faster than the actual Vivek Express, however, the reader is catapulted into the very history of India’s railways and the way "[r]ail is a symbol of wider problems" ( p 6 ). The chapter then goes on to combine a perspective on the North East with the importance of the spread of cell phones in India, the average quantity of calories consumed, and the "heavy burden" of colonial rule (p 13). Reflecting on the book's title, the author finishes the first chapter with:

The journey was not Superfast [referring to the Vivek Express], but it revealed
some significant changes unfolding across the length of India (p.19)

## The Truth and Its Opposite Also

Roberts starts his third chapter with the observation that "[a]lmost anything you say about India could be true-and the opposite, too" (p 38). While this reduces India to slippery untrustworthiness, something colonial officers were all too keen to emphasise, there is perhaps a point to be made about the complex nature of its politics. Although occasionally witty, Roberts seems to be unaware of how insensitive some of his descriptions are, especially considering that they are made by a white man who hails from India's former coloniser. For instance, what is one to make of the following description of the country's Prime Minister and one of the architects of its economic revival:

[Manmohan] Singh, who reliably wore a pale blue turban and a pleasant but some-what docile expression, would serve for a decade as her [Sonia Gandhi’s] front man. He was bright, kind and timid, more functionary than politician, often mute in public.(p.40)

Roberts concludes that: "The ten years under Singh up to 2014 were mixed, but they undoubtedly gave rise to real improvements for many" (p 41). From Singh's troublesome relationship with Sonia Gandhi, we are quickly ushered on towards the dramatic outcome of the 2014 elections, a detour into the disastrously run Coal India, and finally end up with Narendra Modi's demonetisation efforts.

Throughout, the book is clearly in a hurry to cover the whole gamut of "maddening" India with its deeply corrupt politicians, friendly but slightly mental local population, and of course, the influence of Bollywood (as per usual any other regional movie industry remains unmentioned). India is all masala, holi colour, and traffic that never stops honking. How can any of this not be "superfast," how can it not be a "prime- time" feature, and how can this "nation" not be typified as anything but maddening? Roberts has an endless amount of advice to give while casually coasting through a variety of topics that touch upon India's economic, cultural and social ailments. India's democracy, for one, "is potentially a huge advantage, rather than a curse or a tax." Elections in India are so entertaining that allegedly "tour companies started bringing foreign visitors to watch them" ( p 92 ). But reflecting on environmental ruin-reducing Dalits "to human waste clearers ( p 161 )-he summarises that: "there is more that India can do to improve its environment" ( p 162). Only a few pages later, we are informed that "partition was horrific" (p 171) or that "[w]armer relations with Pakistan would bring India other benefits" (p 173). Leaving aside what those might be, at no point does the book offer a deeper analysis of the various circumstances that have culminated into where India finds itself at present.

Superfast Prime time Ultimate Nation caters to an international audience that wants a quick fix; how to understand the exasperating reality of India? Well, this is how. It makes no efforts substantiating its many claims with footnotes or references nor does it seem keen to

actually critically engage with the many discussions that previous publications build on. This would have definitely helped to provide the much necessary nuance to the many painfully stereotypical descriptions that the author employs throughout the text. But perhaps, more importantly, it would have layered the book with the kind of depth that it sorely lacks. While Roberts is certainly not wrong about India's many ailments, there are many books that have offered a much sharper and at the same time, nuanced analysis of these. One wishes that Roberts had occasionally taken a slower train to appreciate the complexity as well as richness of India.

## Economic \& Political Weekly

February 3, 2018.


## RESUME OF BUSINESS TRANSACTED DURING THE 13 ${ }^{\text {th }}$ SESSION OF THE $16{ }^{\text {th }}$ LOK SABHA

The Thirteenth Session of the Sixteenth Lok Sabha commenced on 15 December 2017 and concluded on 5 January 2018. In all, the House held 13 sittings spread over 61 hours.

On the first day of the Session, i.e. 15 December, Shri Sunil Kumar Jakhar, member elected in a bye-election from Gurdaspur Parliamentary Constituency of Punjab took oath and signed the Roll of Members. Thereafter, the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi introduced newly appointed colleagues of his Council of Ministers to the House. Subsequently, the Hon 'ble Speaker, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan made references to the passing away of Sarvashri Sultan Ahmed, Chand Nath and Taslim Uddin, sitting members of the Lok Sabha and Sarvashri Vikram Mahajan, Ram Singh, R. Keishing, P.C. Barman, Dhanraj Singh, Amal Datta and Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi, all former members of Lok Sabha. The members then stood in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed and thereafter, the House was adjourned for the day.

On 22 December 2017, a Short Duration Discussion under Rule 193 was held on the subject of natural calamities in various parts of the country with special reference to cyclone Ockhi in South India. Shri K.C. Venugopal, on behalf of Shri P.R. Sundaram and with the permission of the Hon'ble Speaker, initiated the discussion on the subject. Fourteen members participated in the discussion which concluded with the reply of the Minister of HomeAffairs, Shri Rajnath Singh.

On 27 December, four members, namely, Shri Arvind Sawant, Prof. Saugata Roy, Shri Mallikarjun Kharge and Dr. M. Thambi Durai made a submission regarding illtreatment by Pakistani officials to the wife and mother of Shri Kulbhushan Jadhav during their meeting at Islamabad. Twelve other members associated themselves with the submission. The Minister of External Affairs, Smt. Sushma Swaraj responded to the issue. Next day, on 28 December, the Minister of External Affairs, Smt. Sushma Swaraj made a Statement in the House regarding situation arising out of a meeting with the family of Shri Kulbhushan Jadhav in Pakistan. She said that there was a serious and gross violation of human rights of the family members of Shri Jadhav and an intimidating atmosphere was created for them during this meeting.


On 2 January, Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, by way of submission, raised the issue of attack on Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) training centre in Pulwama killing five security personnel of CRPF. Shri Mullappally Ramachandran also associated himself with the submission. The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Ananth Kumar responded to the issue. The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir also responded.

Prof. Saugata Roy, member, made a submission on 4 January regarding reported mass expulsion of a section of the society from the recently published National Register of Citizens in Assam. Shri Rabindra Kumar Jena also associated himself with the submission. The Minister of Home Affairs, Shri Rajnath Singh responded to the issue.

In addition, members were also permitted by the Speaker to make submissions regarding: (i) retention of Head Office of Hindustan Steelworks Construction Limited at Kolkata; (ii) need to take up with China on the issue of contamination of River Siang in Arunachal Pradesh; (iii) Martyrdom day of two sons of Guru Govind Singh; (iv) need to establish a separate High Court for Telangana; and (v) need to resolve drinking water problem in Karnataka.

On 3 January 2018, when the Rajya Sabha Amendment to the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty- Third Amendment) Bill, 2017, was taken up for consideration, Shri N.K. Premachandran raised a Point of Order under Rule 100(2) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. He sought to know how the clause 3 which is the heart and soul of the Constitution 123rd Amendment Bill, 2017 has been deleted and asked whether the proposed amendment is an alternative amendment and sought specific ruling in this regard, from the Chair.

In this respect, the Speaker made the following observation:
"Hon’ble Members, a point of order has been raised that the new clause 3 being now proposed by the Government in place of amendment made by the Council for omission of clause 3 does not fall within the meaning of amendment alternative to the amendment made by Rajya Sabha. In regard to Bills returned by Rajya Sabha with amendments, sub-rule (2) of Rule 100 of

the Rules of Procedure provides that three types of amendments to an amendment made by Rajya Sabha can be moved in Lok Sabha. The first being amendment relevant to the subjectmatter of an amendment made by Rajya Sabha, the second being amendment consequential upon an amendment made by Rajya Sabha and the last being an amendment alternative to an amendment made by Rajya Sabha. In the instant case, the Rajya Sabha has returned the Bill with amendment seeking omission of a clause from the Bill. Hon 'ble Members would appreciate that to an amendment seeking omission of a clause, no amendment or consequential amendment can be moved since there is no text before us for agreeing or disagreeing to such amendment. The dictionary defines the word "alternative" as "available as another possibility or choice". The Government has proposed that in place of omission of clause from the Bill, the same clause be restored with some changes. In a way, the Government has proposed another choice in place of clause being omitted. In my opinion, therefore, the amendment tabled by the Hon’ble Minister for restoring clause 3 with some changes falls within the category of amendment alternative to the amendment made by Rajya Sabha. I, therefore, rule out the point of order."

Thereafter Speaker made the following observation:
"Hon 'ble members, the House would now take up consideration of amendment made by Rajya Sabha in the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty third Amendment) Bill, 2017, as passed by Lok Sabha. As you are aware, the Hon’ble Minister has given notice to move an amendment alternative to the amendment made by Rajya Sabha and also further amendment regarding change of year from 2017 to 2018. I may inform you that in case the House adopts the alternative amendment, the original amendment made by Rajya Sabha would stand substituted by the alternative amendment. As such, the original amendment made by Rajya Sabha will not be proposed for vote of the House. Hon 'ble Members, the alternative amendment seeks to insert a new clause 3 in the Bill. In this regard, I would like to invite your attention to Direction 31, which provides that "when an amendment for insertion of a new clause in a Bill is adopted by the House, the Speaker shall put the question that the new clause be added to the Bill". Therefore, in case the alternative amendment is adopted by the House, I

shall also propose the new clause 3 to the vote of the House. Hon'ble Members, since we are to consider a Constitution (Amendment) Bill, I shall propose the Motion for consideration of Rajya Sabha amendment, the motion for adoption of amendment alternative to the amendment made by Rajya Sabha, adoption of new clause 3, adoption of further amendment for change of year and the motion for passing of the Bill to the vote of the House by division through special majority as required under article 368 of the Constitution. Keeping in view the spirit of Rule 156, amendments given notice of by private Members to the alternative amendment proposed to be moved by the Hon'ble Minister shall be decided by simple majority."

During the Session, out of the 280 Starred Questions that were listed, 45 Questions were answered orally; written replies to the remaining Starred Questions along with 3,220 Unstarred Questions were laid on the Table of the House.

Hon'ble Members raised 226 matters relating to their constituencies under Rule 377. Besides, as many as 198 matters of urgent public importance were raised by the members after the Question Hour and after completion of the formal business of the House.

During the Session, 41 Reports of the Parliamentary Committees were presented in the House including six reports of the Committee of Privileges and three of the Committee on Violation of Protocol Norms and Contemptuous Behaviour of Government Officers with Members of Lok Sabha. All these Reports are available on the Lok Sabha Homepage loksabha. nic. in

As many as 55 statements were made by the Ministers under Rule 372. These included Statements: (i) by the Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs, Shri. Arun Jaitley on introduction of the Scheme of Electoral Bonds; (ii) by the Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Shri Ramvilas Paswan (a) correcting the reply given on 19.12.2017 to Starred Question No. 55 regarding 'Rise in Prices of Pulses' and (b) giving reasons for delay in correcting the reply; (iii) by the Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Shri Giriraj Singh, on behalf of the


Minister of State in the Ministry of Rural Development, Shri Ram Kripal Yadav correcting the reply given on 04.01.2018 to Unstarred Question No. 2831 regarding Implementation of Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP) in Andhra Pradesh; (iv) by the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Suresh Prabhu on the Outcomes of $11^{\text {th }}$ Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization held in Buenos Aries, Argentina from 10 to 13 December 2017.

During the course of the Session, Shri Nagendra Kumar Pradhan presented a petition for consideration of the House requesting for amendment to Service Rules in Railways in respect of Junior Engineers and Senior Section Engineers.

During the Winter Session, more than 14 hours and 51 minutes of time of the House were lost due to interruptions followed by forced adjournments. However, the House compensated for the time lost by sitting late for about 8 hours and 10 minutes to transact important financial, legislative and other business.

As regards Financial Business, the Minister of Finance, Shri Arun Jaitley presented a statement showing Supplementary Demands for Grants - Second Batch for the year 2017-18 to the House on 18 December 2017. On 21 December, Shri Rajen Gohain, Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways, on behalf of Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways, moved the Resolution seeking approval of the House for the recommendations contained in Paras 9,10 (to the extent that reimbursement oflosses on operation of 'strategic lines’ is made by General Revenues to Ministry of Railways), $11,12,13,14,15,16$ and 17 (the rate of interest will be paid on the basis of average cost of borrowing) of the Sixth Report of Railway Convention Committee (2014) which was presented in Lok Sabha and laid in the Rajya Sabha on 2 December 2016. The combined discussion on the Government Resolution and Supplementary Demands for Grants Second Batch (General) for 2017-18 was taken up together. In all, 57 members participated in the discussion that lasted 5 hours and 30 minutes. The Minister of Finance, Shri Arun Jaitley replied to the combined debate. All the Demands were voted in full and the relevant Appropriation Bill was passed the same day. The Resolution moved by Shri Rajen Gohain was put to vote and adopted.


On 2 January, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, Shri Arun Jaitley, moved a Resolution seeking approval of the House to enhance the Basic Customs Duty (BCD) applicable to certain category of goods by amending the statutory rate under the provisions of sub-section (1) of Section 8Aof the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 read with sub-section (3) of Section 7 of the said Act and the Resolution was adopted.

On 4 January, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, Shri Arun Jaitley, Shri P.P. Chaudhary, Minister of State in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs presented a statement showing Supplementary Demands for Grants - Third Batch for the year 2017-18. The discussion on the Supplementary Demands for Grants No. 31 in respect of Supplementary Demands for Grants - Third Batch for 2017-18 was held the same day. The Demands were voted in full and the relevant Appropriation Bill was passed.

In the sphere of Legislative Business, seventeen Bills were introduced and thirteen Bills were passed by the House. Some of the important Bills passed during the Session include: (i) The Central Road Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2017;(ii) The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2017; (iii) The Goods and Services Tax (Compensation to States) Amendment Bill, 2017; (iv) The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017; and (v) The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

The Central Road Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2017 sought to rationalise the allocation of various percentage of the cess on high speed diesel and petrol thereby providing two and one-half per cent of the cess of high speed diesel and petrol for the development and maintenance of national waterways.

The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2017, sought to amend the National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second Act, 2011, inter-alia, to extend the provisions of the Act for

a further period of three years from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2020.
The Goods and Services Tax (Compensation to States) Amendment Bill, 2017, sought to amend the Goods and Services Taxes (Compensation to States) Act, 2017 to allow increasing the maximum rate at which the Compensation Cess can be levied, from $15 \%$ to $25 \%$ on certain categories of motor vehicles.

The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017, sought to protect the rights of married Muslim women and to prohibit divorce by pronouncing talaq-e-biddat by their husbands.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2017, sought to amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 inter-alia to provide for prohibition of certain persons from submitting an insolvency resolution plan who, on account of their antecedents, may adversely impact the processes under the code; and to make provisions to specify certain additional requirements for submission and consideration of the resolution plan before its approval by the committee of creditors.

Coming to the Private Members Business, 98 Private Members’ Bills on different subjects were introduced. The Motion for consideration of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2015 moved by Shri Vincent H. Pala, was taken up for further discussion on 29 December 2017. However, the discussion could not be concluded.

As regards Private Members' Resolutions, two Private Members’ Resolutions were discussed by the House during the Session. The Resolution regarding renovation of buildings located in the vicinity of various Defence establishments in the country moved by Shri Gopal Chinayya Shetty on 28 July 2017 was further discussed on 22 December and was withdrawn by leave of the House. Another Resolution was moved by Shri Raghav Lakhanpal on 22 December 2017 urging the Government for implementation of a stringent population control policy and remained part discussed.


During the Session, the Speaker informed the House of the receipt of resignation letters from Shri Yogi Adityanath, an elected member from the Gorakhpur Parliamentary Constituency of Uttar Pradesh (21 September); Shri Keshav Prasad Maurya, an elected member from the Phulpur Parliamentary Constituency of Uttar Pradesh (21 September) and Shri Nana Patole, an elected member from the Bhandara-Gondiya Parliamentary Constituency of Maharashtra (8 December) resigning their membership of Lok Sabha and that their resignations had been accepted.

Apart from the obituary references made on the opening day, the Hon'ble Speaker made references to the passing away of Sarvashri Mahendra Singh, Purushottam Kaushik and S.S. Kothari, all former members.

The Hon'ble Speaker further made references to: (i) reported loss of lives of 21 persons and injuries to several others in a boat mishap in Krishna River in Vijaywada, Andhra Pradesh on 12 November 2017; (ii) reported loss of lives of several persons and injuries to many others and also causing widespread loss of property due to Cyclone Ockhi lashing several parts of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Maharashtra and Gujarat during the first week of December; (iii) recent terrorist attacks in United States of America, United Kingdom, France, Spain, Afghanistan, Egypt and Nigeria and also at other places throughout the world resulting in the loss of lives of innocent people and causing serious injuries and damage to property; (iv) loss oflives of348 persons in two massive earthquakes that struck Mexico on 7 and 19 September 2017, and another devastating earthquake that struck the Iran-Iraq border on 12 November 2017 resulting in the death of several persons; (v) to a major Typhoon named 'Tembin/ Vinta' affecting southern parts of the Philippines and the neighbouring region causing more than 266 fatalities and large scale damage of property; (vi) reported loss of lives of 33 persons and injuries to several others when a bus fell into the Banas river in Sawai Madhopur district of Rajasthan; and (vii) a dastardly terrorist attack at a security camp in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir on 31 December 2017 causing loss of lives of 5 CRPF security personnel.


At a solemn function held in Parliament House on 13 December 2017, the Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu; the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi and the Lok Sabha Speaker, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan led the nation in paying tributes to those who sacrificed their lives in the terrorist attack on Parliament. The Indian Red Cross Society organised a blood donation camp in the Parliament House on the occasion.

On 18 December, the Speaker, on behalf of the House, congratulated (i) the Indian Men's Hockey Team for winning the Asia Cup by beating Malaysia in the final on 22 October 2017 at Dhaka, Bangladesh; (ii) the Indian Women’s Hockey Team for winning the Asia Cup by beating China on 5 November 2017 at Kakamigahara, Japan; (iii) Indian boxer and Member of Rajya Sabha, Mary Kom for winning gold medal in the Asian Boxing Championship at Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; and (iv) Indian weightlifter, Mirabai Chanu for winning gold medal at the World Weightlifting Championship in Anaheim, United States of America on 30 November 2017.

On 22 December, the Speaker, on behalf of the House, congratulated the Indian contingent for winning 17 gold, 14 silver and 13 bronze medals in the Asian Youth Para Games held in Dubai from 8 to 14 December 2017.

On 2 January 2018, the Hon’ble Speaker extended New Year greetings to all the Members of the House.

During the Session, the Speaker's Research Initiative (SRI) organized four Workshops for the benefit of the members of Parliament on the subjects: (i) Goods and Services Tax; (ii) Indian Education System (private vs. public) - Issues and Challenges; (iii) Simultaneous Elections; and (iv) Organic Farming. Besides, two interactive Sessions on the subjects (i) Aadhaar-Issues and Implications and (ii) Stunting and Wasting- Issues and Challenges were also held.

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu released the Lok Sabha Calendar 2018 in Parliament Library Building on 28 December 2017. Lok Sabha Speaker, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan; Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha Prof. PJ. Kurien; Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Chemicals \& Fertilizers, Shri Ananth Kumar; Members of Indian Parliamentary Group

(IPG) and other dignitaries attended the event. Releasing the Calendar, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu said that the theme of the Lok Sabha Calendar 2018 is unique and motivating. He opined that the sublime messages, universal and timeless, in these inscriptions are rare pearls of wisdom in themselves and an authentic source of our history and philosophical traditions. Shri Naidu observed that it is in Parliament that the entire range of activities of a nation is discussed and its destinies are shaped and moulded. As such, the deliberations of that august body are naturally to be inspired by the highest traditions of truth and righteousness. Earlier, delivering the Welcome Address, Hon ‘ble Speaker, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan observed that the Calendar 2018 provides glimpses of inscriptions nestled on domes, arches, Chambers and other places in the Parliament House building. She noted that these ennobling thoughts - from Rigveda, Mahabharata, ShrimadBhagwad Gita, the Holy Quran, Manusmriti, Panchatantra and Kautilya’s Arthshastra - extol the virtues of charity, kindness to fellow beings and brotherhood. A short film on Lok Sabha Calendars since 1999, produced by LSTV, was screened on the occasion.

A puppet show based on the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda was organized on 3 January 2018 by the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi in collaboration with the Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal, Udaipur in the Parliament Library Building. Lok Sabha Speaker, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan; Members of Parliament and other dignitaries watched the show. The puppet show depicted various incidents and stories from the life of Swami Vivekananda, known in his pre-monastic life as Narendra Nath Datta. The unique show, with high-class background music and special effects, conceptualized colourful performances by life like puppets through the nimble fingers of the dedicated team of puppeteers which enlivened the message of the great saint. The puppet show was specially commissioned to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda in the year 2013. Since then, the show has been staged in different parts of India and the world. Lok Sabha Speaker, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan presented Mementoes to Swami Shantatmananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission and Shri Salil Singhal, Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal.

Earlier during the inter-session period, Lok Sabha Speaker and Chairperson of


Commonwealth Parliamentary Association India Region, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan led an Indian Parliamentary Delegation to the 63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Dhaka from 1 to 8 November 2017. The other members of the delegation were Shri Devendra Bhole Singh, MP (Lok Sabha); Shri Subhash Patel, MP (Lok Sabha); Smt. Roopa Ganguly, MP (Rajya Sabha); Smt. Meenakashi Lekhi, MP (Lok Sabha) and Member of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Steering Committee. The Conference was also attended by Presiding Officers from State CPA Branches. Dr. Sitasaran Sharma, Speaker, Madhya Pradesh Vidhan Sabha and Shri Kavinder Gupta, Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly attended the Executive Committee Meetings of CPA. Shri Kavinder Gupta, Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly and Shri Hitendra Nath Goswami, Speaker, Assam Legislative Assembly attended the New Executive Committee Meeting.

Smt. Sumitra Mahajan, Hon’ble Speaker, Lok Sabha was a lead speaker on the topic 'Giving Voice to the Youth: Mechanisms for Ensuring Effective Participation of Youth in the Governance Process’. Smt. Mahajan said that youth are engine to take the vehicle of family, society or nation forward. She said that youth are a great promise to each nation and additional efforts need to be made to expose them to their immediate surroundings and realities - reality around them, reality within the country and, of course, beyond borders, around their immediate neighbourhood. Smt. Mahajan opined that surroundings and realities bring in greater appreciation for different cultures, different ways of life and expose them to the idea of pluralities and beauty of different colours. She said that this exposure would bring in the value of 'One World' in their minds and thoughts.

In October, an Indian Parliamentary Delegation led by Hon’ble Speaker, Lok Sabha, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan attended the $137^{\text {th }}$ Assembly of the IPU held in St.Petersburg, Russian Federation from 14 to 18 October 2017. The Delegation consisted of Sarvashri Basawaraj Patil, Anil Desai, Nagendra Singh, Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati, Km. Sushmita Dev, Smt. Sasikala Pushpa and Smt. Raksha Nikhil Khadse. Hon 'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha participated in the

general debate on the overall theme of 'Promoting cultural pluralism and peace through inter-faith and inter-ethnic dialogue', Members of the delegation also attended the meeting of the Asia-Pacific Geo Political Group (APG) of IPU, meetings of the Governing Council of IPU and meetings ofthe Four Standing Committees of IPU. Meetings of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and Forum of Women Parliamentarians were also attended by some Members of the delegation. A meeting of BRICS Parliamentary Forum was held on the sidelines of the Assembly. Hon ‘ble Speaker, Lok Sabha and Shri Nagendra Singh, MP attended the forum.

The Lok Sabha Speaker, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan also led an Indian Parliamentary Delegation to the 8th Conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians held in Colombo from 4 to 6 October 2017. Speakers and delegates from the SAARC countries attended the Conference. The Young Parliamentarians Committee Meeting was held for the first time in the event. Smt. Mahajan delivered the lead speech on the topic 'Association of the SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians- a platform for the Parliamentarians of South Asia to work together to reach the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development'. Smt. Mahajan also attended the Special Parliamentary Session of Sri Lanka to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of Parliament of Sri Lanka. After the conclusion of the Conference, the Indian Parliamentary Delegation led by Lok Sabha Speaker, Smt. Mahajan met the Sri Lankan Delegation led by Speaker of Parliament of Sri Lanka, Mr. Karu Jayasuriya. Both Delegations expressed interest in consolidating closer ties between the two Parliaments.

Earlier in September, Lok Sabha Speaker, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan led an Indian Parliamentary Delegation to the World Parliamentary Forum Meeting in Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia from 5 to 7 September 2017. The Delegation included Sarvashri Rakesh Singh, Jose K. Mani, La. Ganesan and Smt. Riti Pathak, all Members of Parliament. The Forum deliberated on the several subjects of topical relevance focusing on Sustainable Development Goals, including Inclusive and Equitable Development, Climate Change, Peaceful Co- existence, Women and Land Rights, Contribution of Women Leaders, Post Legislative Scrutiny on SDGs


Issues, Regional Cooperation, etc.
As usual, functions were held under the auspices of Indian Parliamentary Group (IPG) to mark the birth anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi and Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri (2 October); Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (31 October); Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das (5 November); Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (11 November); Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (14 November); Smt. Indira Gandhi (19 November); Dr. Rajendra Prasad (3 December); Shri C. Rajagopalachari (10 December); Chaudhary Charan Singh (23 December); Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (25 December) and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose (23 January) in the Central Hall of Parliament House where portraits of these illustrious leaders are put up. Presiding Officers, Union Ministers, Members of Parliament and other dignitaries paid floral tributes on these occasions. Besides, floral tribute functions on the birth anniversaries of former Speakers ofLok Sabha, Sardar Hukum Singh (30 August); Shri G.M.C. Balayogi (1 October); Shri Bali Ram Bhagat (7 October); and Shri G.V Mavalankar (27 November) were held in the Central Hall of Parliament. Booklets containing the profile of the former Speakers, brought out in Hindi and English by the Lok Sabha Secretariat, were distributed to the dignitaries present on the occasion.

The Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training continued to organise various Courses and Programmes during the period.

An Orientation Programme in Legislative Matters for the officials of Lok Sabha Secretariat was organized from 20 to 22 November 2017. The Programme was attended by 19 participants.Another Orientation Programme for Lok Sabha Secretariat Officials working in Parliamentary Committees was organized from 18 to 22 December which was attended by 19 participants.

Five Appreciation Courses in Parliamentary Process and Procedures for the probationers of All India and Central Services and for middle and senior level officials of the Government of India were organised by the Bureau. In all, 431 participants attended these Courses. The Bureau also organized nine Training Courses in Parliamentary Processes and


Procedures, Noting and Drafting, ACR writing, LIBSYS Programme for the officers of the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and State Legislature Secretariats which were attended by 189 participants. In addition, 111 Personal Assistants and Private Secretaries of Members of Parliament attended Training Programme on Information Management in Parliament and Members portal and Reference/Research Support.

The Bureau also organized 13 International Study Visits for the benefit of 262 participants. Besides, 43 Study Visits were organized for educational and other institutions from within the country covering 1,841 participants. Further, Professional Development Programmes for 85 Officers of Lok Sabha Secretariat were organised by the Bureau from time to time.

The Thirteenth Session of the Sixteenth Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die on 5 January 2018 after the playing of the National Song. The President of India prorogued the House the same day.

