

**A hi-tech rath yatra that ran out of steam**

No matter how digitally advanced and modernised Uttar Pradesh might become, some things don't change. The story about the much-advertised technically high-end Samajwadi Party Vikas Yatra rath breaking down after moving just about two kilometres in a journey that was around 70 km (Lucknow to Unnao) is now well known. The rath had a Mercedes engine, cost upwards of ₹2 crore and breathless TV anchors describing how it had Wi-Fi, a running toilet and many other modern gizmos.

The story behind its breakdown is more prosaic. Apparently, the driver hired to drive the rath was a loyalist of Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav. He was short in height — so short that his feet barely reached the clutch. The rath was a humongous animal, requiring an expert driver. This driver was not trained to drive it although he was probably an expert car driver. In the midst of the crowd, he needed to drive slowly, so he kept his foot on the clutch the whole time while coaxing the brute machine further. So the clutch plate got burnt. And of course the truck stopped moving. Yadav sent for his own car — a Toyota with a sun roof — stood on top of a few cushions in the back seat and greeted the crowds. Jugaad is what works.

Once the truck broke down, the question was how to tow it back to where it came from, for repairs. What arrived to tow it away was a puny crane from the fire department. As officials stood by scratching their heads, they realised the story the media was carrying was not about the yatra but the problems with the vehicle used in it. So it was left standing there overnight, and early in the morning, it was towed away. At least one IPS officer has been sacked and replaced by another as a result.

**OPINION**

MICHELLE OBAMA

**If Hillary doesn't win, it will be on us**

**Michelle Obama:** See, over the years I've come to know Hillary. I know her. Not just her extraordinary professional accomplishments, but I know her personal values and beliefs. I know that Hillary was raised like Barack and I in a working family. Hillary's mother was an orphan, abandoned by her parents. Her father was a small business owner who stayed up nights, poring over the books, working hard to keep their family afloat. So believe this, Hillary knows what it means to struggle for what you have, and to want something better for your kids.

See, and that's why since the day she launched her campaign, Hillary has been laying out concrete, detailed policies that will actually make a difference for kids and families in this country. And she said she plans to make college tuition free to help young people drowning in debt.

And let me tell you this about Hillary, she is involved and engaged in every policy issue that she's developed. Because policies matter, they really matter. They determine whether our kids have good schools, whether they can see a doctor when they're sick, whether they're safe when they walk out the door on the way to school. Policies matter, and that's why Hillary has fought so hard for children's health insurance as First Lady, for affordable childcare in the Senate.

She is in this race for us. She is in this for our families, for our kids, for our shared future. So let me tell you, that is why I am inspired by Hillary. That is why I respect Hillary, because she has lived a life grounded in service and sacrifice that has brought her to this day, that has more than prepared her to take on the hardest job on the planet.

So Hillary has done her job. Now we need to do our job, and get her elected president of the United States. Because here's where I want to get real. If Hillary doesn't win this election, that will be on us. It will be because we did not stand with her. It will be because we did not vote for her, and that is exactly what her opponent is hoping will happen. That's the strategy, to make this election so dirty and ugly that we don't want any part of it.

So when you hear folks talking about a global conspiracy, and saying that this election is rigged, understand that they are trying to get you to stay home. They are trying to convince you that your vote doesn't matter, that the outcome has already been determined, and you shouldn't even bother making your voice heard.

They are trying to take away your hope. And just for the record, in this country, the United States of America, the voters decide our elections, they've always decided, voters decided who wins and who loses, period, end of story.

And right now, thankfully folks are coming out in droves to vote early. It's amazing to see. Each of you could swing an entire precinct and win this election for Hillary, just by getting yourselves, your friends and your family out to vote.

Just doing what you are supposed to do, you can do this. But you could also help swing an entire precinct for Hillary's opponent with a protest vote or by not voting at all.

So here's what I'm asking you. Get out and vote. Get out and vote for Hillary. Vote early. Vote right now. Leave here, go vote. And don't let anyone take that right away from you.

Because make no mistake about it, casting your vote is the ultimate way we go high when they go low. Voting is our high.

*Edited excerpts from US First Lady Michelle Obama's speech at a campaign rally by Democratic presidential nominee for the US, Hillary Clinton, in Salem, North Carolina, on October 27*

**The Newshour will end, mercifully**

He's going but *The Newshour* could not have gone on for much longer. After all, how low, how noisy, how crude, how abusive can you go?

AMRIT DHILLON

Even if Arnab Goswami had not resigned, *The Newshour* was not going to be long of this world. The name was a misnomer. It was not news but entertainment, not debate but a blood sport, not information but insult-trading, and not neutral anchoring but one long, exhausting, hectoring, bullying, mocking diatribe by Goswami. It was a cock fight and every show ended not with the death of one of the roosters but the death of reasoned debate.

But that's not the reason why it was reaching the end of its shelf life. Other changes were making the format untenable such as unsustainable levels of crudity, walkouts, and guests turning into mini-Arnabs. A curious change has taken place in guest behaviour. Many people who earlier used to accept being silenced by Goswami began turning the tables on him. They spoke to him with as much belligerence as he did and jabbed their fingers right back at him. When not allowed to speak or finish a sentence, they retaliated, with aggression, demanding insistently and vehemently that he let them speak or refused to speak until he had piped down and guaranteed them at least 30 seconds.

These days, they shout him down. To mention only two, Congress supporter, the indefatigable and garrulous Rajeev Desai, in his *ad nauseam* rants, gives Goswami a run for his money.

Bharatiya Janata Party spokesperson Meenakshi Lekhi hectors him back.

The complaint that "you are a one man show", "why do you invite me if you



won't let me speak", "you are not giving me a chance", "you are judge, jury and executioner all rolled into one, Arnab" are being heard very frequently.

When a guest refuses to speak until Goswami has lowered his voice, Goswami used to be stumped — though, not for long. It is happening all the time now, the latest incident being the other day during a debate on Rahul Gandhi and Arvind Kejriwal being arrested following the suicide of Subedar Ram Kishan Grewal over his pension.

A panelist whose name I can't recall ordered Goswami imperiously to lower his voice before he would answer the question. He kept up this refrain until Goswami had no choice but to lower his decibel level.

Guests are also becoming devious in their handling of Goswami. (Why they

agree to appear on the show in the first place when they must know they will be humiliated is a matter for shrinks to answer). Actor Om Puri was in the dock recently for his tasteless comment last month in connection with the death of soldier Nitin Kumar.

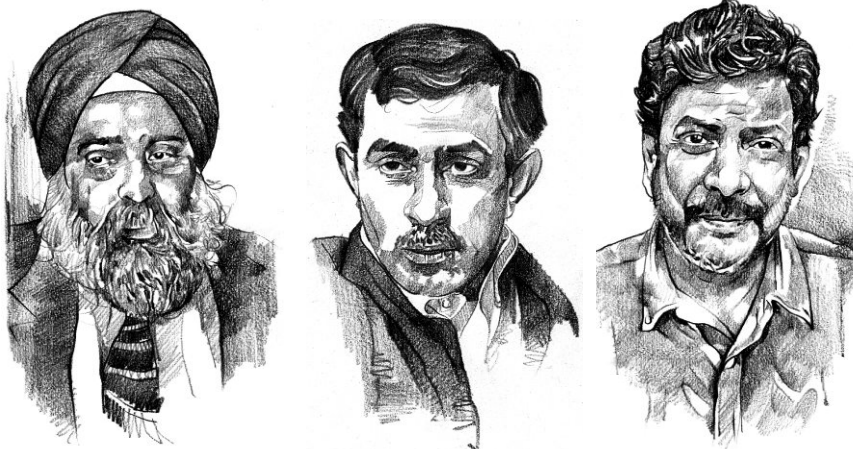
When questioned over why he backed Pakistani actors when Indian soldiers like Nitin Kumar were giving up their lives for the country, Puri had said, while appearing on another channel, "So who asked him to join the Indian Army?"

When he appeared in *The Newshour* kangaroo court and Goswami began taunting him, Puri interjected, saying "go ahead, go ahead, you are right, you are right" and other sarcastic remarks (at least I presume he was being sarcastic).

Goswami lowered his voice and

**DID THEY REALLY SAY THAT?****Go home and rest.**

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Imran Khan's address to his supporters, while calling off the protest against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif after the Pakistan Supreme Court ordered a probe into his assets, as revealed in the Panama Papers, in Islamabad on November 1



(Pictured from left) **NIRVIKAR SINGH**, professor of economics, University of California, Santa Cruz; **DEVESH KAPUR**, director, Centre for Advanced Study of India at the University of Pennsylvania; and **SANJOY CHAKRAVORTY**, professor of geography and urban studies at Temple University, the authors of *The Other One Percent: Indians in America*, tell **Aditi Phadnis** the story of the growth and evolution of the Indian diaspora in the United States.

**'Indian diaspora among most Democrat-leaning of immigrant groups'**

**The year 1965 and the mid-1990s seem to be the two surge periods for migration by Indians to the US. What do they tell us about the kind of Indian that went to the US in these two waves? And later?**

The year 1965 was the beginning. That is when the immigration law was changed in the US and the new law, the Hart-Celler Act, removed the earlier national origins quota system to allow in people with skills and to enable family reunification. There weren't many Indian families in the US then; our best estimate is that there were under 15,000 Indian-born people in America. To put that in context, in 2014, almost 150,000 new India-born people entered the US — 10 times higher in a single year. So family reunification was not much of an option and the Indians who came then were skilled — mostly engineers and doctors. Many of them were Gujaratis. Almost half of them already possessed or later acquired postgraduate degrees.

There was a middle period — from the late 1970s to the early 1990s — when there were enough Indians in the US that family reunification not only became possible, but also widely prevalent. The surge that began around 1995 changed that dramatically. It was initially related to the Y2K problem but soon included a wide range of information technology workers. The vast majority of them were engineers. The number of students also surged. We estimate that over half of these newer tech and student immigrants from India eventually got a postgraduate degree. Telugu and Tamil speakers were heavily over-represented in this surge;

many new Hindi speakers also came in. It should be noted that after the Great Recession, a super-surge appears to have begun around 2010. As we say in the book: a trickle turned into a torrent that became a flood.

**To understand the nature of the diaspora that Indians represent in the US, you point out that a selection system operated both in India and the US. Tell us how this shaped the American of Indian origin.**

We call it a Triple Selection process. The initial two selections happened in India. First, through a social hierarchy that generally restricted access to higher education to groups with high socio-economic status — the "high" and "dominant" castes. Second, through an examination system that further limited the number of individuals, who received the educational inputs that made them eligible to be considered for immigration. The exam system used to be fiercely competitive in the pre-liberalisation days, and has lessened in recent years, but remains strongly selective.

The third selection was through the US immigration system that was geared to admit students and workers that matched its high-end labour market needs — principally in what are called the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). The result is a unique population. It certainly does not resemble the population at home. The college graduates in this population are 10 times higher in percentage terms than in India and their social identities (by caste and language) don't come close to rep-

**CHECKLIST THE LATEST TRUMPISMS**

- **At a rally in Toledo Ohio on October 27:** "We should just cancel the election and just give it to Trump."
- **At the third presidential debate on October 19, when Trump refuses to say whether he will accept the election outcome:** "I will tell you at the time. I'll keep you in suspense, OK?"
- **At the third presidential debate on October 19:** "Nobody respects women more than me."
- **Three minutes later:** "Such a nasty woman", referring to Democratic counterpart Hillary Clinton.
- **On Clinton, September 16:** "I think what we should do is — she goes around with armed bodyguards... Her bodyguards should drop all weapons. They should disarm. Right? Right? I think they should disarm — immediately. What do you think? Yes? Yes. Yeah. Take their guns away! She doesn't want guns. Take their — let's see what happens to her."
- **In an interview on September 11, about his**

**buildings, in the context of the 9/11 attacks on World Trade Centre:** "40, Wall Street was the second-tallest building in downtown Manhattan...And now it's the tallest."

■ **On September 11, when asked if he supported the Iraq war in 2002. (In a recent interview he opposed it):** "Yeah, I guess so."

■ **Explaining his grasp of foreign policy at a town hall meeting in Virginia on September 6:** "Iraq and Iran were very similar militarily, and they'd fight, fight, fight, and then they'd rest. They'd fight, fight, fight, and then Saddam Hussein would do the gas, and somebody else would do something else, and they'd rest."

■ **Bid to win over African American voters, on August 19:** "What do you have to lose by trying something new like Trump? You're living in poverty; your schools are no good; you have no jobs; 58 per cent of your youth is unemployed."

resenting the distribution at home. We call this a population of outliers.

**What does assimilation of these Indians tell us about those who went to the US, took part in politics and engaged with society to influence it?**

Assimilation ranges from naturalisation to civic and political participation. Until the 1990s Indians used to naturalise at rates similar to the average for all immigrants. But this is no longer the case since the queue to move from an H1-B visa to a permanent resident is the longest for Indians. Civic participation or associational life for Indian-Americans varies from membership and participation in functional, non-ethnic organisations to pan-Asian ones with a shared regional identity, while others join organisations that reflect India's ethnic and religious diversity. Similarly, their purposes vary as well — from those seeking to preserve and celebrate cultural traditions, to those with social and economic networking goals, to others whose activities are transnational, linking to the country of origin.

Contrary to what one reads in lazy opinion pieces, Indian Americans are among the most Democrat-leaning of any large immigrant group. Only half the Indian-American population is naturalised and of these two-thirds vote, in line with lower Asian-American voter participation. Along with their limited numbers, the community has been demographically concentrated in states that are strongly Democrat-leaning, and hence their voting influence is limited. Other sources of political participation are more important. These include political funding (especially for the first generation), staffing of the Executive Branch and Congressional and State offices (for the second generation) and more recently, running for office. The differences in behaviour are more inter-generational rather than who came from India per se.

**You have also done extensive research on entrepreneurs of Indian origin in America. What do your findings tell us?**

For long, the image of Indian-American success was found in the professions — successful engineers and doctors, who epitomised the suburban good life, though some of these professionals were also small business owners, running their own practices, individually or in partnerships.

A second pillar of the community — the entrepreneurs — were concentrated in ethnic businesses such as Indian grocery stores and restaurants. The educated middle class was risk-averse and held on to a traditional class aversion towards entrepreneurship. This began to change in the 1980s and 1990s with the emergence of the Silicon Valley innovators and/or entrepreneurs, who created successful software or hardware companies. While US tech companies are now disproportionately likely to have Indian-American founders, the leading industry sectors for Indian-American entrepreneurship remain traditional areas like restaurants,

lowered his voice (always a sign of trouble) and said menacingly: "Get me loud and clear, you are speaking over Colonel VN Thapar. I am taking you off the show right now till you learn to speak with respect to an Army officer."

Vashisht's jaw dropped at this and her eyes widened with shock. "Oh shut up, Arnab," she said and angrily yanked off her microphone.

But more than these developments, it is the fact that the exchanges are getting nastier and nastier and this is the slippery slope towards the gruesome circuses of ancient Rome. It is in the nature of these things, that you have to keep raising the ugliness of the tone and comments, a bit like pornography addicts having to move from vanilla sex to all sorts of perversions and configurations in order to get the same arousal. Or ancient Romans going from straightforward chariot races to people being torn apart limb by limb by lions in order to their bloodlust satisfied.

This was evident earlier this week, in the debate on Kashmir schools burning, when Supreme Court lawyer Shabnam Lone accused her colleague at the Bar, Mahesh Jethmalani, of being in Dawood Ibrahim's pocket. Jethmalani in turn wanted to know how much money Lone was getting from Pakistan and added,

for good measure, that she had "the mindset of a terrorist". Lone was livid. "Really? Really? And who are you? Who are you? Shame on you," she spluttered.

In January 2015, Trinamool Congress leader Mahua Moitra kept telling an interjecting Goswami to let her finish her sentence. When he refused, after a long and pointless slanging match, she showed

him the middle finger.

So we have Goswami's sadism, guest masochism, people telling one another to shut up, competitive nastiness, and no finished sentences, much less arguments. In the initial years, this had some novelty value because it was so different. Year in, year out, though, the format cannot be sustained. Fatigue sets in.

Fans of the TV series *The Walking Dead*, known for its sickening violence, finally revolted in the last few weeks over the violence rising to a new level of sadism. To get the same shock value, Goswami would have had to keep sinking further and further till he was rolling around in the mud, inciting guests to punch one another.

But never mind all this; the point is that his lungs, which must have a biological age of 82, could not have taken it any longer. And it's good that Goswami will go before dear old snarling and spittle-specked General G D Bakshi bursts a blood vessel and before R N Singh is wheeled out of the studio having convulsions.

It was reaching the point where Times Now would have had to cover itself against claims for compensation by asking guests to have their blood pressure and pulse checked before walking into the studio. We were close — so close — to having oxygen cylinders dotted around the studio.

But mercifully, it will not be that because Goswami is going, even though, judging by reports about his future plans, it looks as though it's going to be au revoir rather than adieu.

*With permission from thehoot.org*