

## State elections

SONIA GANDHI played the dynasty card to revive the Congress, but it is very difficult to predict whether the Congress will rule for the next 20 years (Cover Story, November 20). Corrupt politics, money-minded people, family-oriented politicians, and so on, can never be good for a developing nation. The Congress has a long struggle ahead and will not be successful without Sonia Gandhi.

VINOD C. DIXIT

AHMEDABAD

THE detailed analysis of the Assembly election results presented in the Cover Story deserves appreciation.

Overall, the electorate did not take the feud in the saffron family lightly. The disconnect between the BJP and its cadre is widening every day. Unless it projects a cohesive image with leadership that can unite all and sundry under one umbrella, this party will join the "also-ran" category.

ERAIYUR CHEENU

CHENNAI

THE Congress won because there is practically no strong opposition. Some candidates won on regional issues; this is not good for the country. Also, it is not a good sign that very few candidates facing criminal charges lost the election.

MAHESH KUMAR

NEW DELHI

THE Congress has had a bumpy ride in Maharashtra and Haryana. However, as the grand old party is once

## Maoist challenge

PEOPLE in rural areas, including agricultural workers and tribal people, have been neglected since Independence (Cover Story, November 6). The socio-economic and cultural conditions in States such as Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar are still semi-feudal. The Central government needs to wake up.

The Maoists of India should not emulate their counterparts in Nepal as India has a well-organised state with a big army. Even Bhagat Singh believed that bombs and pistols alone could not bring about a successful revolution. If the Maoists do not give up their arms and adopt democratic means, their "Red corridor" will be confined to a few pockets.

RAJ BAHADUR YADAV

FATEHABAD, HARYANA

again on the power chariot, one can only hope that it will take into account the problems of the people. Will it live up to people's expectations?

SYED KHAJA

NEW DELHI

## P.F. scam

THE article "Evidence in peril" (November 20) reveals that the Indian legal system is in a deep mess, with no accountability and transparency on the part of some judges. The involvement of a number of High Court judges and a Supreme Court judge in the Ghaziabad Provident Fund scam and the suspicious death of Ashutosh Asthana, the

main accused, raise serious doubts.

People have the right to know why there is a delay on the part of the judiciary in reining in the judges identified by Asthana in his statement to the magistrate.

K.R. SRINIVASAN

SECUNDERABAD

## Casteism

THE article "A battle won" (November 20) on the spirited struggle waged by the Dalits of Chettipulam in Nagapattinam district for temple entry was an excellent summary of the events that ultimately forced the local administration to act. That the issue is far from over is clear from the way

the caste Hindus kept themselves away when the District Collector and other top officials led Dalits into the Ekambareswarar temple.

It is a pity that even when the State is under the rule of a Dravidian party swearing its commitment to the ideals of the social reformer E.V. Ramasamy, the administrative apparatus chose to side with the opponents of temple entry.

S.V. VENUGOPALAN

CHENNAI

IT is disgusting to note that Dalits are being subjected to social alienation in several parts of our so-called secular country. Denying temple entry and other such discriminatory practices exist even today.

The sacred writings, hymns and holy books of various religions do not exhort people to follow such filthy practices. But, some sections of society strive to divide the nation on the basis of religion, caste, creed and language. The Nagapattinam Collector deserves applause for tackling the situation effectively.

IPPILI SANTHOSH KUMAR

SRIKAKULAM, A.P.

## 'Love jihad'

THE articles on "love jihad" ("Love and hate" and "Divisive debate", November 20) were interesting. Earlier, in Kerala, student politicians used to keep a watch over terrorism among students.

Now, with the High Court ban on campus politics, there is no good orga-

nisation operating on campuses. It is high time to allow student politics.

E.A. IBRAHIM  
VYTTILA, KERALA

## India & China

THE article "Friendship first" (November 20) analyses the deliberations of the fourth East Asia Summit in Thailand and hints that there is sufficient space in the political and economic domains of the world for both India and China to "rise peacefully".

India must play a powerful role in strengthening the emerging new architecture of cooperation across East Asia.

THOMAS EDMUNDS  
CHENNAI

## Reality TV

IN the beginning, talent, or reality, shows were simple, with a small stage, an anchor and three judges ("How real is 'reality'", November 20). The audience and viewers did not have to do anything (such as wasting money on SMS). Now such shows have become ridiculous.

SHIV SHANKER ALMAL  
KOLKATA

## Maoists

THE Cover Story on the Maoists ("Maoist challenge", November 6) exposed the vulnerability of the Indian state. The government is focussing more on planning a major police offensive than on energising democratic processes and policies.

Ever-increasing corruption, inefficiency, a biased

law-and-order machinery and poor governance are pushing more and more tribal people and the poor into the naxal fold. That is why any strategy to curb naxalism should focus on development.

VITULL K. GUPTA  
NEW DELHI

THE Cover Story gave an in-depth analysis on the causes and problems posed by the Maoists. The problem can be traced to the flawed system of Indian bureaucracy.

The multidimensional strategy that the government has been talking about of late should be implemented wholeheartedly, and it should not be confined only to areas under Maoist influence.

It is a fact that tribal people and backward communities back the Maoists. In view of this, the government should think twice before it goes in for a military solution.

BHASKAR PEGU  
GUWAHATI

BOTH the Maoists and the government must strive to change their ongoing stand on violence by sharing a political platform instead of battlegrounds to sort out the chronic socio-economic maladies of the hinterlands. The government has to accept the reality of the discontent in these areas.

Naxalism and any other movement that emerges from socio-economic inequality need to be seen with a fresh perspective because counter-insurgency or any other violent move by the state on their own citizens will only intensify the anguish and desperation of the people.

The Maoists in India

need to take a fresh look at their basic ideology.

ATUL KUMAR THAKUR  
GHAZIABAD, U.P.

## Tuition

"TUITION culture" (November 6) has become so much a part of the school education scene all over India that parents have started considering it a status symbol. But I know of some schools that discourage this trend and give extra attention to pupils who are weak in studies.

R.S. PILLAI  
KOLLAM, KERALA

PARENTS send their children for private tuition as they feel that the existing academic atmosphere is marked by absenteeism, lack of skills among the teaching community, poor student-teacher ratios and an absence of accountability and does not impart the skills necessary for today's competitive world.

Leaving the system to continue in its present form is tantamount to denying sections of society opportunities. It is high time the government intervened to ensure quality education in the primary and secondary school level.

K.A. SURESH KUMAR  
DELHI

THE tuition culture has been in existence from time immemorial. But the present system has assumed new proportions because of tough competition.

The fault lies with our examination system. The new format for assessment in the Central Board of Secondary Education suggested by Human Resource Development Minister Ka-

pil Sibal will further strengthen tuition culture.

R.N. AGARWAL  
BIKANER, RAJASTHAN

## Water on moon

THE news of the presence of water on the moon was exciting ("Lunar surprise", October 23). The discovery will give impetus for further research.

Some regulation is needed, though. Having spoiled the earth, humans are struggling to save it. We should be careful not to spoil the moon too.

A. JACOB SAHAYAM  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

## Chidambaram

THIS is with reference to the article "Unholy row" (October 23). Why should anyone use only a particular language when God should be able to understand and reply in *any* language.

It is time that all clergy, missionaries, preachers and religious heads realised and admitted that religions, sects, cults, languages and rituals are manmade and undergo modification and modernisation over time.

V.N. RAMASWAMY  
SECUNDERABAD, A.P.

THE issue of who should recite prayers and intone mantras and in what language has dragged on until judicial intervention. This is a testament to the religious intolerance within the Hindu fold.

R. RAMACHANDRA RAO  
HYDERABAD

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Letters, whether by surface mail or e-mail, must carry the full postal address and the full name, or the name with initials.