

**Readers write: India's growth, education and democracy, and fashion choices; Why glorify buying ripped jeans? Readers wrote in to discuss this topic, as well as the importance of education and India's economic growth.**

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## Body

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India's growth

Thank you for the Sept. 9 Monitor Weekly cover story, "The superpower in waiting," by Howard LaFranchi. It gave me insight into how the people of India are moving ahead into the modern century.

However, swift progress in the United States has sometimes come at the cost of lives and culture, such as when European settlers forced Native Americans to move and sent Native American children to boarding schools. Many of those children died, and others lost their cultural connections and their native language.

In addition, the industrialization of the Western world - with its huge influx of machines - has been a significant contributor to global warming. Sometimes slow change is best because it ensures there is time to consider all the options and creatively think about solutions. Maybe India will create an innovative way to enhance the lives of its agricultural workers while uniting all of its 1.3 billion citizens.

Cynthia KuestDeLand, Florida

Education and democracy

In the Sept. 23 Monitor Weekly article "What debate over modern education tells us about a divided Turkey," Scott Peterson made an astute observation regarding the decrease in language skills among Turkish students that is applicable to any democracy.

Mr. Peterson wrote that "for the Turkish language, some 66% of [Turkish] eighth graders were at intermediate or lower levels, which meant they struggled to understand idioms and satire."

Democracies need an educated base to survive. Fundamentalists and authoritarians fear an educated, free-thinking populace. Without the necessary critical thinking skills to evaluate candidates and platforms, electorates can choose leaders who don't have a country's best long-term interests in mind. History is replete with leaders who have hoodwinked nations.

Wes BockleyHancock, New Hampshire

Fashion choices

Regarding the Sept. 16 Monitor Weekly issue: I can't understand giving space to stories about buying clothes that are deliberately ripped and torn, as did the Home Forum article "Unafraid to be frayed." But then, I've never been a

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fashionista! Like all fashions, this trend will pass. And I wish that Stephen Humphries' culture article "More gray hair? Hollywood's subtle shift on age" included Robert Redford in "The Old Man & the Gun." Overall, however, I would give the issue a total score of A+.

Carolyn HillPortland, Oregon

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