

*Be not ashamed of thy virtues, honor's a good brooch to wear in a man's hat at all times*  
Ben Jonson

## Bengal offers better ease of business

According to a recent survey conducted by the Centre's Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), West Bengal has moved up five places in ranking in two years from 2016 to 2018 and now occupies the 10th spot in ease-of-doing-business list. The DIPP conducted the survey in collaboration with the World Bank and took feedback from the 'users'. The credit goes to the government of Mamata Banerjee and refutes the charge often made by her political detractors, especially the BJP and the CPM, that West Bengal has made little progress in creating a favourable climate for doing business in the State.

The industrial resurgence has happened in a State which was 'de-industrialized' by the Left Front Government during its nearly three and a half decades of rule. First, 'militant' trade unionism led to the closure of many factories and there was a flight of capital from the State which was once one of the most industrialized States. Many cotton and jute mills on either side of the Ganga upstream of Kolkata were closed down and the land on which the factories stood were bought up by promoters and developers to build apartment houses for the rich and the upper middle class people. That land can never be taken back and used for industries.

Later, by the early nineties of the last century the Left Front Government suddenly woke up to the necessity of wooing industrialists and setting up new industries in Bengal. In 1994, toward the end of Jyoti Basu's stewardship of the State, the Left Front Government adopted a new industrial policy which, among other things, first welcomed foreign capital. But by then the Left Front had turned West Bengal into a "No No" for prospective investors and industrialists. Seventeen years later, when the Left Front was thrown out of power, the pendulum had swung to the other extreme in the opposite direction. In his eagerness to industrialize West Bengal, the then Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee laid out the red carpet for big industrialists and handed over fertile multi-cropland to them for as long as they were evicting peasants.

The resistance movement that grew ultimately voted out the Left. They exited from power, leaving a huge debt burden of nearly Rs. 2 lakh crore. It was a debt-ridden State that Mamata inherited. From there in just seven years she has made West Bengal an investor-friendly State. Today there is no militant trade unionism, no periodic Bangla Bandhs and the law and order situation has vastly improved to assure businessmen that West Bengal is a safe investment destination. The credit goes to her.

# US decision to leave UN HR Council

## REFLEX ACTION

Ajay Kumar

The United States of America has left the United Nations Human Rights Council. This news came as a shock to some and as an eventuality to many. This latest decision is part of a broader foreign policy shift that is being witnessed under the Donald Trump administration in the White House. A greater disengagement by the United States when it comes to multilateral instruments.

The US leaving the Paris Agreement is perhaps what set it off. The US has also been imposing protective tariffs on goods from certain countries. A protectionist policy that goes against longstanding US views on free trade. What this also perhaps shows is that the US foreign policy now is subject to domestic political interests i.e., catering to a particular voter base, rather than being one that is about a broader engagement with the global community. The Human Rights Council may not seem like such a big deal. It's an organ of the United Nations that is created by the General Assembly. It is not an organ that find place in the UN Charter. The Council has nations that aren't really the best model when it comes to human rights. Some of the world's worst offenders, such as Saudi Arabia, are members of the Council. The Council, in the past, has passed resolutions that are perhaps against the tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

But the Council is an important organ, as for some states, it presents the only forum where they are truly held to account for their actions. For example, the US veto prevents any Security Council action against Israel, so the Council ends up being the only forum to place soft pressure on Israel in order to remedy some of its domestic political decisions. Though this must also be considered with the fact that there is perhaps a strong anti-Israeli sentiment that exists within

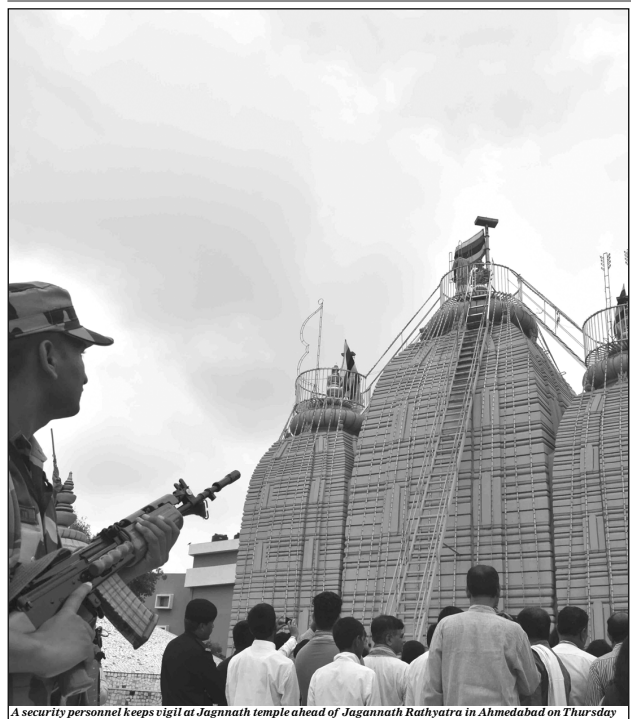
the Council. So the question now that ought to be asked is this, is the world better off without the United States engaging in multilateral forums and following what now appears to be a very isolationist foreign policy? The United States has, at least as far as human rights are concerned, been a force for good. It was the US foreign policy coupled with smart liberal rhetoric that managed to break the Iron Curtain and liberate Europe from the scourge of communism. The US intervention in the First World War and the intervention in the European and Far Eastern theatres of the Second World War are glorious examples of the US fighting the war against fascism. The US could have restricted itself to merely a retaliatory strike against the Japanese. But Roosevelt at the time was looking for any excuse to enter the war and take on Hirohito and Hitler. Many brave Americans gave up their lives in the World Wars fighting for freedom and many more gave their lives to fight against communism in Korea and Vietnam. However, during the course of the later of the two major fights, the US engaged in war crimes such as the use of napalm. Presently, with the "war on terror", we are seeing the United States justify the use of torture as "enhanced interrogation" and supporting mass surveillance on its citizens.

Perhaps the time has come when "American Exceptionalism" is no longer the defensive shield under which the US can hide. The recent foreign policy

decisions by President Trump and his administration, no longer show the United States as being the beacon on a hill. They unfortunately show that the US is the highlight of a border patrol car, starting down a poor refugee with the view of sending her back to danger and separating a poor, conflict-battered mother from her children. The world is not poorer for the US leaving the Human Rights Council, a decision, given the conduct of the Council, may be justified in isolation. But as a part of broader foreign policy though, the world is poorer having an isolationist United States. The United States, after all, is perhaps the only country in the world that still sees itself as a global power. It intervenes to protect children from chemical weapons in Syria and also intervenes to prevent abuses in other parts of the world.

If the US doesn't intervene, the question the world must ask itself now is—whom else will? Will the Syrians be left to fend for themselves against Assad? Will the Venezuelans continue to spiral into the depths of poverty under a dictatorial regime? Who will now call out China in its abuses on its citizens, or who will now bravely point out that religious freedom is under threat in India?

Unfortunately, with the US walking out on its moral obligations towards the world, obligations that the US has because it is the most powerful democracy that ever existed in the history of the world, the world is poorer as it no longer has a moral compass. We may now live in a multi-polar world, but the US just decided its pointing its compass right at itself and the rest of the world can keep spinning around in circles. The country of Eleanor Roosevelt, that helped draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is now the country that no longer cares. The world is incredibly poorer under Donald Trump. (IPA)



A security personnel keeps vigil at Jagannath temple ahead of Jagannath Rathayatra in Ahmedabad on Thursday

Conventional Crossword						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8			9		
		10				
11	12		13			
				14	15	16
17	18	19				
			20	21		22
24	25					
			27			
28						29

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>       | <b>DOWN</b>        |
| 1 Mild explosion    | 1 Church seating   |
| 3 Social standing   | 2 left             |
| 8 American state    | 3 Australian river |
| 9 Curve             | 4 Dance            |
| 10 Heart ailment    | 5 Pollute          |
| 11 Season           | 6 Rounded vase     |
| 14 Company of eight | 7 Inadequate       |
| 17 Symbols          | 8 Hawaiian dish    |
| 20 Widespread       | 9 Tavern           |
| 24 Mad              | 15 Drinking vessel |
| 26 Fate             | 16 Do wrong        |
| 27 Preservative     | 17 Show amusement  |
| 28 Worn away        | 18 Keen relish     |
| 29 Help             | 19 Inward feeling  |
|                     | 21 Greek drink     |
|                     | 22 Greek letter    |
|                     | 23 Observed        |
|                     | 25 And not         |

## SUDOKU: 2252

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

## Yesterday's Solution 2251

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

## Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 260

S	T	I	R		P	R	C
E	R	U	G		P	E	S
C	O	O	L		M	O	D
T		N	E	P	A	L	V
O	B	I		D	O	V	E
R	O	C	K	S		E	R
X	E	O	S	I	N	C	
S	E	L	S		D	I	V
T	R	A	P		R	O	C
Y	X				L	E	F

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# Congress in a bind on possible alliance with Nitish

## FOCUS

Arun Srivastava

After Nitish Kumar walked out from the grand alliance, Rahul Gandhi, then Congress general secretary, had accused him of sacrificing his credibility and rules for power. Power makes a man lose his credibility, he had stated. Annoyed with Nitish's shifting of loyalty, Rahul had even remarked: "I knew about this planning of BJP and JDU and it was under discussion for 3-4 months and that Nitish Kumar has forgotten all the rules and regulations of politics." He had remarked: "Satta ke liye vyakti kuch bhi kar jaata hai, koi neeyam, credibility nahin hai."

But after taking charge of the presidency of the party it appears that Rahul has forgotten his previous stance on Nitish. Had it not been the case, his senior party man Shakeel Ahmad Khan would not have suggested that Nitish Kumar was a big leader and efforts should be made to bring his Janata Dal (United) and all

like-minded secular parties under one umbrella. Khan's statement came after RJD leader Tejashvi Yadav refused the overtures from the close aides of Nitish to accommodate him in the grand alliance.

In this backdrop it obviously implied that he was speaking the party line. This sudden change in the stance and approach of the Congress is bizarre. How could a person who till yesterday was described as a betrayer and championed the cause of the BJP and its leader Narendra Modi be branded secular? This simply underlines the desperation of the Congress. What is surprising is that Khan slammed Tejashvi's stand, saying he "should not have said that the doors are shut for Nitish".

Obviously, he is echoing his master's voice. One wonders what authority Khan has to slam Tejashvi Yadav? It is high time Tejashvi learnt to act maturely and mark his words.

He should understand that the focus, at present, is not on 2020 Bihar assembly polls, but on the 2019 Lok Sabha elections," Khan said.

His most preposterous action has been to seek an explanation from Tejashvi about this refusal to accommodate Nitish. "If doors can remain open for NDA allies Hindustani Awam Morcha-Secular (HAM-S) leader Jitan Ram Manjhi and Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (RLSP) leader Upendra Kushwaha, why should it remain closed for Nitish?"

Leaders like Khan have been primarily responsible for sounding the death knell for the Congress. They are driven by their own personal gains than the benefit of the party.

While he has yet to spell out his electoral strategy, whether he would join hands with the secular forces, he has already fixed an appointment with BJP chief Amit Shah on July 12 possibly to discuss seat sharing. Lalu Prasad has not commented on Khan's proposal, but it has not gone down well with the Rashtriya Janata Dal.

Nitish's maneuvering to join the grand alliance is nothing but a shrewd attempt to increase his bargaining power to claim more seats in the BJP-led NDA. When he meets Amit Shah, he is sure to bargain hard. Khan's remark has put the Congress in an awkward situation. In the wake of this development the RJD's top leaders are toying

with the idea of going it alone in the LS polls if Congress insists on Nitish's return. However, they are confident that Rahul Gandhi would not allow leaders like Khan to spoil the pitch.

Tejashvi's close relationship with the Congress president could salvage the situation. Some RJD leaders have even cautioned Congress to maintain restraint as it is a small force in the state and must understand the poll dynamics. The RJD leaders also refer to earlier statement of Nitish wherein he said: "victory of Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led National Democrat Alliance in 2019 Lok Sabha polls was a foregone conclusion as nobody has the strength to take on the prime minister."

Kumar's made this statement hours after Janata Dal (United) veteran Sharad Yadav had voiced his disapproval of the party's alliance with the BJP. (IPA)