

## India not a flailing state but can we return to 7% GDP?



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A decade ago, former World Bank economist Lant Pritchett was lauded for his thesis that while India was definitely not a failing state — it had achieved 7% “miracle” GDP growth — it was a “flailing state.” That is, while its performance was world class by some measures of governance, it was terrible in other respects, notably in government services like health, education and sanitation.

India has some top-class institutions like the IAS, the IITs and Election Commission. Even Uttar Pradesh, viewed by many as the worst-administered state, can astonish the world by creating a temporary, excellently run giant city for the Kumbh Mela. But for ordinary day-to-day services, there is a fatal disconnect between the excellence of top institutions and last-mile delivery to citizens. With some exceptions, government services are widely seen as corrupt, callous, unaccountable, and almost unreformable.

Today, after India has drawn worldwide praise for achieving one billion Covid vaccinations, is the “flailing state” thesis obsolete? No doubt bungles and delays hit initial arrangements, but the pace and spread of vaccination is now good. India can do 10 million vaccinations per day. This is a state that works.