



Power crisis

The standoff in Delhi has placed everyone in a bad light

One crisis, many causes. The immediate provocation for Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal sitting on a dharna at the residence of the Lt. Governor might have been a run-in with the bureaucracy, but the crisis is rooted in the understanding (or misunderstanding) of the constitutional limits of the powers of the elected government in the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The Aam Aadmi Party government has a history of confrontation with the Centre on the question of who is the administrative head of a region that is less than a State and more than a Union Territory. Since the party came to power in 2015, the demand for Delhi to be given the status of a full-fledged State, allowing it among other things powers over the police, has become strident. Differences extend to the LG's discretionary powers to appoint the Chief Secretary, with the AAP nursing a grouse that the bureaucratic cadre came directly under the Centre. Matters came to a head when Chief Secretary Anshu Prakash was assaulted during a late-night meeting in Mr. Kejriwal's presence. Since then, officials have been in a non-cooperative mode, only attending statutory meetings, skipping what they term are "routine" meetings and not taking phone calls from Ministers. Mr. Kejriwal and his Cabinet colleagues decided on the dharna in protest, but instead of forcing a solution, they may have precipitated a crisis. Members of the BJP responded with a dharna at the Chief Minister's residence, completing the political spectacle.

In adopting the politics of protest as part of its quest to expand the powers of the elected government, the AAP is putting governance at risk. Instead of mounting a legal challenge to the Centre's efforts to further curtail the limited powers of the Delhi government, Mr. Kejriwal chose to respond politically. While he might like to be seen as a constitutional functionary whose hands are tied by an overbearing Centre, he is coming across as someone who is keener on a bigger fight on a bigger stage than as one eager to fulfil his constitutional mandate. The dharnas might end, but the underlying causes of the present crisis will not disappear without the Centre and the Delhi government agreeing on the terms of engagement through the office of the Lt. Governor. The BJP cannot mock Mr. Kejriwal out of politics; the Centre will have to deal with him, and work jointly with the AAP government for the welfare of Delhi's citizens – something it has failed to do. The way to fight the AAP cannot be by placing handcuffs on the Delhi government. As for the AAP, it should learn to make the best of the system before demanding more autonomy. To push the constitutional limits to acquire more meaningful powers is fine, but it cannot be at the cost of failing to do whatever is possible within the current framework.

In the shadow of FARC

Iván Duque's election as Colombia's President puts a question mark on the peace accord

Colombia's first presidential election since the landmark 2016 peace deal with the FARC Marxist guerrillas has thrown up the youngest winner in its history. But the victory of the 41-year-old right-wing candidate, Iván Duque, raises questions for the future of the agreement negotiated by the Nobel Peace Prize-winning outgoing President, Juan Manuel Santos. Mr. Duque, a relative political novice, beat his rival, Gustavo Petro, an erstwhile insurgent, by a 12 percentage point margin in Sunday's run-off. Mr. Duque's victory is likely to help the conservatives further consolidate their gains in the Congress, where the centrists led by Mr. Santos remain weakened. Mr. Duque's decade-long work experience with the Inter-American Development Bank perhaps partly explains his programme of economic orthodoxy – to cut corporate taxes and create a conducive climate for investment in the oil sector. A protégé of the conservative former President Álvaro Uribe, Mr. Duque can count on backing from his mentor's Democratic Centre party. There is some concern, however, that the veteran politician could exert undue influence. This is especially so because Mr. Duque, like many on the political right, has been sceptical of the peace agreement with the rebels, and Mr. Uribe had actively opposed the referendum on the deal. The grant of amnesty to the extremists and codified guarantees of representation in the Congress, to ensure a smooth passage into the political mainstream, have proved the most contentious provisions. As President, Mr. Duque may be more disposed to adopting a moderate stance.

The outcome in the run-off was not surprising given the steady marginalisation of centrist forces, leaving the field open to the extremes. In March, the contender from the Revolutionary Alternative Common Force (FARC), the rebel movement refashioned as a political party with a name that retains its former acronym, quit the presidential race. After violent attacks on its candidates, it had suspended its campaign for the Congressional election. The FARC's withdrawal from the contest marked a setback for the central plank of the peace process – the rebels' right to run for public office in return for the surrender of arms. It also illustrates the tenuous nature of the accord overall, as the judicial and other mechanisms to advance its objectives are still not in place. A return to civil peace after a protracted conflict, in which hundreds of thousands were killed and many more displaced, is a painstaking process that, above all, calls for firm moral and political conviction. The legacy Mr. Santos leaves behind is the courage he mustered to clinch the controversial peace accord with the perpetrators of the worst brutalities for half a century. Mr. Duque, who assumes office in August, will be judged in terms of the distance he can travel to make the Colombian dream an enduring reality.

Heart of the matter

We must publicise the full information on organ allocations to secure public trust in the donation process



MOHAMED RELA

Over the last few days a storm has been raised following publication of an article in *The Hindu* (June 12, 2018) based on a leaked WhatsApp message from the head of the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO) claiming that foreign patients who are waiting for a donor heart transplant are being prioritised over Indian patients by private hospitals in Chennai. This article has angered many. Unfortunately, amidst the din, the basic concepts of organ donation, allocation and transplantation have been completely lost.

Tamil Nadu's advantage

A forward thinking bureaucracy, committed non-governmental organisations and a willing political dispensation took up promotion of cadaver organ donation as a must-have in Tamil Nadu around 10 years ago. This was primarily in response to a widely publicised and unrelated kidney donation racket unearthed in the late 1990s. The initial kick-start and continuing efforts have made Tamil Nadu the undisputed leader in organ donation in India. Thousands of lives have been saved through organ donation.

Many southern States have successfully emulated Tamil Nadu's road map and have developed organ donation programmes on their own. The uptake of the concept of organ donation, however, has been disappointing in north India. This has led to a steady stream of patients from north In-

dia to travel to the south for a cadaver donor organ as their chance of getting a timely transplant in their own State is close to zero. While the organ donation rate in Tamil Nadu is over 10 times greater than most of the northern States, there is a lot of work to be done to achieve the West's donation rates.

Every country goes through an evolution process in terms of organ donation, and this is different for each organ. Kidney transplantation has been practised in India for over 25 years. There is public confidence in the procedure, and it is not surprising that there is a massive waiting list for cadaver kidney transplants. On the other hand, liver transplant as a treatment option for liver failure remained an esoteric idea in India until 10-15 years ago. The results of liver transplantation in India were poor in the early stages. That has changed in the last 10 years. With increasing success, an increasing number of patients who need a liver transplant are getting waitlisted. So there is no real possibility of a foreigner getting a cadaver liver or kidney in India, as there will always be a patient to whom a donor liver or kidney, irrespective of its characteristics can be matched. Among 2,100 liver transplants performed by our group in south India over the last nine years, not a single foreign patient has been transplanted with a cadaveric liver.

Heart transplants

Cardiac and lung transplantation have been the last to develop in India. Until five years ago, results of heart and lung transplantation were dismal in India. Many doctors would have been reticent to put their patients forward for transplantation even if they would have benefitted from the treat-



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

ment. However, over the last two-three years, results have improved significantly with the influx of talented and trained surgeons. But the number of patients being assessed and listed are still fewer in comparison to those listed for livers or kidneys. Waiting lists for heart transplantation are still small, and in such a situation while a donor liver or kidney can be immediately matched to a suitable Indian patient, this is not always possible for a heart or lungs.

This is where the claim for utilising the organ for a foreign patient comes in as otherwise the organ would be wasted. Even though occasional abuse of the system may be a possibility, it is important to point out that even with the current practice of allocating an organ to a foreigner when there is no suitable Indian patient, one-third of all hearts and lungs are still not being used due to "lack of a suitable recipient". As public and physician confidence in the success of heart and lung transplantation improves in India, the waiting list of Indian patients will increase and it will be possible to match every organ to a suitable Indian patient. Once that stage is reached, there will not be even a remote possibility of a foreigner getting an organ.

An additional issue with heart and lung transplantation is the strict criteria for size and quality

The spirit of Sentosa

South Korean President Moon Jae-in's skilful diplomacy is worthy of the Nobel Peace Prize



T.P. SREENIVASAN

The Nobel Peace Prize has been conferred on international organisations which simply do their job and even the promoters of impractical disarmament initiatives, while the real issues that involve the very survival of mankind cry out for out-of-the-box solutions.

Three festering situations which guarantee this Nobel for anyone who can break the impasse are Korea, Palestine and Kashmir. There is no dearth of proposals to resolve them but they elude acceptance as the parties concerned have adopted ironclad positions. The traditional approach is to let things be.

Till very recently, North Korea was a clear case of a total freeze being preferable to any meddling that might cause an escalation. With a mix of authoritarianism, holding out nuclear threats and irrational behaviour, three generations of Kims held the world to

ransom while successive U.S. Presidents followed a carrot and stick approach to keep things within manageable limits.

Slow progress

Then came a U.S. President with a clearly disruptionist policy and no fear of consequences. War, he said, was an option if leaders starved their people, violated their human rights and threatened the world itself with a nuclear war. After much sabre rattling and the use of unidiomatic language, both leaders (of the U.S. and North Korea) came to the conclusion that peace should be the preferred option and took hesitant steps that were unthinkable even a few months ago. A summit was an on-again, off-again concept till Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un reached Sentosa island in Singapore.

The outcome, on June 12, which made the world heave a sigh of relief, was characterised as a comprehensive document. In fact, there is nothing in the document which was not agreed in 1994 and 2005. Though it is a four-point document, in actual fact it is nothing more than a declaration of intent. Crucial issues such as denuclearisation and a guarantee of security remain undefined. There



is no timeframe either for any of the proposals. There could be many a slip between the cup and the lip. Still, a grateful world has hailed it as real progress and called for the Nobel for Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim.

If one considers where the two leaders started from and where they have reached, there could be some justification to reward them for switching gears from war to peace. But they are unworthy of the honour if one is to go by their past records.

The number of bilateral and multilateral agreements that Mr. Trump has sacrificed and his irrational agendas cannot be forgotten just because of what he has decided on North Korea. Mr. Kim, on the other hand, was till the other

and the very tight timeframes within which these organs should be transplanted. While a kidney can be preserved for 12-18 hours and a liver for 8-12 hours, hearts and lungs should be transplanted within six hours, otherwise outcomes are likely to be poor. So while sharing of livers and kidneys across the country is possible, it is very difficult as far as hearts and lungs are concerned, considering the size of our country. In the absence of a viable and accessible air ambulance service to transport organs, feasibility will depend on the timing of the donation and the flight schedules of commercial airlines. Remember, most organ donation procedures happen in the night as logistics permit. So, at least for hearts and lungs, exceptions notwithstanding, sharing is feasible only by adjacent States.

Fine-tuning the process

What can be done to improve the situation? The government can decide that no foreigners can receive a cadaver donor organ in India even if it means that an organ is wasted due to lack of a suitable Indian recipient. But this may be an extreme step as local governments and corporate hospitals are still very interested in medical tourism. Another option is to develop a system of zonalisation across the country (like in the U.S.) so that more efficient sharing of organs across States is feasible, possibly with the development of a publicly-funded air ambulance service. This will significantly benefit transplant programmes in government hospitals.

Organ donation is based on public trust that due process is being followed. Currently, the donation process and organ allocation in Tamil Nadu is fully monitored by Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu (TRANSTAN). Every organ that

is transplanted, even to a foreign patient, is only done after approval from TRANSTAN. The authority of course depends on the clinical judgment and decisions of the transplant team as to the best use of each organ. The process should be made more transparent and accessible to the public. If donation and the allocation of each organ can be tracked, that will be a strong deterrent to mischief. Most importantly, the outcome of every transplant should be monitored. TRANSTAN should make it mandatory that the transplanting centre should report the outcome of the organ and the patient with updates at one week, one month and one year after transplantation.

Organ donation is a highly emotive topic. When a family agrees for organ donation, they are making a decision to be generous to some unknown person in the midst of a great personal crisis. For this to succeed, they should have utmost trust in the process of organ donation and allocation. Even in highly developed countries, donation rates drop temporarily when news of suspicious practices surfaces. In India, this is even more important as controversies such as these can break a developing programme and bring us back to square one. A reduction in donation rate will affect patients waiting for organs as each donor can save up to seven lives. The issue must be thoroughly investigated before newspapers and television proclaim a "scandal". It does no good to the system and can cause immeasurable harm to sick patients desperately waiting for the call that "they have an organ".

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day the butcher of North Korea where his family oppressed their people, starved them and used the nation's resources to splurge on weapons of mass destruction. He has blood on his hands.

Candidate Moon

Instead, the person who should get the Nobel was not on Sentosa. South Korean President Moon Jae-in – who is the real peace maker – was in Seoul, thinking about the two leaders whose decisions will be critical for his country and the wider region.

What Mr. Moon worked on for long and finally accomplished is nothing short of a miracle given the stances adopted by Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim before he set out on his journey to explore peace. With determination, charm and incorrigible optimism, he stuck his neck out, ready to pay a price if his efforts failed. He knew that his country would be the first to face the fire and fury that Mr. Trump had talked about. He even allowed, without hesitation, a South Korean official to announce the news of a possible thaw from the lawns of the White House.

Mr. Moon has an impeccable record of integrity, poise and sincerity. In late April, the world

watched in awe as he warmly welcomed Mr. Kim in the demilitarised zone at the start of a historic summit. He even unhesitatingly stepped on to North Korean soil when asked to by Mr. Kim and the agreement they reached in the path of peace was unequivocal. The transparency and dignity of Mr. Moon is a model worth emulating.

Another reason why it should be Mr. Moon who should get the Nobel is because it is he who brought the warring sides together. The Sentosa document is a concept while the summit is a reality. Moreover, Mr. Moon has a crucial role as both peacemaker and stakeholder. He should be enabled to come to terms with Mr. Trump's impulsive decision to suspend joint military exercises with South Korea, as a concession announced after the Sentosa meet. Even if peace eludes the Korean Peninsula for some time, Mr. Moon's skilful diplomacy should not go unrewarded.

T.P. Sreenivasan, a former diplomat, is Chairman, Academic Council and Director, NSS Academy of Civil Services, and also Director General, Kerala International Centre, Thiruvananthapuram

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Simultaneous polls

I am of the firm opinion that the very idea of conducting simultaneous elections across the country is absurd ("PM renews call for debate on simultaneous polls", June 18). It is not as though we have a two-party system; in some States, regional parties are more powerful than the national parties. In some others, there are coalition governments. There was a coalition at the Centre for nearly two decades. Therefore, one cannot be sure that governments across the country will complete their tenure together. Instead of putting forth such questionable ideas, the current regime should focus on educating the masses about the value of their votes. Candidates must be selected on merit. If there is the perception that electronic voting machines are being tampered with, let the authorities concerned revert to the ballot system.

T. ANAND RAJ,
Chennai

■ Change must come from within. There can be debate on the subject based on constructive arguments and which involve political theorists, domain scholars, constitutional experts and legal luminaries.

DEVANAND VYAS,
Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

Lateral hiring

The speed with which the government is moving ahead to implement what can be called "lateral entry into the civil service" does not augur well for the country. Recruitment under the UPSC is well-organised, rigid and longstanding. It has credible steps to ensure that a candidate is worthy of selection. Even after selection, the candidate moves up the ladder after hands-on administrative experience. Going ahead with the new plan under the reason of utilising domain expertise is half baked. The damage such an officer could cause because of his lack of experience is enormous. What about accountability? Rushing such a key policy

especially when we are so close to a general election is unwise.

I.P.P. PRABHAKARA RAO,
Secunderabad

AAP, politics and Delhi

The people of Delhi must be experiencing great discomfiture caught as they often are in the crossfire between Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and the Lieutenant Governor ("We are not on strike, say Delhi IAS officers", June 18). Mr. Kejriwal has to first ensure that the law and order machinery is well oiled and IAS officers are able to function in a safe environment. As the name of their party suggests, the Aam Aadmi Party should strive to serve the common man. Street-level politics is increasingly being allowed to affect administration. The party is wasting an opportunity to prove its mettle in governance. A constant and confrontational approach with the Centre is bound to backfire.

BELLUR S. DATTATRI,
Bengaluru

Trash mountain

Many of us are aware of our oceans becoming receptacles for waste. Now it is equally disheartening to know that our mountains too have not been spared ('Life' page, "Mt. Everest, the highest dump", June 18). The Himalayan chain is a very fragile ecosystem and the source of many perennial rivers. The authorities concerned must ensure that climbers are held responsible for waste collection. Lame excuses such as the cost factor should be ignored. Flaws in the pride of adventure should not take over the welfare of the environment and society.

N. VIJAI,
Coimbatore

Insensitive

The statement by the Union Law Minister where he said, "I wish to make it clear that the Law Minister or the Law Ministry is not a post office," is in bad taste ("Asking collegium to review decision not a sin: Minister", June 12). I vividly remember what a

teacher told my classmates and me decades ago – that two of the important persons in life are the postman and the nurse. The Union Communications Minister, instead of passively allowing his colleague's unjustified stigmatisation of an essential service and an honourable profession at that, should suggest to Ravi Shankar Prasad that they could exchange their portfolios for a short period; it might force the Law Minister to take back his words.

S.V. RAMAKRISHNAN,
Chennai

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

A sentence in a feature on Prafulla Mahanta (Who-What-Why-When-Where page, June 17, 2018) read: "Emotions associated with the Assam agitation saw the AGP sweep the 1985 polls and Mr. Mahanta becoming *India's youngest Chief Minister*..." It should have read: "... Mr. Mahanta becoming *one of India's youngest Chief Ministers* at 33 years..."

In the Sunday Magazine story titled "The hornbill housing crisis" (June 17, 2018), there was an error in the context of the bird's nesting cycle. It ought to have said: "He [the male hornbill] keeps up this punishing schedule for *three to four months* until the female fries herself and the young fledge." The published version said *six months*.

It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-28552963; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. No personal visits. The Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor are on www.thehindu.com